

<b>BRD-003 POS</b>	<b>INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM</b>
<b>Applicability:</b>	<b>Customers and Employees</b>

**Purpose:**

To affirm the Ottawa Public Library's commitment to, and support of, intellectual freedom, as embodied in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ottawa Public Library values, and as expressed by the Canadian Library Association and the Ontario Library Association in their statements on intellectual freedom.

**Statement:**

The Ottawa Public Library (OPL) supports intellectual curiosity and enquiry, and supports intellectual freedom as the prerequisite for an informed, democratic society as part of its core values as expressed in the OPL *Strategic Directions and Priorities*. The Ottawa Public Library defends "the right of library users to freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression as the basis of a democratic society". (Approved as per Board Motion 078-07, October 15, 2007).

**1. Canadian Library Association Statement on Intellectual Freedom.<sup>1</sup>**

All persons in Canada have the fundamental right, as embodied in the nation's Bill of Rights and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity, and to express their thoughts publicly. This right to intellectual freedom, under the law, is essential to the health and the development of Canadian society.

Libraries have a basic responsibility for the development and maintenance of intellectual freedom.

It is the responsibility of libraries to 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. To this end, libraries shall acquire and make available the widest variety of materials.

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Library Association *Statement on Intellectual Freedom*, 1985

It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee the right of free expression by making available all the library's public facilities and services to all individuals and groups who need them.

Libraries should resist all efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups.

Both employees and employers in libraries have a duty, in addition to their institutional responsibilities, to uphold these principles.

## **2. Ontario Library Association Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual.<sup>2</sup>**

In affirming its commitment to the fundamental rights of intellectual freedom, the freedom to read and freedom of the press, as embodied in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Library Association declares its acceptance of the following propositions:

1. That the provision of library service to the public is based upon the right of the citizen, under the protection of the law, to judge individually on questions of politics, religion and morality.
2. That intellectual freedom requires freedom to examine other ideas and other interpretations of life than those currently approved by the local community or by society in general, and including those ideas and interpretations, which may be unconventional or unpopular.
3. That freedom of expression includes freedom for a creator to depict what is ugly, shocking and unedifying in life.
4. That free traffic in ideas and opinions is essential to the health and growth of a free society and that the freedom to read, listen and view is fundamental to such free traffic.

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<sup>2</sup> Ontario Library Association *Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual*, 1998

5. That it is the responsibility of libraries to maintain the right of intellectual freedom and to implement it consistently in the selection of books, periodicals, films, recordings, other materials, and in the provision of access to electronic sources of information including access to the Internet.
6. That it is therefore part of the library's service to its public to resist any attempt by any individual or group within the community it services to abrogate or curtail access to information, the freedom to read, view and listen by demanding the removal of, or restrictions to library information sources in any format.
7. That it is equally part of the library's responsibility to its public to ensure that its selection of material is not unduly influenced by the personal opinions of the selectors, but determined by the application of generally accepted standards of accuracy, style and presentation.

### **Responsibilities:**

#### **City Librarian, Management, and other representatives of Ottawa Public Library:**

- To guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity.
- To guarantee the right of free expression by making available the library's public facilities and services to all individuals and groups who need them.
- To uphold the principles of Intellectual Freedom.
- To acquire and make available the widest variety of materials and information.
- To resist attempts by any individual or group within the community to abrogate or curtail access to information.