

(On Tuesday, June 26, 2012, the ALA Council referred the following resolution to the Council Intellectual Freedom Committee)

Resolution on Homelessness and Libraries

- Whereas "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." (*Economic Barriers to Information Access: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights*, Adopted June 30, 1993, by the ALA Council);
- Whereas "In the preamble to its Library Bill of Rights, the American Library Association affirms that *all* libraries are forums for information and ideas. This concept of *forum* and its accompanying principle of *inclusiveness* pervade all six Articles of the *Library Bill of Rights*." (*Access to Library Resources and Services Regardless of Sex, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, or Sexual Orientation: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights*, Adopted June 30, 1993, by the ALA Council; last amended July 2, 2008);
- Whereas Article V of the *Library Bill of Rights* states that "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views;"
- Whereas "Libraries are charged with the mission of providing services and developing resources to meet the diverse information needs and interests of the communities they serve. Services, materials, and facilities that fulfill the needs and interests of library users at different stages in their personal development are a necessary part of library resources. The needs and interests of each library user, and resources appropriate to meet those needs and interests, must be determined on an individual basis." (Free Access to Libraries for Minors: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*, Adopted June 30, 1972, by the ALA Council; last amended July 2, 2008);
- Whereas "The 'right to use a library' encompasses all the resources the library offers, including the right to attend library-initiated programs. Libraries do not deny or abridge access to library resources, including library-initiated programs, based on an individual's economic background or ability to pay." (*Library-Initiated Programs as a Resource: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights*, Adopted January 27, 1982, by the ALA Council; last amended July 12, 2000);
- Whereas "All library policies, regulations, and procedures should be carefully examined to determine if they may result in denying, restricting or creating barriers to access" (*Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of Policies, Regulations and Procedures Affecting Access to Library Materials, Services and Facilities*, Adopted by the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee June 28, 1994; revised January 19, 2005).;
- Whereas "Librarians and governing bodies should look for alternative models and methods of library administration that minimize distinctions among users based on their economic status or financial condition." (*Economic Barriers to Information Access: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights*, Adopted June 30, 1993, by the ALA Council);
- Whereas "The publicly supported library provides free and equal access to information for all people of the community t he library serves. While the roles, goals and objectives of publicly supported libraries may differ, they share this common mission." (*Economic Barriers to Information Access: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights*, Adopted June 30, 1993, by the ALA Council); and,
- Whereas the ALA policy 61.1 states that "The American Library Association promotes equal access to information for all persons, and recognizes the urgent need to respond to the increasing number of poor children, adults, and families in America";
- Whereas this policy further states "it is crucial that libraries recognize their role in enabling poor people to participate fully in a democratic society, by utilizing a wide variety of available resources and strategies;" and by "Promoting the removal of all barriers to library and information services;"
- Whereas people experiencing homelessness have no permanent address;

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Whereas many public libraries require a permanent address to obtain a library card; and

Whereas this requirement can serve as a barrier to free access to library materials and services, including the Internet:
now, therefore, be it;

Resolved that the American Library Association (ALA), shall amend Article V of the Library Bill of Rights to include housing status, so that it now reads: "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, views or housing status."

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E-Form

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Submitted by user:

Submitted values are:

Date: 06/24/2012

Resolution author(s): Julie Ann Winkelstein

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1. Title of Resolution: Resolution on Homelessness and Libraries

2. ALA Units and/or Committees Consulted (if any): IFRT, IFC

3. Endorsements by ALA Units and/or Committees (if any): SRRT

4. Fiscal implications: None

5. List all parties to whom resolution should be sent:

6. Impact on ALA Policies and Positions: This resolution supports ALA's core value of equal access for all.

6a) ALA general policy or viewpoint:

6b) Change in existing policy: This resolution amends Article V of the Library Bill of Rights, which currently states: "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views."

6c) New policy: This resolution changes Article V of the Library Bill of Rights so that it states: "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, views or housing status."

6d) Policy conflicts:

7. Initiating Committee or Unit (if any): SRRT

8. Pertinent Background Information: Economic Barriers to Information Access: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, Adopted June 30, 1993, by the ALA Council; Access to Library Resources and Services Regardless of Sex, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, or Sexual Orientation: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, Adopted June 30, 1993, by the ALA Council - last amended July 2, 2008; Free Access to Libraries for Minors: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, Adopted June 30, 1972, by the ALA Council - last amended July 2, 2008; Library-Initiated Programs as a Resource: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, Adopted January 27, 1982, by the ALA Council - last amended July 12, 2000; Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of Policies, Regulations and Procedures Affecting Access to Library Materials, Services and Facilities, Adopted by the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee June 28, 1994 - revised January 19, 2005.

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