

INTELLECTUAL
FREEDOM
MANUAL

TENTH EDITION

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM MANUAL

*Compiled by the Office for Intellectual Freedom
of the American Library Association*

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This publication provides information about laws related to library operations. This information is not intended as legal advice. If legal advice or expert assistance is required, the services of a competent legal professional should be sought.

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Things You Can Do to Support Intellectual Freedom in Your Library

1. **Create a culture** that supports intellectual freedom by regularly talking about it with users, coworkers, employees, administrators, legislators, and governing bodies. Don't wait for a crisis to educate them about the library profession's principles. Meet with other organizations and individuals in your community, and form partnerships around common interests.
2. **Develop written policies** that support intellectual freedom in the following areas: collection development and resource reconsideration, internet use, meeting rooms and exhibit spaces, privacy and confidentiality, social media, and user behavior.
3. **Formally adopt these core ALA statements** as policy for your library: *Libraries: An American Value*, *Library Bill of Rights*, *Code of Ethics of the American Library Association*, and *The Freedom to Read* statement. Frame and prominently post the *Library Bill of Rights* on the walls and on the library website for users to see.
4. **Consult this manual** to learn about best practices for supporting intellectual freedom, and for tools to respond to concerns and challenges.
5. **Ask for help** if you need it. If you're facing a challenge or concern and need help, contact your state intellectual freedom committee or the American Library Association Office for Intellectual Freedom at (800) 545-2433, ext. 4226.

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For historical information about the creation and revision of many of the documents in this book, please consult the companion publication, *A History of ALA Policy on Intellectual Freedom: A Supplement to the Intellectual Freedom Manual, Tenth Edition*.

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INTRODUCTION AND USER'S GUIDE

BEGINNING WITH THE first edition published in 1974, the *Intellectual Freedom Manual* has served as an essential reference book for librarians seeking information and guidance in applying the principles of intellectual freedom to library service. The manual is published under the direction of the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom. Additional information about intellectual freedom issues can be found on the ALA's "Intellectual Freedom" web page, www.ala.org/intellectualfreedom. **Check the web page regularly to find the latest news and to see newly adopted and revised ALA policies.**

The phrase "library workers" is used throughout this manual to refer broadly to all those who work in libraries, including librarians, staff members, and volunteers.

Scope

Like previous editions, the tenth edition contains current ALA intellectual freedom policies and guidelines; essays on intellectual freedom issues, principles, and law; and practical help for library workers and trustees. All of its content has been reviewed and updated.

New to this edition are:

- New interpretations of the *Library Bill of Rights* approved by the ALA Council since the last edition:
 - Equity, Diversity, Inclusion
 - Internet Filtering
 - Labeling Systems (formerly part of Labeling and Rating Systems)
 - Politics in American Libraries
 - Rating Systems (formerly part of Labeling and Rating Systems)

- Religion in American Libraries
- User-Generated Content in Library Discovery Systems
- Visual and Performing Arts in Libraries
- Information about when to call the police
- An essay about censorship beyond books (e.g., programs, displays, databases, etc.)
- Expanded content about developing library policies that support intellectual freedom
- An expanded “Glossary of Terms”

Continuing the practice of the ninth edition, the historical essays related to the various policy statements have been updated and published in a separate volume titled *A History of ALA Policy on Intellectual Freedom: A Supplement to the Intellectual Freedom Manual, Tenth Edition*.

Arrangement

The topical arrangement of this manual and its easy-to-read summaries are intended to help readers find information quickly, especially those readers who are less familiar with the content or are faced with a crisis. Readers who are more familiar with ALA policy statements are encouraged to use the index and “Appendix 3” to quickly identify the location of a particular policy statement in the manual.

Part I of the manual, “Intellectual Freedom and Libraries,” provides foundational information. It begins with an essay that defines intellectual freedom and explains how it applies to school, public, and academic libraries. Core intellectual freedom documents of ALA, such as the recently revised *Library Bill of Rights*, are presented next, followed by practical information about how to create library policies that support intellectual freedom.

Part II, “Intellectual Freedom Issues and Best Practices,” contains ten chapters focusing on intellectual freedom issues: (1) access, (2) censorship, (3) children and youth, (4) collection development, (5) copyright, (6) meeting rooms, exhibit spaces, programming, and education, (7) privacy, (8) requests from law enforcement, (9) workplace speech, and (10) special lenses, a new chapter collecting ALA statements that touch broadly on the intellectual freedom issues listed above. Each chapter begins with a summary called “Issue at a Glance,” covering key concepts, points of law, additional resources, tips for various types of libraries, and questions for reflection. “Issue at a Glance” is followed by relevant “Official ALA Policy Statements” (e.g., interpretations of the *Library Bill of Rights*), which articulate the associ-

ation's principles and best practices. These statements have been developed by ALA committees and ratified by the ALA Council. Finally, most chapters also include "A Deeper Look"—one or more essays expanding on the issue. Many of the "Deeper Look" essays provide information about laws related to library operations. This information is *not* intended as legal advice. If legal advice or expert assistance is required, the services of a competent legal professional should be sought.

Part III, "Advocacy and Assistance," offers practical information on how to communicate about intellectual freedom, work with the media, lobby legislators, get help, and get involved in promoting and defending intellectual freedom.

The three appendixes are a "Glossary of Terms," a "Selected Bibliography," and a list of official ALA policy statements related to intellectual freedom.

How to Use the Manual

- *Refer to it when developing library policy*—Review "Creating Intellectual Freedom Policies for Your Library" (part I, chapter 3) for guidance in creating six essential intellectual freedom policies.
- *Turn to it for guidance when a question or problem emerges*—Consult the relevant chapter in "Intellectual Freedom Issues and Best Practices" (part II), review the tips in "Communicating about Intellectual Freedom" (part III, chapter 1), and consult "Where to Get Help and Get Involved" (part III, chapter 2) if you need additional help.
- *Use it to orient new employees, volunteers, and trustees*—Ask them to read "What Is Intellectual Freedom?" (part I, chapter 1) and "Core Intellectual Freedom Documents of the American Library Association" (part I, chapter 2).
- *Use it for professional development*—Consider having library staff, volunteers, and trustees read the chapters in "Intellectual Freedom Issues and Best Practices" (part II), and schedule times to discuss the "Questions for Reflection" provided. Some of the questions are easily answered after reading the chapters; others present more difficult ethical challenges that are likely to stimulate interesting discussions.
- *Use it as a textbook in library and information science courses*—Use the "Questions for Reflection" listed at the beginning of each chapter in "Intellectual Freedom Issues and Best Practices" (part II) as writing prompts or to start class discussions. Assign readings from the companion publication, *A History of ALA Policy on Intellectual Freedom: A*

Supplement to the Intellectual Freedom Manual, Tenth Edition, to help students understand the development and evolution of the ALA's policies on intellectual freedom.

- *Use it to connect with other librarians and help promote intellectual freedom*—Read “Where to Get Help and Get Involved” (part III, chapter 2) to learn about organizations, committees, programs, and awards that focus on intellectual freedom.

The library profession has a long history of defending and promoting freedom of expression and the freedom to read. It is our hope that library workers and supporters will find this new edition of the *Intellectual Freedom Manual* a valuable and easy-to-use resource as they continue this important work.

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