

OHIO LIBRARY COUNCIL

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM POLICY STATEMENT

I. PREAMBLE

The Ohio Library Council is concerned with the freedom of all members of a democratic society to examine what they will in the course of making the social, educational, and political judgments upon which that society is based. Libraries provide to a free society the defense necessary against pressures toward conformity. Libraries enrich their communities through provision of recreational reading, listening, and viewing materials for a wide variety of tastes and interests. Libraries provide students and scholars with the records concerning current, and perhaps controversial, issues. Library employees should deem their freedom, and that of libraries and their users, of the utmost importance to the continued existence of democracy.

II. AUTHORITY

The Board of Directors of the Ohio Library Council endorses the "Library Bill of Rights," "Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights," and the "Freedom to Read Statement", as delineated in the latest edition of the *Intellectual Freedom Manual*, published by the American Library Association*, and ALA's "Libraries: An American Value" statement.

The Board of Directors empowers the Intellectual Freedom Committee to investigate and report to the Chairperson of the Council and the Board of Directors about problems arising in the areas of concern described below. Such investigations and reports shall follow the "Procedures for Handling Reported Violations of Intellectual Freedom" adopted by the Intellectual Freedom Committee and the OLC Board of Directors.

Reports to the Board will normally be given at regularly scheduled meetings, but the Chairperson, or an authorized deputy, shall call special meetings, as authorized under Article 3, Section 3.07, of the Code of Regulations of the Ohio Library Council, in circumstances which necessitate immediate action.

* Available from ALA Books, American Library Association, 50 East Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; -800-545-2433

III. AREAS OF CONCERN

- A. The Council is concerned with actual or proposed restrictions on library materials or on the selection judgments, order procedures, or administrative practices of library employees, originating with individuals, voluntary committees, or administrative and governmental authorities.
- B. The Council believes that every library, in order to strengthen its own selection process and to provide an objective basis for evaluation of that process, should develop an official statement of policy for the selection of library materials based on the Library Bill of Rights. In making decisions about how to offer access to information, each library should consider its mission, goals, objectives, cooperative agreements, and the needs of the entire community it serves.
- C. The Council is concerned about legislation or policies at the state, local, or school district level which might place library collections in jeopardy or which might restrict, prejudice, or otherwise interfere with selection, acquisition, or other professional activities of library employees. At the same time, the Council is supportive of legislation or policies at the state, local, or school district level which would strengthen the position of libraries and other media of communication as instruments of knowledge and culture in a free society.
- D. The Council believes that its members should be free to exercise their constitutional rights as individuals to express their views in public on any subject. Members should not be constrained by the possibility that expression of unpopular views may result in loss of employment. Members should, however, make a clear distinction between their personal views and the policies of the library or institution by which they are employed.
- E. The Council believes that each library user has a right to privacy with regard to information sought or received and materials consulted, borrowed, or acquired.
- F. The Council believes in full and free access to the Internet in libraries and opposes all attempts by federal and state governments, or their agencies, to impose filtering on libraries.

Adopted by the OLC Board of Directors, January 3, 1997

Modified and Revised, November 4, 1999

Modified and Revised, December 7, 2001

Modified and Revised, January 12, 2005

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING REPORTED VIOLATIONS OF INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

If there is an alleged violation of intellectual freedom involving an institution or library employee in Ohio, the Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) will adhere to the following procedures:

1. Any person may report an alleged violation of intellectual freedom by telephoning the OLC Executive Office staff. The Executive Office staff will be responsible for immediately notifying the IFC Chairperson.
2. The IFC Chairperson should contact immediately the affected institution or individual, if the reporting individual is not an official representative of an affected institution or individual, to ascertain whether the assistance of the Committee is needed/requested.
3. If assistance is requested, the IFC Chairperson will send an Intellectual Freedom Report Form to the institution or individual affected. The form should be completed and returned to the IFC Chairperson and shall become part of the Committee's file. The IFC Chairperson will maintain a confidential file of the report for the duration of the case. Upon settlement of the case, the file will be transferred to the OLC Executive Office for appropriate disposition. The provision of assistance by the Committee should not be contingent upon the return of a completed form.
4. Once the assistance has been requested, the IFC Chairperson should immediately inform the following of the request:
 - IFC members
 - American Library Association Office for Intellectual Freedom
 - Executive Director of OLC, who shall immediately inform the OLC President
5. The IFC Chairperson, or designee, will review the alleged violation of intellectual freedom by contacting the involved parties to determine the facts.
6. The IFC Chairperson will draft a statement of position in light of the facts and in relation to the stated Intellectual Freedom policy of the OLC; this statement shall include recommendation for appropriate action by OLC.
7. The IFC Chairperson will present the draft statement to the OLC President and Board of Directors. The IFC Chairperson will be responsible for providing any assistance necessary to the OLC Chair and Board to facilitate their deliberations.
8. The Board will issue the official position statement of the OLC. The IFC will follow the guidelines set forth in the statement while providing assistance to the affected institution or individual.
9. If, in the judgment of the IFC Chairperson, a violation of intellectual freedom requires immediate action on the part of the Committee, he/she may contact the OLC President to determine what actions may be taken before the regular procedures are followed.
10. In extreme cases, where the IFC and the Board of Directors find that an intrusion on intellectual freedom exists and cannot be resolved by conciliatory procedures, the Directors may authorize one or more of the following actions:

- a) in cases of censorship of library material(s), publicize this fact in OLC publications and local media;
- b) in cases involving dismissal or threats of dismissal:
 - i. provide moral support to the library employee to resist.
 - ii. provide factual support in documented evidence.
 - iii. publicize this fact in OLC publications and local media.
 - iv. assist in seeking monetary support for maintenance and legal aid. If monetary support is required for maintenance and legal aid, the Committee shall recommend and the Board shall promptly determine whether such aid can best be furnished by the OLC or by such groups as the Freedom to Read Foundation, the American Library Association, the American Association of University Professors, the American Civil Liberties Union, or the National Education Association Legal Fund, and shall take all possible steps to ensure that prompt and adequate assistance is made available.