

TITLE: Intellectual Freedom		POLICY: B-2012	
COMMITTEE:	Governance & Nomination	PASSED:	April 26, 2016
		AMENDED:	May 9, 2023
TOPIC:	Foundation of Service	REVIEW PERIOD:	Every 3 years

Intellectual Freedom is the core of Edmonton Public Library’s mission to preserve and promote universal access to a broad range of human knowledge, experience, information, and ideas in a welcoming and supportive environment through our collections, programs, and spaces. EPL actively supports and facilitates the free exchange of information and ideas, respecting the individual’s rights for privacy and choice.

EPL believes every individual has the right to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. This right is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948 and in the Canadian Federation of Library Associations’ Statement on Intellectual Freedom which EPL endorses (as replicated below).

In facilitating and providing access to diverse collections that represent a broad range of viewpoints, EPL recognizes this will include ideas and perspectives that some may consider controversial, unpopular, offensive, or wrong. The availability of items in EPL collections does not indicate endorsement by the Library.

EPL provides public spaces where people are free to share ideas, including those that are challenging and controversial, that encourage expression of diverse thoughts, ideas, and opinions, without judgement, provided they do not violate EPL policies or contravene legislation.

EPL respects the right of individuals to voice their objections about EPL collections, spaces, and programs, and provides opportunities for customers to do so.



Statement on Intellectual Freedom

Approved by Executive Council ~ June 27, 1974;

Amended November 17, 1983; November 18, 1985; and September 27, 2015

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations recognizes and values the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#) 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 Federation of Library Associations 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 Federation of Library Associations 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 Federation of Library Associations affirms further that libraries have a core responsibility to support, defend and promote the universal principles of intellectual freedom and privacy.

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations 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.

Children's Use of Library Services

Responsibility for any restrictions on children's choice and/or use of library resources or use of the library rests with parents and/or guardians. Children are those individuals under the age of 18 years. No materials are excluded from selection because they may come into the possession of a child.

Related Board Policies

- [Public Internet Access Policy, B-2010](#)
- [Alberta Human Rights Act](#)
- [Collection Development Policy, B-2003](#)
- [Customer's Complaints About Library Materials – A-1003](#)
- [Customer's Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials Form](#)
- [Customer Request to Reconsider Library Programs Policy - A-1073](#)
- [Customer Request to Reconsider Library Programs Form](#)
- [Diversity and Inclusion policy, B-2031](#)
- [Meeting Room Policy, B-2006](#)