

## Censorship

“Censorship is the intentional suppression or restriction of ideas by the review of publications, plays, recordings, electronic formats or other media.”

### *HANDBOOK ON INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM*

*Michigan Library Association*

*Revised Edition, 2003*

The Michigan Library Association opposes censorship, which is an impediment to individual liberties and the free flow of ideas. We defend access to material of any type regardless of its format. We support the privacy protection positions adopted by the American Library Association.

- The Library Bill of Rights
- The Librarian’s Code of Ethics

Further, the Michigan Library Association upholds the individual intellectual freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States.

The role of the MLA Intellectual Freedom Committee is to educate all MLA members to the indispensable value of intellectual freedom, to offer supportive assistance to libraries facing censorship challenges, and to track the frequency and types of challenges.

Libraries should prepare for censorship challenges by:

- Maintaining a materials selection policy.
- Adopting policies – in concurrence with local, state and federal statutes – that cover the use of online resources.
- Having a clearly defined policy for handling complaints – including a Request for Reconsideration form.
- Constantly providing staff and governing bodies with in-service training.
- Maintaining communication with civic and service organizations within the community.
- Conducting a vigorous public information campaign on behalf of intellectual freedom.
- Being familiar with local, state and federal laws covering intellectual freedom.

In the case of censorship, the library profession believes that the best defense is a good offense. Adopt the necessary policies and procedures, communicate with the community, train staff and governing bodies, and campaign effectively on the value of intellectual freedom.

While opposing censorship, MLA believes that libraries have a responsibility to prepare the proper framework for the development and use of their collections.

Michigan Library Association  
Intellectual Freedom Committee  
April 2004