



REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS FORM

We welcome your input. All materials in our collection have been vetted by professional staff for legal compliance, alignment with our policies, and relevance to community needs and interests. Once a title has been added, it will not be removed unless it is shown to be in violation of those criteria. Titles do not need to meet all criteria to be added to or retained in the collection.

All fields on the form must be completed in a full and meaningful way. Incomplete, cursory, or duplicated forms or forms containing multiple titles will not be considered. Programs, exhibits, and displays may also be submitted for reconsideration using this form.

1. Have you discussed your concerns in person with a professional librarian on staff at the Botetourt County Library? Yes / No

If yes, list their name and position/branch: _____

If no, please reach out to the Library Director or a Branch Manager for a conversation.

2. Have you read the attached Access to Information Statement, Library Bill of Rights, and the Freedom to Read Statement? Yes / No

3. Name: _____

4. Are you a resident of Botetourt County? Yes / No

5. Do you have a valid Roanoke Valley Libraries card? Yes / No

6. Address: _____

7. Phone: _____

8. Email: _____

ABOUT THE MATERIAL

9. Is the material owned by Botetourt County Libraries? Yes / No

Consult with a staff member if you're not sure. Only material owned by Botetourt County Libraries may be submitted for reconsideration.

10. Title: _____

11. Author: _____

12. Have you reviewed the entire material as a whole? Yes / No

Requests that do not consider the work holistically and/or that focus solely on isolated parts (such as pages, passages, or images) will not be considered.

13. Explain how this material violates and/or lacks alignment with the Library's Collection Development Policy. (See policy attached.) Please be specific, such as citing sample pages or passages.

14. What action would you like the Library to consider regarding this material?
Materials may not be removed, moved, labeled, restricted, or otherwise censored based on viewpoint.

- Remove the material from the collection.
- Move this title and all materials with the same specific subject or genre to a different section of the library (please list suggested objective criteria and location below).
- Other (list below)

I understand that material may not be removed or altered based on the viewpoint expressed, and that material will not be removed if it is found to be in alignment with the Library's Collection Development Policy. I understand that the Botetourt County Library collection includes materials that may be deemed objectionable or controversial by some or even a majority of citizens, and that it is the responsibility of individuals to determine what is appropriate for themselves and their families, but not to determine what is appropriate for other individuals and their families.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Thank you for submitting this request! We take your feedback and concerns seriously and appreciate the time you spent thoughtfully evaluating the suitability of this material for our Botetourt County community. You will be contacted by the Library Director or designee within 30 days. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the Library Director.

BOTETOURT COUNTY LIBRARY

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Overview

The free exchange of ideas and information is guaranteed in the US Constitution and is vital to a healthy democracy. Within the framework of the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement, the Botetourt County Library provides materials and programs representing a wide variety of viewpoints, including perspectives and expressions that may be deemed offensive or controversial to individuals or groups. The use of Library materials and programs is voluntary. Parents or guardians of minors are responsible for monitoring the selection of materials or attendance at programs by their children.

The Library embraces its mission to provide materials and programs that enable patrons to freely access and consume information and cultural expressions across the spectrum of human experience and knowledge. The Library does not promulgate particular beliefs, views, or forms of expression, nor does the selection of an item or program express or imply an endorsement of the content or viewpoint expressed. Library materials and programs will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, nor will items be sequestered except for the purpose of protecting them from damage or theft. In support of its mission, the Library rejects censorship and the abridgement of the free expression and access to ideas.

Authority

The Library Director assumes ultimate responsibility for collection development and maintenance, with primary responsibility delegated to the Materials Manager. The Materials Manager, in collaboration with qualified Library staff, oversees all collection development and maintenance planning, budgeting, selecting, and management. Any Library staff and patrons can participate in the collection development process by relaying purchase requests, observed trends, and general feedback regarding the collection.

Materials Selection Criteria

Within the scope of its vision, mission, and objectives, the Library will provide materials in a wide variety of formats, both physical and digital, including books, audiovisual materials, periodicals, newspapers, pamphlets, kits, objects, and other materials.

Collections contain popular works, classic works that have withstood the test of time, and other materials of general interest. In building collections, the Library places priority on filling contemporary needs rather than building historical or rare material collections, with some exceptions for materials of past and current significance to Botetourt County. Botetourt County Library follows the principles of selection rather than censorship.

The Library will not attempt to furnish materials needed for formal courses of study offered by private or public elementary and secondary schools, or by institutions of higher learning such as academic texts, or those of a highly technical nature used in specialized research.

The Library exercises foresight in anticipating demand in the selection of materials and will keep informed of other available resources in the area, including within the Roanoke Valley Libraries consortium, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication.

To build a collection of merit, materials are evaluated according to one or more of the following standards. An item need not meet all criteria in order to be acceptable.

- General:
 - Present and potential relevance to community needs
 - Suitability of physical form for Library use, including durability
 - Suitability of subject and style for intended audience
 - Cost
 - Importance as a document of the times
 - Relation to the existing collection and to other materials on the subject
 - Attention by critics and reviewers
 - Potential user appeal
 - Requests by Library patrons
- Content:
 - Authority
 - Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment
 - Skill, competence, and purpose of the author
 - Reputation and significance of the author
 - Objectivity
 - Consideration of the work as a whole
 - Clarity
 - Currency
 - Technical quality
 - Representation of diverse points of view
 - Representation of important movements, genres, or trends
 - Vitality and originality
 - Artistic presentation and/or experimentation
 - Sustained interest
 - Relevance and use of the information
 - Effective characterization
 - Authenticity of history or social setting
- Special considerations for digital resources:
 - Ease and use of the product
 - Availability of the information to multiple simultaneous users
 - Equipment needed to provide access to the information
 - Technical support and training

Materials Acquisitions

The Library will purchase materials requested by patrons if the materials are acceptable according to the Collection Development Policy. The materials generally must have the current or previous year's copyright date and anticipated demand. Otherwise, the material may be requested for that patron's use through Interlibrary Loan services when possible.

The Library purchases materials from distributors such as Ingram, Baker & Taylor, Blackstone, and EBSCO, as well as publishers who do not distribute to jobbers, such as CenterPoint and Gale. The Library may use a variety of standing order plans with these vendors; however, the Library does not participate in approval plans. Other acquisitions sources may be used for reasons such as competitive pricing or expedited delivery.

Occasionally, the Library purchases items such as works of local authors and regional history titles from Roanoke area sources. All materials acquired must meet staff-guided standards for quality (both in writing and in physical construction), illustrations, patron demand, pricing, and other requirements.

The Library welcomes donations that align with the selection criteria noted above. For more information, see the Library's *Gifts and Donations Policy*.

Special Collections

The Genealogy collection's acquisition is heavily directed by limited physical space and patron-driven usage, request, and interest. While primarily sourced from donations, the Genealogy collection may include a limited number of purchased resources related to Botetourt County settlers and their migratory patterns (Pennsylvania, Maryland, and ports such as Norfolk and Virginia Beach areas). Resources may include military records; census information; and birth, marriage, death, and burial records of Botetourt County and surrounding counties. The Genealogy collection prioritizes resources directly related to Botetourt County rather than to surrounding or other localities.

The Library also collects books and other resources related to the history of Botetourt County, primarily sourced from donations. The Eagle Rock branch maintains a local history collection to preserve the history of the Eagle Rock area, focusing heavily on prominent family histories, local businesses, and historic landmarks.

The Appalachian collection focuses on materials relating to the Appalachian region, including its history, folklore, music, religion, culture, genealogy, fiction, and African and Indigenous peoples. Materials may be collected for all age levels, formats, and scholarly or non-scholarly works.

Reconsideration of Materials

Patrons may request that the Library reconsider inclusion of specific materials in the Library collection. For more information on the process, see the Library's *Reconsideration Policy*.

Withdrawal of Materials

Materials are withdrawn in order to maintain the collection's usefulness, currency, and relevance as well as to utilize limited the Library's limited physical spaces for effective discovery and retrieval of materials. Materials may be moved from one Library branch or storage facility to another at the discretion of the Materials Manager.

The Library follows professional practices for the removal of material. Criteria include, but are not limited to, condition, currency, and popularity of the material. Special consideration is given to last copies of titles with particular local or historical significance when no other copies are available within the Roanoke Valley Libraries consortium.

The Library may offer withdrawn materials to the Friends of the Library, Inc., to sell on its behalf with proceeds directly benefitting Library programs and projects. Materials will be otherwise disposed in accordance with Botetourt County's policies governing surplus property disposal.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

The Botetourt County Library provides a process for patrons to voice concerns about materials or programs they consider objectionable or inappropriate for public consumption or attendance. Patrons may request a reconsideration of material or programs by filling out a Request for Reconsideration form. For the request to be considered, the requester must:

1. Have a valid Roanoke Valley Libraries card.
2. Be a resident of Botetourt County.
3. Complete the Request for Reconsideration form in its entirety for one item/title or program only.
4. Address only material or programs owned by Botetourt County Library.

To ensure an equitable and timely response, the requestor is limited to no more than ten (10) active requests at a time. A separate form must be completed for each disputed item/title or program. All fields on the form must be completed in a full and meaningful way. Incomplete, cursory, duplicated forms or forms containing multiple titles will not be considered.

The Request for Reconsideration form may be submitted in writing to the Library Director. Upon receipt of a fully-completed form by a qualified patron, the Library Director will convene a Reconsideration Committee composed of at least three (3) members, including a minimum of two (2) professional librarians (which shall not include the Director). The Committee will review the material or program for alignment with the Collection Development Policy and make a policy-based recommendation to the Library Director.

After consulting with the Reconsideration Committee, the Library Director will make a decision regarding the material or program. Within thirty (30) days of receiving the Committee's recommendation, the Library Director will respond to the patron in writing with the action to be taken and the reasons for the decision.

Within seven (7) days of the Library Director's decision, the requestor may appeal the Director's decision in writing to the Library Board of Trustees. The Library Board will review the material or program in light of the Collection Development Policy and address the appeal at a scheduled Board meeting. The requester will be invited to attend the Board meeting as a public commenter. If the Library Board's recommendation aligns with that of the Library Director, then that decision is final. If the Library Board's recommendation differs from that of the Library Director, then the Library Director will reconsider the request in light of the Board's feedback and make a final decision.

The specific material or program will be exempted from future requests for reconsideration for three (3) years after a final decision has been made.

Review time may be reasonably extended due to factors such as the unavailability of materials, existing staff workload, limited staff availability, or the prioritization of previously-submitted requests. The Library is not obligated to remove any material or program requested for reconsideration during the reconsideration process, except for the purpose of examining it.

The Library reserves the right to seek an informal conversation (verbal or written exchange) between the patron and a professional librarian on staff at Botetourt County Library prior to the review process. Communication can lead to better clarity for both the patron and Library staff, and it may help the patron determine whether continuing with a formal request for reconsideration is necessary or desirable.

The patron is also responsible for abiding by the Library's Patron Behavior Policy, and all patrons are encouraged to express their concerns in a manner that is respectful.

Botetourt County Administration and Library Board of Trustees

Adopted November 15, 1984

Revised and adopted December 18, 2006; June 21, 2022; April 12, 2023

ARSL Access to Information Statement

Public libraries are uniquely American institutions, providing opportunities for lifelong learning and open discourse. The expression of differing ideas has a long history in our country and is a core aspect of our national character. Banning, removing, or censoring materials, speakers, or displays without due process violates people's Constitutional rights.

The Association for Rural & Small Libraries (ARSL) represents library professionals serving diverse communities across the United States. As a professional organization:

ARSL stands in firm support of the freedom to read and free speech as inalienable rights protected by the First Amendment. We are committed to defending those rights for all individuals and recommend library policies that support the selection of library materials that represent a broad range of topics and ideas.

ARSL stands in support of small and rural librarians' expertise in selecting materials and affirms their dedication to the communities they serve. Librarians use their professional training to develop collections and programs that are reflective and supportive of the communities they serve while providing opportunities to learn about other communities that may be different from their own. Materials are carefully selected following established collection development policies and professional standards. If library users voice concerns about materials or services that they find objectionable, libraries have procedures in place for reevaluating those selections.

ARSL stands in support of caregivers' rights to guide their own children's use of the library, and to determine which materials are appropriate or beneficial for their children. We recognize that not every book is right for every reader; however, no one person or group has the authority to determine what is appropriate for someone else's child. Access to a wide variety of reading materials increases the chances that children will become lifelong learners.

Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

Although the Articles of the Library Bill of Rights are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as "Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights."

The 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.

A Joint Statement by:

*American Library Association
Association of American Publishers*

Subsequently endorsed by:

*American Booksellers for Free Expression
The Association of American University Presses
The Children's Book Council
Freedom to Read Foundation
National Association of College Stores
National Coalition Against Censorship
National Council of Teachers of English
The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression*