



ALA's Core Values of Librarianship

The foundation of modern librarianship rests on an essential set of core values that define, inform, and guide our professional practice. These values reflect the history and ongoing development of the profession and have been advanced, expanded, and refined by numerous policy statements of the American Library Association. Among these are: access, confidentiality/privacy, democracy, diversity, education and lifelong learning, intellectual freedom, preservation, the public good, professionalism, service, social responsibility, and sustainability.

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to express our values more eloquently than ALA already has in the [Freedom to Read statement](#), the [Library Bill of Rights](#), the [ALA Mission Statement](#), [Libraries: An American Value](#), and other documents. These policies have been carefully thought out, articulated, debated, and approved by the [ALA Council](#). They are interpreted, revised or expanded when necessary. Over time, the values embodied in these policies have been embraced by the majority of librarians as the foundations of their practice. These selections are direct quotes from the [ALA Policy Manual](#).

Access

All information resources that are provided directly or indirectly by the library, regardless of technology, format, or methods of delivery, should be readily, equally, and equitably accessible to all library users. [ALA Policy Manual B.2.1.14 Economic Barriers to Information Access](#)

Confidentiality/Privacy

Protecting user privacy and confidentiality is necessary for intellectual freedom and fundamental to the ethics and practice of librarianship. [ALA Policy Manual B.2.1.17 Privacy](#)

Democracy

A democracy presupposes an informed citizenry. The First Amendment mandates the right of all persons to free expression, and the corollary right to receive the constitutionally protected expression of others. The publicly supported library provides free and equal access to information for all people of the community the library serves. [Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights](#), [Economic Barriers to Information Access](#)

Diversity

We value our nation's diversity and strive to reflect that diversity by providing a full spectrum of resources and services to the communities we serve. [ALA Policy Manual B.3 Diversity, Libraries: An American Value](#)

Education and Lifelong Learning

ALA promotes the creation, maintenance, and enhancement of a learning society, encouraging its members to work with educators, government officials, and organizations in coalitions to initiate and support comprehensive efforts to ensure that school, public, academic, and special libraries in every community cooperate to provide lifelong learning services to all. [ALA Policy Manual A.1.1 Introduction](#)

Intellectual Freedom

We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources. [ALA Policy Manual B.2 Intellectual Freedom, ALA Code of Ethics, Article II](#)

The Public Good

ALA reaffirms the following fundamental values of libraries in the context of discussing outsourcing and privatization of library services. These values include that libraries are an essential public good and are fundamental institutions in democratic societies. [1998-99 CD#24.1, Motion #1](#)

Preservation

The Association supports the preservation of information published in all media and formats. The association affirms that the preservation of information resources is central to libraries and librarianship. [ALA Policy Manual B.8.3. Preservation, Preservation Policy](#)

Professionalism

The American Library Association supports the provision of library services by professionally qualified personnel who have been educated in graduate programs within institutions of higher education. It is of vital importance that there be professional education available to meet the social needs and goals of library services. [ALA Policy Manual B.7.1 Graduate Programs in Library and Information Studies](#)

Service

We provide the highest level of service to all library users. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession. [ALA Code of Ethics](#)

Social Responsibility

ALA recognizes its broad social responsibilities. The broad social responsibilities of the American Library Association are defined in terms of the contribution that librarianship can make in ameliorating or solving the critical problems of society; support for efforts to help inform and educate the people of the United States on these problems and to encourage them to examine the many views on and the facts regarding each problem; and the willingness of ALA to take a position on current critical issues with the relationship to libraries and library service set forth in the position statement. [ALA Policy Manual A.1.1 Mission Priority Areas, Goals](#)

Sustainability

ALA is supporting the library community by showing its commitment to assisting in the development of sustainable libraries with the addition of sustainability as a core value of librarianship. This consists of practices that are environmentally sound, economically feasible and socially equitable. Libraries play an important and unique role in promoting community awareness about resilience, climate change and a sustainable future. They are also leading by example by taking steps to reduce their environmental footprint. [ALA Policy Manual A.1.4 Core Organizational Values](#)

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