

# Library Responses to Neutrality Issues

Compiled by System Staff and the Division for Libraries and Technology (DPI)

*The resources listed here should not be interpreted as formal recommendations from the agency.*

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## Foundational Statements

### The American Library Association's [Bill of Rights](#)

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

#### Interpretations of the Bill of Rights

- **Diverse Collections:** Collection development should reflect the philosophy inherent in Article I of the *Library Bill of Rights*: "Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation." A diverse collection should contain content by and about a wide array of people and cultures to authentically reflect a variety of ideas, information, stories, and experiences. Amended 2019
- **Education and Information Literacy:** Libraries and library workers foster education and lifelong learning by promoting free expression and facilitating the exchange of ideas among users. Libraries use resources, programming, and services to strengthen access to information and thus build a foundation of intellectual freedom. In their roles as educators, library workers create an environment that nurtures intellectual freedom in all library resources and services. Amended 2019
- **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion:** Libraries are essential to democracy and self-government, to personal development and social progress, and to every individual's inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. To that end, libraries and library workers should embrace equity, diversity, and inclusion in everything that they do. Adopted 2017

# The Department of Public Instruction's [Inclusive Services Statement](#)

The Division of Libraries and Technology interprets [Wis. Stat. sec. 43.24\(2\)\(k\)](#) "Promotion and facilitation of library service to users with special needs" to encompass inclusive services. Inclusive library services are holistic, spanning library policies, collections, space, and services. Inclusive services reflect equity and accessibility for all members of the community.

"Wisconsin public libraries are places where everyone should be safe, welcomed, and respected" is a core value of the [Inclusive Services Statement](#), an interpretation of [Wis. Stat. sec. 43.24\(2\)\(k\)](#).

"When libraries honor the full diversity of their communities, communities thrive. Fundamentally, inclusive library services should be developed locally with and for all community members...Our common goal is to improve life and learning opportunities for all Wisconsin residents."

[Safe, Welcome, and Respected: Social Injustice in Our Libraries and Communities](#) (Wisconsin Libraries for Everyone blog post June 15, 2020)

## Elevator Speech

### Template

#### Key Points

- 1) Speak to core value of libraries
- 2) Speak to specific concerns
- 3) Speak to general aspect of libraries, i.e. not just this library
- 4) Be prepared to end the conversation

The [insert library name] is a place for information and ideas. Our [choose topic of concern, e.g. social media, services, programs, displays, partnerships] reflect community inclusion, whether [controversial topic] or [non-controversial topic]. Free expression and free exchange of ideas is the foundation of public libraries everywhere.

The \_\_\_\_\_ is a place for information and ideas. The \_\_\_\_\_ is for everyone. Our \_\_\_\_\_ reflect community inclusion, whether \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_. Free expression and free exchange of ideas is the foundation of public libraries everywhere.

\*if needed\* Thanks for sharing your concern, I'll be sure to take this to the next leadership meeting.

### Samples

1. The Cranberry Public Library is a place for information and ideas. The Cranberry Public Library is for everyone. Our displays reflect community inclusion, whether Black Lives Matter or Breast Cancer Awareness. Free expression and free exchange of ideas is the foundation of public libraries everywhere.

2. The Tall Oak Public Library is a place for information and ideas. The Tall Oak Public Library is for everyone. Our programs reflect community inclusion, whether senior center outreach or create a protest sign. Free expression and free exchange of ideas is the foundation of public libraries everywhere.
3. The Badger Hills Public Library is a place for information and ideas. The Badger Hills Public Library is for everyone. Our social media reflects community inclusion, whether memes about wearing face masks or inspirational quotes. Free expression and free exchange of ideas is the foundation of public libraries everywhere.