

# REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

*Example:* The Board of Trustees of the Anytown Public Library have authorized the use of this form and delegated the responsibility for selection and evaluation of library materials to the library director. This is the first step in the reconsideration process. Please return this form to the library director of the Anytown Public Library, 11 Main Street, Anytown, Illinois.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Do you represent yourself? \_\_\_\_\_

Or an organization? \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Organization \_\_\_\_\_

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

\_\_\_\_ Book \_\_\_\_\_ Video \_\_\_\_\_ Newspaper

\_\_\_\_ Display \_\_\_\_\_ Magazine \_\_\_\_\_ Audio

\_\_\_\_ Electronic Information/Network (*Please specify.*)

\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Author/Producer \_\_\_\_\_

2. What brought this resource to your attention?
3. Have you examined the entire resource?
4. What concerns you about the resource?
5. Are there resource(s) you suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

# LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

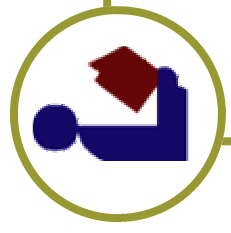
The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- 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.

*Adopted June 18, 1948, by the ALA Council; amended February 2, 1961; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.*



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# How to Write a Public Library Selection Policy

## INTRODUCTION

This is only a guide to help a public librarian develop a selection policy.

The information for this pamphlet was taken from the Workbook for Selection Policy Writing as shown on the American Library Association website as accessed on July 25, 2006.

For more examples and instructions, visit: [www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=dealing&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=111173](http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=dealing&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=111173)

The following sections should be included in every selection policy.

## MISSION

*Example:* The mission of the Anytown Public Library guides the selection of materials as it does the development of services and the allocation of resources.

The mission of the Anytown Public Library is to make high-interest, high-demand materials readily available, as well as to actively support the lifelong learning and information needs of community residents of all ages and abilities. Special emphasis is placed on stimulating children's interests and appreciation for reading and learning, on integrating new technology with traditional library resources, and expanding access and services beyond the library's physical walls.

*(from the Waukesha Public Library)*

**“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people to peaceable assembly and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”**

*First Amendment to the United States Constitution*

## OBJECTIVES

*Example:* Anytown Library seeks to enrich, entertain, inform, and educate its users.

You may want to add more detail or objectives for each type of format or audience. For example, the children's collection may have different objectives than the young adult and adult collections and the objectives for the AV collection may be different from the previous three.

## RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION

*Example:* Ultimate authority for the selection of materials is the responsibility of the Library Board which delegates it to the Director who works within the framework of policies set by the library board. The Director delegates selection to others by virtue of their education, knowledge, and/or background in a given area.

## CRITERIA

Include criteria relevant to your mission and/or objectives. *Example:* reputation of author, publisher, or producer, timeliness, suitability of format to use, positive reviews by critics or staff members, quality of illustrations, clarity of sound or visuals, quality of writing, ability to stimulate interest or thinking, user appeal, appearance on New York Times Best Seller Lists, accuracy of content, award winner, ability to address information needs of collection, . . .

Examples of sources consulted but not limited to: *Library Journal, School Library Journal, Booklist, VOYA, Horn Book, New York Times Book Reviews, etc.*

## PROCEDURES

Describe the steps involved in selection from coordinating recommendations from various departments and reviews to the types of materials you collect, where you get them, and why you choose them. Include how you handle gifts (usually evaluated the same as items you purchase), when and how you weed the collection, how you handle ephemera, what you do not buy, and, if you charge fines, how you handle them.

## CONTROVERSIAL MATERIALS

Include a statement on intellectual freedom and its importance. Consider including the texts of the first amendment and Library Bill of Rights and its various interpretations, the Freedom to View, and/or Librarians: An American Value.

## RECONSIDERATION

Even when your policies and procedures are followed, there may still be objections or challenges to items in the collection. What is the framework for registering complaints within the context of the principles of intellectual freedom? What are the steps? Generally, the person who complains is referred to a selector in the appropriate department who attempts to defuse the situation. If they are unsuccessful, they may be referred to a department head or the director or given a copy of a “Request for Reconsideration” form. They are given a copy of the rules and procedure and given a time frame with which they must comply. Complaints are generally submitted to the director who chooses a committee to review the complaint. The director then replies with the committee's findings. If the patron is still not satisfied, there may be a procedure for the complaint to be sent on to the board or a board committee. All of the steps should have a time frame included for response.