

APPENDIX 3B - ALA Code of Ethics

As members of the American Library Association, we recognize the importance of codifying and making known to the profession and to the general public the ethical principles that guide the work of librarians, other professionals providing information services, library trustees and library staffs.

Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict. The American Library Association Code of Ethics states the values to which we are committed, and embodies the ethical responsibilities of the profession in this changing information environment.

We significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations.

The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision making. These statements provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations.

1. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.
2. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
3. We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.
4. We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders.
5. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.
6. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.

7. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.
8. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.
9. We affirm the inherent dignity and rights of every person. We work to recognize and dismantle systemic and individual biases; to confront inequity and oppression; to enhance diversity and inclusion; and to advance racial and social justice in our libraries, communities, profession, and associations through awareness, advocacy, education, collaboration, services, and allocation of resources and spaces.

Adopted at the 1939 Midwinter Meeting by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 1981; June 28, 1995; January 22, 2008; and June 29, 2021.

(Appendix referenced in Policy 3. Approved by WPLD Board of Trustees June 15, 2021; readopted _____)

7 - Collection Management

7-1 Purpose of the Library's Collection

In support of its mission, Wilmette Public Library District (the library) selects, organizes, preserves, and makes freely available resources which inform, educate, entertain, and enrich persons as individuals and as members of society.

Since no library can possibly acquire and share all resources, every library must employ a policy of selectivity in acquisitions and collection management. The library provides, within its financial and spatial limitations, a general collection of quality resources reflective of many perspectives and lived experiences. Included are works of enduring value and timely resources on current issues. Within the framework of these broad objectives, selection is based on community needs, both expressed and inferred from study of community demographics, and evidence of areas of interest in all formats for adults and young people alike.

The Board of Library Trustees (the board) recognizes that there is a broad range of interests among district residents. Therefore, the library's collection includes a variety of resources that present varying viewpoints on a diverse range of topics, including items that may be viewed as controversial by some members of the community. The library and the board resolve to protect the right to freely access information and resources from censorship and book banning, and seek to provide our community the opportunity to read and access information freely, as guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States.

The library and the board endorse the following American Library Association intellectual freedom statements, found in the Policy Appendices:

- Library Bill of Rights, Appendix 3C
- Freedom to Read Statement, Appendix 7A
- Freedom to View Statement, Appendix 7B
- Labels and Rating Systems, Appendix 7C

The library's print and digital resource collections will meet or exceed the Illinois State Library Standards for Public Library materials in accordance with the library's strategic planning priorities.

Other community resources and area library collections are also considered when selecting resources. The library is a member of the Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS), a multi-type system covering northern Illinois. Wilmette Public Library cardholders and Kenilworth residents holding cards from either the Wilmette or Winnetka-Northfield Public Libraries have access to resources in these libraries through cooperative agreement.

The library is a member of Cooperative Computer Services (CCS), a consortium of over 25 public libraries that share a computer system for circulation, cataloging, an online public access catalog, and interlibrary loan. Through interlibrary loan agreements, librarians may obtain resources for patrons from libraries in the metropolitan Chicago area, throughout the state of Illinois, and the United States. For digital resources, the library is also a member of the Electronic Content Consortium (ECC), which manages the Digital Library of Illinois, providing ebooks, eaudiobooks, and digital magazines to over 100 member libraries. Additional information may be obtained through electronic access of digital resources, including numerous specialized and technical databases.

(Approved __ __, 2023)

7-2 Responsibility for Collection Development

Authority and responsibility for library resource selection rests with the director, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the board. The library collection is managed by a team of professional librarians. The director may assign specific areas of the collection to staff for the selection, evaluation, maintenance, and withdrawal of resources. This delegation of collection management tasks does not remove collection management responsibilities from the director.

(Approved __ __, 2023)

7-3 Selection of Resources

Staff select and evaluate resources using a variety of criteria. All criteria need not be met for acquisition and can vary based on individual titles, formats, languages, and age levels. The criteria include, but are not limited to:

- Accuracy, currency, and authoritativeness of information presented
- Artistic and literary merit, and awards of recognition
- Availability from library vendors and distributors
- Availability of cataloging records
- Existing and anticipated demand and relevance to the community
- General interest and appeal
- Holdings of other libraries in the north suburban Chicago area
- Physical limitations of space to appropriately house the resources
- Price of resources and budget for collections
- Relevance of format and compatibility with technological advances
- Representation of various interests and viewpoints
- Resources that fit the library's strategic plan and service priorities
- Suitability of subject, style, and format for the intended audience

Tools used in selection include, but are not limited to, professional journals, trade journals, online resources, publishers' promotional materials, and reviews from reputable sources. Purchase suggestions from patrons are welcome and given serious consideration.

In addition, the following guidelines are provided to aid staff in resource selection decisions:

- Personal biases must not influence acquisitions and collection management
- Resources will not be excluded from the collection due to the race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, or political, moral, or religious beliefs of any author or contributor to a work, nor will resources be proscribed or removed from the collection due to doctrinal or partisan disapproval
- Resources are judged on the basis of their content and style as a whole, not by selected portions or passages
- Resources of contemporary significance and of long-standing value will be selected ensuring an overall balance in the collection
- The overall value of a resource must be considered in relation to all resources currently provided while serving the interests of patrons
- Selection will not be inhibited by the possibility that resources may come into the possession of children. It is the responsibility of a parent or guardian to monitor and oversee their children's reading, viewing, and/or listening
- The library does not actively acquire textbooks or other curriculum-related materials, except as such materials also serve the general public, and where few or no resources are available in any other form
- Medical, scientific, and legal works will be acquired only to the extent that they are useful to the general public
- The library routinely acquires commercially published resources, and may also acquire self-published books as appropriate to the library's selection criteria

In addition to the criteria used in selecting physical formats, additional considerations for databases, digital, and downloadable formats include: licensing, ease of use, technology requirements, and availability of remote access. Some digital resources include a range of content that is leased or purchased as a whole, while other platforms allow staff to select specific content.

(Approved __ __, 2023)

7-4 Evaluation and Maintenance of the Collection

With the exception of resources related to local history, Wilmette Public Library is not a library of historical record. The collection is routinely reviewed and evaluated in order to maintain its usefulness, currency, and relevance. Items may be kept, redistributed, repurchased, withdrawn, or preserved.

Factors considered in the evaluation of resources include, but are not limited to:

- Anticipation of continuing and changing community interests and needs
- Availability of resources in other formats
- Budget and/or cost per use
- Holdings of other libraries in the north suburban Chicago area
- Inclusion in standard bibliographies or recommended lists
- Insufficient use or lack of patron demand
- Obsolete content that is no longer timely, accurate, or relevant
- Physical condition
- Physical limitations of library facilities
- Professional judgment and principles of collection management
- Publication date
- Student and local school curriculum support
- Suitability of subject, style, and format for the intended audience

Following evaluation by the above criteria, resources are regularly chosen to be withdrawn from the collection and information about those items is removed from the catalog of holdings.

Materials in acceptable physical condition with potential resale value are offered to the Friends of the Wilmette Public Library for inclusion in their used materials fundraisers or donated to help support library and literacy initiatives of partners. Other items are recycled or discarded.

(Approved ____ __, 2023)

7-5 Local and Self-Published Authors

The library maintains a “Local Authors Shelf” for resources written or created by residents of the Wilmette and Kenilworth area. Resources in this collection may not meet all of the selection criteria of our collection.

- Items will be accepted as donations from the author or publisher and evaluated for inclusion in the collection by the librarian responsible for that genre or subject area.

- Items will be included based on condition, appropriate format, and perceived demand or interest by the library's community.
- Items may be withdrawn depending on demand and established evaluation criteria.
- All donated items become the property of the library and will not be returned to the donor.
- Items that are not accepted into the collection will be given to the Friends of the Wilmette Public Library for inclusion in their used materials fundraisers or donated to help support library and literacy initiatives of partners.
- Staff may not be able to meet with individual authors, nor notify donors whether items are or are not added to the collection.

(Approved ____ __, 2023)

7-6 Labeling of Resources

The library encourages exploration of its collections and will not engage in labeling practices that discourage this exploration. Library labeling practices align with guidance provided in the American Library Association's Statements on Labeling and Rating Systems (Appendix 7C). Because labeling decisions can have broad-ranging and sometimes unanticipated impacts, staff should consult with the director whenever questions on labeling arise, and before initiating changes in labeling practice.

Labels can provide a convenient tool to assist the public in locating resources within the collection. While this convenience may be valuable to a particular group of users, it is also important to consider the impact of labeling practices on the community as a whole.

Some of the items in the physical and digital audiovisual collections have been assigned ratings by various external groups, such as the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA). The producer or distributor of a particular item may or may not have chosen to receive a rating or include such rating on the item itself. To the extent that rating information is present on an item as acquired, the library neither obliterates such information nor adds an additional rating label. When such rating information is absent from an item, the library does not assign a rating or add a rating label, even when an MPAA or other rating appears to have been assigned through a ratings system. For example, an MPAA-rated film is often bundled with non-rated features and bonus materials for distribution. In such a case, the film rating can become misleading with respect to the entire contents of the item, causing the distributor to omit a rating on the item as sold or licensed.

The library remains committed to assisting patrons in obtaining information requested to aid with their own selection of resources, including access to rating

information when available. However, such assistance shall not extend to altering an item's appearance through a rating label or other means to reflect the judgment of others on the appropriateness of that item for any individual or group of patrons.

(Approved __ __, 2023)

7-7 Arrangement and Presentation of Resources

A variety of factors influence the arrangement and shelving of resources within the library facilities. These factors include, but are not limited to, physical space and shelving restrictions, promotional considerations, security issues, user convenience, and logical and coherent presentation. Resources will be arranged and shelved in a manner that is viewpoint neutral and does not convey endorsement or disapproval by the library.

Arrangement and presentation of resources should not be used to restrict access or to suggest moral or doctrinal endorsement. Resources may be shelved in areas that are not accessible to the public to protect the collection or because of space considerations. However, the library will not place resources in areas that are not accessible to the public based on a value judgment that the content, language or themes of the resource, or the background or views of the author(s) of the resource render it inappropriate or offensive for all or certain groups of users. Young people under the age of 18 have free access to resources in the library's collections, and parents or guardians may choose to advise their children in making appropriate selections.

(Approved __ __, 2023)

7-8 Donations for Resources

The library welcomes gifts to the collection, and accepts them with the understanding that it has the right to handle and dispose of them in the best interest of the library. Such material may be added to the collection provided that it meets the library's selection criteria and cataloging standards. Items without ISBNs or readily available cataloging may not be added to the collection.

Monetary gifts may be designated to purchase resources as memorials and honoraria. While donors of such funds may suggest subjects or specific titles to be acquired with their donation, the library reserves the right of final selection of titles that will enhance the collections and meet the library's selection criteria. An appropriate bookplate may be placed in items purchased from donated funds.

(Approved __ __, 2023)

7-9 Patron Requests for Additions to the Collection

Patrons may request resources for the library to purchase by completing the *Suggest a Purchase* form on the library's website or a *Wilmette Public Library Comment Form* available at all library service desks.

All requests are evaluated by either the manager of the department in which the request would be placed and/or the selector of that subject area. Not all requested items will be ordered for the collection. All requests must meet the resource selection criteria. If a request is denied, the patron will be notified via a letter or email stating that the library will not be purchasing the item.

Items not currently available in the library's collections may be available by interlibrary loan.

(Approved __ __, 2023)

7-10 Patron Requests for Reconsideration of Resources

The library and the board resolve to protect the right to freely access information and resources from censorship and book banning, and seek to provide our community the opportunity to read and access information freely, as guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States.

It is not the policy of the board to exclude information and resources, or to arbitrarily remove resources from the collection due to pressure from any individual or organization.

Any resident or taxpayer of the Wilmette Public Library District has the right to question the inclusion of or exclusion of any title in the collections. Patrons may request that selection decisions be reconsidered in the following ways:

1. Informal comments may be made to staff in the appropriate department at any time. Such comments will be conveyed to the appropriate department manager and selector for the subject area of the item in question, but no formal action will necessarily be taken.
2. A patron may request to speak with the appropriate department manager. A meeting time will be arranged that is convenient for both the patron and department manager. The patron will be offered copies of the *Collection Management Policy* which details the use of the *Resource Reconsideration Form (Appendix 7D)*. No formal action will necessarily be taken.

3. If a patron wishes to express their comments in a formal manner, the following procedure will be used:
 - a. The patron will be given a copy of the *Collection Management Policy* and a *Resource Reconsideration Form*. The patron will fill out the form and return it to the Administrative Office of the library.
 - b. A copy of the completed form will be given to the appropriate department manager and the selector of that subject area for formal review. A copy will also be forwarded to the director.
 - c. Following formal review, the department manager will send the decision in writing to the patron within 60 days of receipt of the completed *Resource Reconsideration Form*.
 - d. If further review is requested by the patron, the patron will be invited to meet with a committee consisting of the director, the department manager, and appropriate selector(s). After the meeting, the committee will respond in writing to the patron explaining what actions are being taken with regard to the item in question.
 - e. If further review is requested by the patron, the board will handle the matter directly as a body or may refer the matter to an advisory committee for recommendation. This committee would consist of two board members appointed by the board president, and two staff members appointed by the director.

In making its decision, the board will carefully consider the principles articulated in the *Collection Management Policy* and will allow ample opportunity for both staff and patron input. The board's final decision will be conveyed in writing to the patron within 60 days of referral to the board.

(Approved ____ ____, 2023)

APPENDIX 7A - American Library Association Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into

its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

(Approved by WPLD Board of Trustees ____ __, 2023)

APPENDIX 7B - American Library Association Freedom to View Statement

The **FREEDOM TO VIEW**, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore, these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest possible access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video and other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989 and was endorsed by the ALA Council January 10, 1990.

(Approved by WPLD Board of Trustees __ __, 2023)

APPENDIX 7C - ALA Statements on Labeling and Rating Systems: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

1. Labeling Systems

The American Library Association affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to read, view, listen to, or otherwise access. Libraries do not advocate the ideas found in their collections or in resources accessible through the library. The presence of books and other resources in a library does not indicate endorsement of their contents by the library. Likewise, providing access to digital information does not indicate endorsement or approval of that information by the library. Labeling systems present distinct challenges to these intellectual freedom principles.

Labels may be a library-sanctioned means of organizing resources or providing guidance to users. They may be as simple as a colored dot or strip of tape indicating reference books or fiction or as elaborate as the Dewey Decimal or Library of Congress call number systems.

Labels as viewpoint-neutral directional aids are intended to facilitate access by making it easier for users to locate resources. Users may choose to consult or ignore the directional aids at their own discretion. Viewpoint-neutral directional labels are a convenience designed to save time. These are different in intent from attempts to prejudice, discourage, or encourage users to access particular library resources or to restrict access to library resources. Labeling as an attempt to prejudice attitudes is a censor's tool. The American Library Association opposes labeling as a means of predisposing people's attitudes toward library resources.

Prejudicial labels are designed to restrict access, based on a value judgment that the content, language, or themes of the resource, or the background or views of the creator(s) of the resource, render it inappropriate or offensive for all or certain groups of users. The prejudicial label is used to warn, discourage, or prohibit users or certain groups of users from accessing the resource. Such labels sometimes are used to place materials in restricted locations where access depends on staff intervention.

Directional aids can also have the effect of prejudicial labels when their implementation becomes proscriptive rather than descriptive. When directional aids are used to forbid access or to suggest moral or doctrinal endorsement, the effect is the same as prejudicial labeling. Even well-intentioned labels may have this effect.

Prejudicial labeling systems assume that the libraries have the institutional wisdom to determine what is appropriate or inappropriate for its users to access. They presuppose that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. The American Library Association opposes the use of

prejudicial labeling systems and affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to read, view, listen to, or otherwise access.

Adopted on June 30, 2015, by ALA Council.

2. Rating Systems

Libraries, no matter their size, contain an enormous wealth of viewpoints and are responsible for making those viewpoints available to all. However, libraries do not advocate or endorse the content found in their collections or in resources made accessible through the library. Rating systems are tools or labels devised by individuals or organizations to advise people regarding suitability or content of materials. Rating systems appearing in library catalogs or discovery systems present distinct challenges to intellectual freedom principles.

Creators of rating systems assume that individuals or groups exist who can determine what is appropriate or inappropriate for others. They also assume that individuals want or need direction in making decisions about the materials or resources they use. While the creation and publication of such systems is protected by the First Amendment's right to free speech, the American Library Association also affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about the information that they consume.

Libraries' explicit or implicit adoption, enforcement, or endorsement of any of these rating systems violates the Library Bill of Rights and may be unconstitutional if used to prevent an individual's access to materials or resources. If enforcement of rating systems is mandated by law, the library should seek legal advice regarding the law's applicability to library operations.

Libraries often acquire resources, such as DVDs and video games, that include ratings as part of their publication materials. Library workers should not endorse the inclusion of such rating systems; however, removing or destroying the rating placed on the original item by the publisher, distributor, or copyright holder could constitute expurgation.¹

Because cataloging standards provide an opportunity for libraries to include ratings in their bibliographic records, many libraries have chosen to do so—some by acceptance of standard records containing such ratings and others by a desire to provide the maximum descriptive information available on a resource. Libraries are not required by cataloging best practices to provide this information. If they choose to do so, for whatever reason, they should cite the source of the rating and indicate that the library does not endorse external rating systems.

The inclusion of ratings in bibliographic records within library catalogs or discovery systems may be interpreted as an endorsement by the library. Therefore, without attribution, inclusion of such ratings is a violation of the Library Bill of Rights.

If libraries include information about rating systems on items or records, this information should not be used to restrict access to those materials based on the age of library users. Such a restriction may violate minors' First Amendment rights.²

That libraries do not endorse or advocate for the use of rating systems does not preclude them from answering questions about such systems. It is appropriate to provide access to sources containing information on rating systems in order to meet the specific information-seeking needs of individual users. The American Library Association affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to read or view.

¹ ["Expurgation of Library Resources: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights,"](#) adopted February 2, 1973, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008; and July 1, 2014.

² *Engahl v. City of Kenosha*, 317 F. Supp. 1133 (E.D. Wis. 1970); *Motion Picture Association of America v. Specter*, 315 F. Supp. 824 (E.D. Pa. 1970); *Swope v. Lubbers*, 560 F. Supp. 1328 (W.D. Mich. 1983); and *Rosen v. Budco*, 10 Phila. 112 (1983).

Adopted on June 30, 2015, by ALA Council; amended June 25, 2019.

(Appendix 7C is referenced in Policy 7. Approved by WPLD Board of Trustees
_____, 2023)

APPENDIX 7D - Wilmette Public Library Resource Reconsideration Form

The Wilmette Public Library District Board of Trustees has established a Collection Management Policy (Policy 7) to manage its collections, and has endorsed the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read and View Statements. The library's policies include this procedure for gathering feedback about resources:

Any resident or taxpayer of the Wilmette Public Library District has the right to question the inclusion of or exclusion of any title in the collections. Patrons may request that selection decisions be reconsidered by completing and returning this form to:

Resource Reconsideration Request
Wilmette Public Library
1242 Wilmette Avenue
Wilmette, IL 60091

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Do you represent yourself? ____ or an organization? ____

Name and contact information of Organization _____

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

Book (e-book) Video Magazine Audio Recording
 Digital Resource Game Newspaper Other

Title _____

Author/Producer _____

2. What brought this resource to your attention?

3. Have you examined the entire resource? If not, what sections did you review?

4. In your own words, what concerns you about the resource?

5. What resource(s) do you suggest to provide additional information and/or other or similar viewpoints on this topic?

6. What action are you requesting the committee consider?

7. Is your requested action in conflict with the library's Collection Management Policy? If so, please explain why your request outweighs adherence to these principles.
