



Recognizing that the Clarence-Rockland Public Library Board has a fundamental responsibility for upholding the principles of, as well as advocating for, intellectual freedom, this policy ensures the rights of individuals to access information.

1. The Board adopts the **Canadian Library Association Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries**, approved by the CLA Executive Council ~ June 27, 1974; Amended November 17, 1983; November 18, 1985 and September 27, 2015 as well as the **UNESCO Public Library Manifesto** of 1994.
2. It is the responsibility of the Board, and those who work in the Library, to:
  - a. Ensure that all Library clients have the fundamental right to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity, and to express their thoughts publicly;
  - b. Guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity, including those which some elements of society may consider to be unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable;
  - c. Make available all of the Library's public facilities and services to all individuals and groups who need them, when operationally possible;
  - d. Resist all efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities, while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups;
3. The Board directs the Chief Executive Officer to ensure that the principles of intellectual freedom are integrated into all organizational policies, procedures and practices.

## Related Documents

**Canadian Library Association Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries**, 1974; Amended 2015 (**Appendix A**)

**UNESCO Public Library Manifesto**, 1994 (**Appendix B**)

## Revision History

| Document Owner | Issue/Revision Date | Reason for change |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| C. Rouse       | September 23, 2014  | Initial Approval  |
| S. Lavoie      | September 19, 2019  | Revision          |
| V. Portelance  | October 19, 2022    | New Format        |
| V. Portelance  | May 19, 2026        | Revision          |
|                | 2030                | Next Revision     |

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## Appendix A

### Canadian Library Association Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries

The Canadian Library Association recognizes and values the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-15.html> as the guarantor of the fundamental freedoms in Canada of conscience and religion; of thought, belief, opinion, and expression; of peaceful assembly; and of association.

The Canadian Library Association supports and promotes the universal principles of intellectual freedom as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>, which include the interlocking freedoms to hold opinions and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

In accordance with these principles, the Canadian Library Association affirms that all persons in Canada have a fundamental right, subject only to the Constitution and the law, to have access to the full range of knowledge, imagination, ideas, and opinion, and to express their thoughts publicly. Only the courts may abridge free expression rights in Canada.

The Canadian Library Association affirms further that libraries have a core responsibility to support, defend and promote the universal principles of intellectual freedom and privacy.

The Canadian Library Association holds that libraries are a key institution in Canada for rendering expressive content accessible and affordable to all. Libraries are essential gateways for all persons living in Canada to advance themselves through literacy, lifelong learning, social engagement, and cultural enrichment.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and facilitate access to constitutionally protected expressions of knowledge, imagination, ideas, and opinion, including those which some individuals and groups consider unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, in accordance with their mandates and professional values and standards, libraries provide, defend and promote equitable access to the widest possible variety of expressive content and resist calls for censorship and the adoption of systems that deny or restrict access to resources.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and foster free expression and the right to safe and welcoming places and conditions. To this end, libraries make available their public spaces and services to individuals and groups without discrimination.

Libraries have a core responsibility to safeguard and defend privacy in the individual's pursuit of expressive content. To this end, libraries protect the identities and activities of library users except when required by the courts to cede them.

Furthermore, in accordance with established library policies, procedures and due process, libraries resist efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups.

Library employees, volunteers and employers as well as library governing entities have a core responsibility to uphold the principles of intellectual freedom in the performance of their respective library roles.

**Approved by Executive Council ~ June 27, 1974 Amended November 17, 1983;  
November 18, 1985; and September 27, 2015**

## Appendix B

### UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994

Freedom, Prosperity and the Development of society and individuals are fundamental human values. They will only be attained through the ability of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to play an active role in society. Constructive participation and the development of democracy depend on satisfactory education as well as on free and unlimited access to knowledge, thought, culture and information.

The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.

This Manifesto proclaims UNESCO's belief in the public library as a living force for education, culture and information, and as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women.

UNESCO therefore encourages national and local governments to support and actively engage in the development of public libraries.

#### The Public Library

The Public Library is the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users.

The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. Specific services and materials must be provided for those who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospital or prison.

All age groups must find material relevant to their needs. Collections and services have to include all types of appropriate media and modern technologies as well as traditional materials. High quality and relevance to local needs and conditions are fundamental. Material must reflect current trends and the evolution of society, as well as the memory of human endeavour and imagination.

Collections and services should not be subject to any form of ideological, political or religious censorship, nor commercial pressure.

### Missions of the Public Library

The following key missions which relate to information, literacy, education and culture should be at the core of public library services:

1. Creating and strengthening reading habits in children at an early age;
2. Supporting both individual and self-conducted education as well as formal education at all levels;
3. Providing opportunities for personal creative development;
4. Stimulating the imagination and creativity of children and young people;
5. Promoting awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of the arts, scientific achievements and innovations;
6. Providing access to cultural expressions of all performing arts;
7. Fostering inter-cultural dialogue and favouring cultural diversity;
8. Supporting the oral tradition;
9. Ensuring access for citizens to all sorts of community information;
10. Providing adequate information services to local enterprises, associations and interest groups;
11. Facilitating the development of information and computer literacy skills;
12. Supporting and participating in literacy activities and programmes for all age groups, and initiating such activities if necessary.

### Funding, legislation and networks

The Public Library shall in principle be free of charge. The public library is the responsibility of local and national authorities. It must be supported by specific legislation and financed by national and local governments. It has to be an essential component of any long-term strategy for culture, information provision, literacy and education.

To ensure nationwide library coordination and cooperation, legislation and strategic plans must also define and promote a national library network based on agreed standards of service.

The public network must be designed in relation to national, regional, research and specific libraries as well as libraries in schools, colleges and universities.

### Operation and management

A clear policy must be formulated, defining objectives, priorities and services in relation to the local community needs. The public library has to be organized effectively and professional standards of operation must be maintained.

Cooperation with relevant partners - for example, user groups and other professionals at local, regional, national as well as international level - has to be ensured.

Services have to be physically accessible to all members of the community. This requires well situated library buildings, good reading and study facilities, as well as relevant technologies and sufficient opening hours convenient to the users. It equally implies outreach services for those unable to visit the library.

The library services must be adapted to the different needs of communities in rural and urban areas.

The librarian is an active intermediary between users and resources. Professional and continuing education of the librarian is indispensable to ensure adequate services.

Outreach and user education programmes have to be provided to help users benefit from all the resources.

#### Implementing the Manifesto

Decision makers at national and local levels and the library community at large, around the world, are hereby urged to implement the principles expressed in this Manifesto.