

Fort Dodge Public Library

Expression of Concern

Purpose

Fort Dodge Public Library strives to provide all patrons with fair and equal access to library materials, resources, and programs. The Library's role is to provide opportunities that will allow individuals to freely examine subjects and make their own decisions. The choice of library materials or resources by users is an individual matter. While patrons may reject materials, resources, or programs for themselves, they may not restrict the freedom of access to these things by others.

The Board of Trustees and Library Director recognize that some patrons may take issue with the inclusion of specific items, programs, or practices and may wish to express their concerns. Management team members are available to discuss concerns and identify alternate materials that may better meet the needs of the concerned individual.

Policy

FDPL hopes to resolve these matters in a face-to-face discussion but understands this may not always be possible. Formal concerns or complaints about library materials, resources, programs, or policies should be addressed with the Library Director. If the matter is not resolved through discussion with the Director, the individual will be offered an Expression of Concern form.

Any resident of Fort Dodge, Otho, Barnum, or rural Webster County may formally request that an item in the collection, library resource, program, or policy be reconsidered.

Please note that for a request to be considered by the Library Director and/or the Board of Trustees, the Expression of Concern form must be completed in full and items will not be removed from the shelves while under review.

If an expression of concern is rejected, the Library resource in question may not be submitted for review for the next two years. If there is another complaint about the same resource within that two-year window, the individual expressing the new concern will receive the original finding of the Board of Trustees.

This policy has been developed in concert with the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and its interpretations, as well as The Freedom to Read Statement, Freedom to View Statement, and ALA resources on Intellectual Freedom and Challenged Resources.

Adopted 03/26/2018; Reviewed 11/2021
Revised 04/22/2024

Procedure for Written Expression of Concern

Upon receipt of the completed form, the following procedures will be followed:

- The Director and appropriate library staff will reconsider the material, program, or resource identified on the Expression of Concern form. They will evaluate the reasons for selecting the resource, consult professional reviews when available, and review the information provided by the patron along with relevant library policies.
- The Library Director will decide whether to retain or withdraw the item and communicate in writing their decision to the patron who completed the Expression of Concern. The Director's response will include the procedure for appealing the decision.
- If the patron believes the Director's response is inadequate, a written appeal may be made to the Library Board of Trustees. The appeal will be considered at an open meeting of the Board, with comments welcomed from the concerned patron and other interested citizens. No decision on the appeal will be made at that Board meeting.
- The Board's decision to retain or withdraw the item will be made at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees and will be considered final. Their decision will be communicated in writing to the patron who originally submitted the Expression of Concern form.
- Materials deemed appropriate for the collection by the Board of Trustees will not be removed unless by court order.