**SECTION 1. GENERAL INFORMATION**

**1.A. Mission**

We empower ideas.

**1.B. Values**

*Open Access:*

The Library System values free, open, unrestricted access to its collections and services. We are committed to connecting our customers to the ideas, information and materials they wish to explore in a friendly, nonjudgmental manner. We strive to offer materials, programs and services that represent the needs of our diverse population.

*Customer Focus:*

The Library System values all customers and is responsive to their service needs. The customer’s opinion and input is welcomed in all initiatives and undertakings. We consider the impact on the customer in all decisions.

*Excellence:*

The Library System values excellence, individually and collectively. We offer quality service to all customers by displaying a positive attitude, valuing the diversity of people and perspectives, and expecting integrity and competence in our personal and professional actions. We strive to earn the trust and confidence of all customers.

*Growth and Innovation:*

The Library System values continuous learning and innovation in the pursuit of excellence. We respond to present situations and anticipate future needs.

*Good Stewardship:*

The Library System values responsible stewardship of all the resources with which we have been entrusted. We are accountable for ensuring the proper use of public funds. We take seriously our responsibility to maximize the efficiency of staff time and talent making the best use of all our resources in the delivery of quality library service.

**1.C. Vision**
ECARLS will be the premiere, first-choice learning and cultural institution within the region, serving a diverse people with exceptional customer service, anticipation of informational needs, provision of equitable library services in inviting facilities, and delivering second-to-none recreational and learning experiences that will make us a dynamic force in our communities.

**1.D. Library System History**

ECARLS was created in 1982 by the Quorum Courts of Cross and Woodruff Counties to provide regional library services and to foster the growth of libraries within the region. The county libraries were established under Act 244 of the Acts of Arkansas of 1927. The Woodruff County Library was reorganized in compliance with Arkansas Act 742, Ordinance # 19-A, April 17, 1978. The Cross County Library was reorganized on February 20, 1978, Ordinance # 78-5. Act 244 of the 1927 Arkansas Legislature requires that county libraries, such as the Cross County Library and Woodruff County Library, be located in the county seat of their respective county. It does not prohibit county libraries from establishing branches in municipalities other than the county seat with additional assistance from those municipalities.

Mrs. Laura Adele "Lolly" Ledbetter Shaver, the Cross County Librarian was selected as the first Executive Director/Regional Librarian. Subsequent Regional Librarians have been Caprisha Page (2005-2009), Holly Mercer (2009-2013) and John Paul Myrick (2013-present)

Under Shaver’s visionary direction, the regional library began automating its circulation and cataloging systems in the 1980’s and merged the fiscal operations of the two county libraries. In the 1990’s, Internet access and public access computers were offered with the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the State of Arkansas Library Commission.

With the support of the Library Commission, later renamed the Arkansas State Library, ECARLS libraries began offering area residents access to information databases through the Arkansas Traveler project, and through its own purchases. In the 21st Century, access to e-content was initially offered through a pay as you go service, and, in 2014, expanded into membership in the Arkansas Book Cooperative (ABC), a joint project of ECARLS and the Arkansas State Library. Membership in ABC is offered to libraries statewide.

Recognizing the power of cooperation in bringing information services to a rural area, ECARLS remains a regional system. As such, ECARLS has and will actively consider additional counties or libraries joining the system. On many occasions, ECARLS has made overtures to officials in St. Francis County to assist with the provision of library services, and many St. Francis County residents use the library system paying out-of-area fees. The addition of St. Francis County as a part of the regional system was included in the system’s 2011-2016 Long Range Plan, and inviting Jackson County into the system has been considered.

The Cross County Library was first established in the back room of the Women's Progressive Club in 1945 and operated by volunteers. Anita Holt Thwing, Gloria Brown Borell, Alva McElroy Jackson and Joyce Harris Walker were some of the first volunteers when the library was in the Progressive Club building.

Later, it had a room upstairs in the Cross County Courthouse Extension Building, the buff brick house that sat south of the old courthouse.

In 1962 Southwestern Bell transferred ownership of their telephone building on Merriman Avenue to Cross County for use as a library. The facility was remodeled into a library with the support of the City of Wynne, Cross County Quorum Court, Cross County Bank, First National Bank, the Bank of Cherry Valley, Wynne Federal Savings and Loan, the 100 Club of Wynne and the Wynne Rotary Club. The remodeling was completed in 1966-67. The library originally had magazines and books that were exchanged. Mrs. A. O. Chastain was the first paid librarian.

On October 14, 2003 a 1.5 millage property tax was passed by voters to support the Cross County Library’s operations. Other financial support for the library includes state funding, endowments, interest, gifts and memorials.

In 1982 a back addition was constructed. In 1998-99, the east side addition was added, which sits approximately on part of where Barwick Ford Company was once located. Again, there were many donors to this project, and the Friends of the Cross County Library took out a loan to complete the construction.

The current Cross County Library building is 8,700 square feet. The library’s collection and services have expanded since the library was first opened. Today the library has a collection of over 30,000 print items, 2,000 videos, downloadable audio books, public access computers, wireless internet, electronic books for kids, an active Summer Reading Programs, online research tools, computer classes, numerous author visits and arts shows, and an active Friends of the Library Group. The library has a 24/7 web presence and the building provides services 49 hours per week. Over 10,000 registered library users use the library in a variety of ways. Some enjoy finding books by their favorite author, or discovering a new favorite author. Some enjoy using the computers to find information and connect with friends and family. Children enjoy the library’s children’s books and programs, especially the Summer Reading Program.

In the 21st Century the library began branching out of Wynne. Deposit stations were opened in Cherry Valley and Hickory Ridge and in 2012 and full-service branch library in the City of Parkin was developed in the Municipal Complex (the old Parkin High School). The library will continue to meet the community’s needs through a variety of services and programs. As the use of the library grows, future plans are to expand the building. The Wynne library will be the focal point of the downtown area and be utilized as a place for the community to gather and learn.

The exact date of the founding of the Woodruff County Library (at one time called the Woodruff County Memorial Library) is unknown. In 1966, two Augusta families (the Gregory’s) donated the current lot on Mulberry Street to be used as a library. 60% of the construction costs of the current building were covered with federal money. 40% of the required matching money for the building was raised by Woodruff County citizens. Individuals, families and local businesses donated toward the library building and furnishings.

In February of 1967, the required match for the federal funds was met. Bill Saxton was the architect and R.D. Fox was the contractor for the new Woodruff County Library. The building was opened and dedicated on April 28, 1968. The library was dedicated “to the services of the people of the area.”

A library millage was passed in the amount of 1 mill to support library operations. In 1993, a vote was passed to increase the tax to 2 mills. Branch library services were offered in Cotton Plant, and through a deposit station in the McCrory Municipal Building.

Due to lack of municipal support, the affiliation between the City of Cotton Plant, ECARLS and the Woodruff County Library Board was discontinued in 2012. It is hoped that the Cotton Plant Library will re-affiliate with Woodruff County in the future.

In 2012, planning began for the future growth of the Woodruff County Library. Property was purchased for future expansion of the county seat library in Augusta and in 2013 planning began for re-construction of the library roof and an eventual addition. These plans were tied to the Board’s desire to expand library services in McCrory with a full-service branch library and the re-affiliation of the Cotton Plant Library with the regional system in the marketing document *“Woodruff 21: Libraries for the County’s Future.”* The plan recognizes that libraries are an integral part of economic and community development in Woodruff County.

**1.E. Previous Policies, Amendments, Administrative Memoranda**

1.E.1. Upon adoption, this manual shall supersede and/or nullify any policies in place prior the date of its adoption.

1.E.2. Amendments to this policy manual may be made at any time by the Board of Trustees.

1.E.3. The Executive Director/Regional Librarian may issue Administrative Memoranda when specific, policy-type guidance is needed by library staff or for operation of the libraries. These memoranda shall have the force of policy until such time as the Board may review the situation and adopt policies as necessary.

**SECTION 2. GENERAL CIRCULATION AND PUBLIC SERVICE POLICIES**

**2.A General Usage of the Library**

2.A.1. The Library will serve all residents of the region. Service will not be denied or abridged because of religious, racial, social, economic, or political status. Persons residing outside of the geographical area but owning property, working within the region or attending educational institution in the area shall be considered residents. Proper documentation (i.e. school or work i.d.) may be required for persons residing outside the area seeking “resident” status.

2.A.2. The use of the library or its services shall be limited when excessive demands of groups or individuals tend to curtail services to the general public. Such demands include, but not limited to, those made by students, puzzle contestants, and others whose demand for staff time, available materials, or space would prohibit attention and service to other individuals or groups.

2.A.3. The use of the library or its services may be denied for due cause. Such cause may be failure to return books or to pay penalties, destruction of library property, disturbance of other patrons, or any other objectionable conduct on library premises. The Regional Librarian will make such determinations, which may be appealed to the appropriate county Library Board.

2.A.4. Residents of the region will be issued a library card at no charge. Any card which is lost or stolen must be reported immediately. There will be a $2 replacement charge for lost or stolen library cards. The card must be presented when books are checked out. Non-residents who wish to use the library may obtain a non-resident card for an annual fee of $25.00.

2.A.5. Borrowers/Membership cards will be issued in three categories:

CHILD: Persons up to the age of 16. Cards will be provided as long as a responsible party (parent or guardian) agrees to be responsible for any and all items borrowed on the card. Holders of the child’s card may borrow up to 10 items not including audiovisual materials at any given time unless extenuating circumstances are determined by the library location manager to exist.

ADULT: Person of the age of 16 and older. These persons may borrow up to 20 items at any given time unless extenuating circumstances are determined by the library location manager to exist.

TEACHER: Educators in any school or college within the region may receive a Teacher card for use in supporting their curriculum. Proof of employment in a teaching position will be required. Persons holding the Teacher’s card may borrow 25 items for classroom use. The loan period for these items shall be one month.

2.A.6. Up to four audio-visual items per card may be checked out at one time, notwithstanding Teacher cards. These items are to be included in the borrowing limits of each card type. Any patrons checking out videos or computer software must have a library card in good standing. Patrons checking out audiovisual items shall hold an adult or teacher card.

2.A.7. Replacement costs for damaged or lost library materials will be the responsibility of the borrower or, in the case of a child, the signing responsible party.

2.A.8. Audio-visual materials will check out for one (1)-week. All other library materials will check out for two (2)-weeks. Certain items may be designated “Reference”, “Arkansas” or other special collection and will not circulate and will remain in the library except at the discretion of the library location manager.

2.A.9. Any item circulating for two weeks may be “renewed” or “rechecked” for an additional two (2)-week period. Such materials may be renewed in additional two (2) week increments at the discretion of the library location manager if it is determined that extenuating circumstances exist. Generally, rechecks will be allowed if there is no demand for those materials.

**2.B Use of Computer Equipment/Internet Access/Social Media.**

2.B.1. To ensure that the regional libraries operate in accordance with the region’s mission, value, and vision, the East Central Arkansas Regional Library System (ECARLS) Board of Trustees has established this policy to maintain an atmosphere that promotes library services, protects library resources and fosters safety for all patrons and library staff.

The East Central Arkansas Regional Library System offers public access to computers. These computers may be used for Internet access, word processing, database searching, and children's applications. Time is limited to two (2) hours a day, with the first session being thirty (30) minutes. Patrons may not be able to use all their time in one session. Patrons will not be granted additional time if reservations for computers are present.

Logging in or starting any computer application or software on the Library's computers signifies patron agreement to abide by the East Central Arkansas Regional Library System Computer Use Policy. Failure to comply with this policy will result in a loss of one or more library privileges according the Library Use/Rules Policy or elsewhere in library policy.

ECARLS staff reserves the right to end an Internet session if the Internet search is causing a disruption of library services, if the behavior of the patron becomes inappropriate for a library setting, or if the content being searched is inappropriate for public display.

The Library Board has no control over sources available on the Internet and does not guarantee their authenticity.

In accordance with Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) content filters are installed and active at all public access computers in the library. As with other areas of the public library collection, the responsibility for minors when accessing the Internet rests with their parents or legal guardians.

While other activities may not be allowed as well, the following activities are expressly prohibited while using the equipment in the library:

* Accessing obscene material.
* Viewing child pornography.
* Accessing material that is "harmful to minors".
* Sending, displaying or receiving obscene, harassing, or libelous messages, files or images or any other activity defined as harmful to minors in Arkansas Code 5-68-501.
* Engaging in any activity which is obscene or deliberately and maliciously offensive, libelous, or slanderous.
* Using Library computers to gain access to computers or computer systems for which they are not authorized.
* Deliberately attempting to damage computer equipment or software.
* Deliberately attempting to alter software configurations.
* Using any Library computer for illegal or criminal purposes.
* Violating copyright laws or software licensing agreements.
* Installing or using any software not currently installed and available for use on the computer, including music CDs and CD-ROMs.
* Intentionally using techniques or software which harass other users or infiltrate a computer or computing system and/or damage or alter the software components of a computer or computing system
* Deliberately attempting to cause degradation of system performance or unnecessarily impeding the computing activities of others.

As stated elsewhere in the East Central Arkansas Regional Library System policies, the use of the library and/or its services must be appropriate. Library visitors may be denied use of library services for due cause such as overdue material and behavior violations. Violations of policy could also result in the restriction and/or termination of Library privileges, including the use of Library computers and other equipment. Determinations regarding the revoking of privileges may be made by the library location manager. Such revocations may be appealed to the Executive Director and then to the County Library Board. The decision of the County Library Board shall be final.

Reasons that use of library public access computers may be denied include, but are not limited to:

* Failure to return books, pay penalties or pay for lost/damaged materials, or any other failure of library usage policies.
* Destruction of library property
* Disturbance of other patrons
* Using another person's library card to gain access to library computers. Patrons using someone else's library card number will be asked to discontinue his or her computer session and may be temporarily banned from using the Library's computer resources.
* Inappropriate noise level on computers. Headphones are to be used if available, and noise kept to an appropriate as deemed by library staff
* Removal of privacy screens or other equipment from the computers or computer monitor.

2.B.2. Rules for Wireless Internet Use

Wireless devices may automatically detect the Library's "Hot Spot". Certain passwords may be required to then access service.

When using the internet through the library’s wireless internet connections; patrons may not:

* Send, display or receive obscene, harassing, or libelous messages, files, or images.
* Engage in any activity that is obscene or deliberately and maliciously offensive, libelous, or slanderous.
* Using internet access to gain access to computers or computer systems for which they are not authorized.
* Use any library computer network line for illegal or criminal purposes.
* Violate copyright laws or software licensing agreements.
* Intentionally use techniques or software to harass other users or infiltrate, damage, or alter a computer or computing system.

2.B.3. Social Media/Social Software Policy

The Library System may offer blogs, community reviews, patron comments and other social software tools for educational, cultural, civic and recreational purposes. Library social software tools provide a limited (or designated) public forum to facilitate the sharing of ideas, opinions and information about library-related subjects and issues. Library social software is intended to create a welcoming and inviting online space where library users will find useful and entertaining information and can interact with library staff and other library users. Comments are moderated by library staff and the library reserves the right to remove comments that are unlawful or off topic. Violation of the Social Media Policy may result in warnings or exclusions according to the Library Behavior Rules.

*Definition of Social software*
Social software is defined as any web application, site or account offered by the library that facilitates the sharing of opinions and information about library related subjects and issues. Social software includes such formats as blogs, listservs, websites, social network pages or posts to community reviews and patron ratings of library materials.

*Rules for commenting*
The protection of one’s privacy is a personal responsibility. Do not post personally identifying information. Young people under age 18, especially, should not post information such as last name, school, age, phone number, address.

Posts containing the following are against library rules and will be deleted before posting or removed by library staff:

1. Copyright violations
2. Off topic comments
3. Commercial material/spam
4. Duplicated posts from the same individual.
5. Obscene posts
6. Specific and imminent threats
7. Libelous comments
8. Images

By choosing to comment you agree to these rules.

**2.C. Library Use/Conduct Policy**

To ensure that regional libraries operate in accordance with the region’s mission, value, and vision, the East Central Arkansas Regional Library System Board of Trustees has established certain rules to maintain an atmosphere that promotes library services, protects library resources and fosters safety for all patrons and library staff. The use of the library and/or its services must be appropriate for the library’s intended purposes.

Library visitors may be denied use of library services for due cause such as overdue material and behavior violations. Violations could also result in the restriction and/or termination of Library privileges, including the use of Library computers and other equipment.

Individuals who may violate the rights of the staff or library users, or who create disorder in the library in any of the following situations are not demonstrating appropriate use of the library and could result in removal from the premises and expulsion from the Library for a period of one day to one year, or in arrest or prosecution.

Example of violations include:

* Any situation in which the actions of a person present an imminent danger to the life or safety of others in the library.
* Any situation in which a person is observed in an attempt to steal library property or that of another library user, or to destroy library property.
* Any situation in which a person willfully and purposefully disturbs the staff or other library users or whose behavior is in any way disruptive to the legitimate use of library facilities by others.
* Any situation in which a person’s behavior is inappropriate to the use of the library building and property for the purposes for which it is legally constituted.

The following actions are examples of conduct not allowed on Library property:

* Engaging in any activity in violation of Federal, State, local or other applicable law, or Library policy.
* Carrying firearms and dangerous weapons of any type (except by law enforcement officers).
* Being under the influence of alcohol/illegal drugs and selling, using, or possessing alcohol/illegal drugs.
* Verbally or physically threatening or harassing other patrons, volunteers, or staff, including stalking, staring, lurking, offensive touching, and obscene acts such as sex acts and indecent exposure.
* Soliciting or conducting surveys not authorized by the Library.
* Stealing, damaging, altering, or inappropriate use of Library property in Library facilities or on Library grounds, including computer hardware and software, printers, copiers, phones, and other equipment.
* Trespassing in nonpublic areas, being in the Library without permission of an authorized Library employee before or after Library operating hours, or camping on Library grounds.
* Fighting or challenging to fight, running, pushing, shoving, or throwing things.
* Creating disruptive noises such as loud talking, screaming, or banging on computer keyboards.
* Using offensive language in the library.
* Gambling and group activities which are disruptive to the Library environment.
* Using audible devices without headphones or with headphones set at a volume that disturbs others.
* Using cell phones, pagers, and other communication devices in a manner that disturbs others.
* Using restrooms for bathing or shampooing, doing laundry, or changing clothes.
* Littering.
* Smoking, chewing, and other tobacco use in Library facilities.
* Entering the Library barefooted, without a shirt, with offensive body odor or personal hygiene, or being otherwise attired so as to be disruptive to the Library environment.
* Bringing in garbage, articles with a foul odor, or articles which, alone or in their aggregate, impede the use of the library by other users.
* Using wheeled devices in Library property or on Library grounds, except in designated areas, including skateboarding, roller-skating, bicycling, scooters, and shopping carts (exceptions i.e. wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers, and handicapped equipment).
* Lying down or sleeping in the restrooms or on any floor, couch, table, or seat in the Library, and by blocking aisles, exits, or entrances by sitting or lying down in them.
* Neglecting to provide proper supervision of children.
* Registered sex offenders must follow all state laws regarding distance from the library and other behavior.
* Bringing pets or animals, other than service animals necessary for disabilities, into the Library, except as authorized by the Executive Director.
* Soliciting for money nor distribution of handbills, pamphlets, or other materials on library property. Exceptions to this rule must be approved by the Executive Director or Library Board in advance.

Enforcement of these rules will be conducted in a fair and reasonable manner. Library staff and/or security staff will intervene to stop prohibited activities and behaviors. Expulsion for more than one week may be appealed in writing to the Director. If dissatisfied with the decision of the Executive Director, expulsions may then be appealed to the appropriate County Library Board. The decision of the County Library Board shall be final.

**2.D. Meeting Room Use Policy**

2.D.1. The libraries may make available a community meeting room as a public service. Use of meeting rooms must be in accordance with the library’s mission, values, and vision. Not every library service outlet will have meeting room facilities.

The room is made available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use. The Library does not sponsor or endorse the views of any group using the room. Use of the library meeting rooms for commercial purposes is prohibited without payment of rental fees.

2.D.2. In scheduling use of the meeting room, priority is given to programs administered or sponsored by the Library and organizations directly affiliated with the Library. The meeting room is available during regular library hours. Permission may be granted for the following uses, in order of priority and based upon availability:

* The library meeting room may be used by non-profit community groups and organizations whose aims are educational, cultural, intellectual, social, or civic betterment of the region and area citizens.
* The meeting room may be used by members of the community for the presentation and exchange of information and opinions.
* Educational or training conferences, workshops, planning sessions, etc. may be held in the library’s meeting room. Registration fees for materials or tuition for these types of purposes should be collected in advance by the sponsoring organization as long as the fees are not for personal profit.

2.D.3. Groups using the room which are not affiliated with the Library must also follow these guidelines:

* Requests for use of the meeting room shall be made through the library location manager.
* Use of the premises may be terminated at any time by the library location manager, Executive Director, or law enforcement official if the conduct of the group, or any member of the group, is disruptive to Library service, abusive or dangerous to the building, Library materials, exhibits, furnishings or individuals in the building.
* Organizations may not use the Library's address or phone number for publicity purposes, nor imply endorsement or co-sponsorship of events/meetings by the Library.
* Organizations must provide their own set-up, clean-up, arrange tables, etc. Library personnel are not available to assist with audio-visual equipment, carrying materials from parking areas to the meeting room or setting-up or serving refreshments, nor can personnel be expected to answer telephone inquiries for organizations using the meeting room. A $50.00 clean up fee will be assessed if the room is not properly cleaned after a meeting.
* The Library will not provide storage for the property of any organization that meets in the library.
* With prior approval by the library location manager, organizations may serve light refreshments. Clean up is the sole responsibility of the organization. A $50.00 clean up fee will be assessed if the room is not properly cleaned after a meeting.
* The meeting room is to be returned to the condition in which it was found.
* Library staff or representatives may enter any of the rented premises at any time and on any occasion.

2.D.4. Commercial interests have the very last priority for use of the rooms and may use the rooms for commercial purposes with the payment of a $250 rental fee, plus any applicable set-up and clean-up fees as may be set by the Executive Director.

**2.E Hours of Operation/Closure of the Library.**

Hours for county libraries will be recommended by the Executive Director and approved by respective County Library Board. Hours for branch libraries will be set by the respective County Library Board with input from local municipal officials.

Holiday schedules will be set by the Regional Library Board on recommendation from the Executive Director. Holiday schedules will generally follow those put in place by the State of Arkansas. The Executive Director may close the library up to three (3) days for training of the staff. Additional training day closures will require the approval of the Regional Library Board.

In the event of inclement weather or an emergency, the East Central Arkansas Library System libraries will generally follow the same schedule as the county courthouses in their respective counties. In the case that inclement weather or an emergency puts library staff or patrons in harm’s way, the Director may decide to close the libraries even if the courthouses are open. Such a case may be if the parking lots are icy and cannot be cleaned or library staff cannot make it to the library from their homes. The Executive Director has the power to close specific libraries if such a situation exists in certain locations, without closing the system as a whole.

In the event of a situation which precludes effective operations of a particular library or the system as a whole, the Executive Director or his/her designee may close the library/system until such time as the situation is resolved.

If the library closes, the regular salaries and vacation time of full-time staff members will not be affected. Part-time staff members will be given the opportunity to make up the hours they would have worked during the time when the library was closed. If the library is open and a full-time employee cannot make it to the library, he or she may take a vacation day, and part-time employees will not be eligible to make up the hours missed.

**2.F Patron Privacy and the Confidentiality of Library Records**

2.F.1. The laws of the state of Arkansas are very succinct regarding the confidentiality of library records. The Code of Arkansas, 13-2-702-706 reads as follows:

***13-2-702. Penalty.*** *(a) Any person who knowingly violates any of the provisions of this subchapter shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a fine of not more than two hundred dollars ($200) or thirty (30) days in jail, or both, or a sentence of appropriate public service or education, or both.*

*(b) No liability shall result from any lawful disclosure permitted by this subchapter.*

*(c) No action may be brought under this subchapter unless the action is begun within two (2) years from the date of the act complained of or the date of discovery.****13-2-703. Disclosure prohibited.***

*(a) Library records which contain names or other personally identifying details regarding the patrons of public, school, academic, and special libraries and library systems supported in whole or in part by public funds shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed except as permitted by this subchapter.*

*(b) Public libraries shall use an automated or Gaylord-type circulation system that does not identify a patron with circulated materials after materials are returned.*

***13-2-704. Disclosure permitted.***

*A library may disclose personally identifiable information concerning any patron to:*

*(1) The patron;*

*(2) Any person with the informed, written consent of the patron;*

 *(3) A law enforcement agency or civil court, under a search warrant; or*

 *(4) Any person, including without limitation the patron, who has received an automated telephone notification or other electronic communication for overdue materials or reserve materials if the person making the request can verify the telephone number or email address to which the notice was sent.*

 ***13-2-705. Construction — Statistics.***

*(a) No provision of this subchapter shall be construed to prohibit any library or any business operating jointly with a library from disclosing information for the purpose of:*

 *(1) Collecting overdue books, documents, films, or other items or materials owned or otherwise belonging to the library;*

 *(2) Collecting fines on overdue books, documents, films, or other items or materials; and*

 *(3) Contacting its patrons by telephone, mail service, or other medium for the purpose of notifying, informing, and educating patrons or otherwise promoting the legitimate programs, policies, and other interests of the library.*

*(b) Aggregate statistics shown from registration and circulation records with all personal identification removed may be released or used by a library or library system for research or planning purposes.*

***13-2-706. Use of information in evidence.***

*Personally identifiable information obtained in any manner other than as provided in this subchapter shall not be received in evidence in any trial, hearing, arbitration, or other proceeding before any court, grand jury, department, officer, agency, regulatory body, legislative committee, or other authority of the state or political subdivision of the state.*

2.F.2. The Library System will follow all state laws with regard to the confidentiality of library records and patron information. The Library will not retain circulation records after the return of borrowed library materials.

2.F.3. Parents or guardians of patrons who have undertaken the responsibility for items borrowed on Child membership cards shall have the right to information regarding what items have been borrowed on the card.

2.F.4. The Executive Director shall be responsible for insuring that training in patron privacy and confidentiality will be included in new employee orientation materials, and that regular instruction in the matter is provided to employees.

2.F.5. This policy shall be posted in all library service outlets.

**2.G Security of Library Materials**

2.G.1. The Arkansas Library Materials Security Law (Code of Arkansas 13-2-801-806) provides for the prosecution of those who remove materials from libraries without permission, those who fail to return materials borrowed from libraries, and those who willfully damage library materials. Depending on the cost of items damaged, stolen or not return, the crime may be considered a misdemeanor or a felony, with appropriate penalties including fines and/or jail time

2.G.2. The Library System shall follow all portions of the Arkansas Library Materials Security Law when attempting to collect lost, detained or stolen library materials, including sending certified notice to the patron that they will have 30 days to return materials from the date of the notice or shall be subject to criminal prosecution.

2.G.3. In cases where prosecution is necessary, approval to file a complaint with law enforcement officials must be provided by the appropriate local library board prior to the filing of the complaint.

**2.H Collection Development Policy**

2.H.I *Purpose*

The East Central Arkansas Regional Library System shall strive to provide citizens of all ages, backgrounds, and persuasions with a well-balanced collection of print and non-print materials to meet the informational, educational, and recreational needs of the community.

2.H.2 *Responsibility for selection*

Responsibility for materials selection, as for all library activities, rests with the Executive Director/Regional Librarian, who operates within the framework of policies determined by the Library Boards. Under his/her supervision, members of the staff who are deemed qualified by education, training, and/or experience may be assigned to participate in the selection of library materials.

2.H.3 *General criteria for selection*

The permanent book collection should reflect a strong, accurate, and up-to-date reference collection, a broad fiction selection of classics, as well as standard and popular items, and basic non-fiction titles covering a wide range of subject areas for the researcher and the recreational reader. If determined necessary by the Executive Director/Regional Librarian and/or the Board of Trustees, specialized collections may be developed to meet specific research, information, or recreational needs of the community.

Selection of materials will be influenced by:

A.) Anticipation of and response to continuing and changing needs and interest of the community and of individuals.

B.) Current and historical significance.

C.) The attention of critics and reviews.

D.) Budgetary considerations.

E.) Physical limitations of the facility/facilities.

F.) Needs for additional or duplicate materials in the existing collection.

G.) Availability of the materials through cooperating libraries in the region, through inter-library loan, or in more comprehensive collections in the area (i.e. Northeast Arkansas).

H.) Patron demand.

I.) Professional judgment.

A general representative collection, for all ages at a variety of reading levels is selected, but the collection will be attuned to the specific needs of the community.

Materials selection sources, such as Library Journal or Booklist, will be utilized as guide for collection, development; but these references will not be solely relied upon. Patron demand and perceived needs must still be considered even if reviews for a particular item are not favorable. In most instances, the library will purchase a title if there are demands from the community for it, because the importance of on-demand purchasing is recognized.

Popular Reading will be given a strong emphasis. To provide timely works, a book-lease plan can be utilized and supplemented with purchases from local bookstores and jobbers. Paperbacks may be used to provide inexpensive recreational reading. Periodicals will reflect a selection of scholarly and lay publications, with an emphasis being on the latter.

Materials will be selected in a variety of formats, including books, serial publications and periodicals, online formats, audiocassettes, phonographic records, cassette tapes, compact disc, CD-ROM resources, videotapes, film, filmstrips, digital videodisc, and any other appropriate format which is in current demand and use. Such materials will reflect the diversified needs and preferences of the community. The purchase of audio-visual materials will reflect educational and recreational needs of the community as funding is available.

Widely diverse points of view, including controversial and unorthodox subjects, will be available in the collection. Inclusion in the collection does not imply library approval or agreement with the contents. The Board and Staff recognize that some materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some patron/s. Selections will not be made on the basis or merits of anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to building the collection and to serving the interests of all the patrons.

The East Central Arkansas Regional Library Board and the Staff of the Libraries shall uphold the principles set forth in the Library Bill of Rights as amended January 23, 1980, the Freedom to Read Statement of the American Library Association adopted May, 1953 and the Freedom to View Statement as endorsed by the Intellectual Freedom Committee of the American Library Association and the Council of the American Library Association in June, 1979. Furthermore, these statements shall be incorporated as part of this policy.

2.H.4 *Reconsideration of Library Materials*

While the selection of materials appropriate to the needs of the community is one of the basic duties of the library staff and of the Executive Director, it is not possible to read or view every item added to the collections of the Library System. It is recognized that a member of the community may find an item personally objectionable or wish that an item be added to or deleted from the library’s collection.

Since the library is a tax-supported institution, any citizen has the right to question the inclusion or exclusion of any title in the library’s collection. Procedures have been established which will insure serious consideration of any request for removal, restriction, or addition of any item in or to the library’s collection. However, until such an examination has been made, and a decision reached by the appropriate County Library Board, no such removal, etc., shall take place.

Since all political, religious, and social opinions should be represented in a public library, no group or individual will be permitted to impose a partisan emphasis on the library’s collection. Frankness of language, a widespread and contemporary phenomenon, will never, in itself, be considered sufficient justification to remove or restrict library materials. The responsibility of the library is to serve all the community, not to promote – and above all, not to censor-- any particular political, moral, philosophical, or religious conviction or opinion. It is not the purpose of the library to stimulate, nor to cater to anti-social, prurient, or immoral interests. But no one, least of all a free public library, has the right to judge what another may not read, see, or hear.

Patrons with complaints concerning material content shall be given the "Citizens Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form to fill out. Such forms shall be forwarded to the Executive Director/Regional Librarian or his/her designee for review. The Executive Director/Regional Librarian may take action to remove such items or move them to a more appropriate collection, or he may refer the matter to the attention of the appropriate County Library Board at their next regularly scheduled meeting. A decision by the Board to keep an item in the collection will stand unless subsequent judicial decisions are rendered which prohibit housing the material in the library’s collections. The library’s philosophy is that censorship is a purely individual matter, and while anyone is free to reject for oneself any book or other material which he/she may find inappropriate, he/she cannot exercise the right of censorship to restrict the freedom of others.

2.H.5. *Evaluation of the Collection*

Collection Development is an all-encompassing and on-going process. With this understanding, staff involved in collection development will continuously and vigorously evaluate existing collections and make recommendations to update and/or delete titles. Final decisions regarding deletion of titles shall rest with the Executive Director or his/her designee. The outlet-level managers and other staff shall evaluate the periodical collection annually and submit recommendations to the Executive Director for additions/deletions. Other library employees involved in Public Services may be consulted in this task.

2.H.6. Appendices:

Library 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.

1. 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.

2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgement of free expression and free access to ideas.

5. A person’s right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

6. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

*Adopted June 18, 1948; Amended February 2, 1961, June 27, 1967, and January 23, 1980 by the ALA Council.*

The Freedom to Read

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove books from sale, to censor textbooks, to label "controversial" books, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid, that censorship and suppression are needed to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens devoted to the use of books and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating them, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

We are deeply concerned about these attempts at suppression. Most such attempts rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy; that the ordinary citizen, by exercising his critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow-citizens.

We trust Americans to recognize propaganda, and to reject it. We do not believe they need the help of censors to assist them in this task. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

We are aware, of course, that books are not alone in being subjected to efforts at suppression. We are aware that these efforts are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, films, radio and television. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of uneasy change and pervading fear. Especially when so many of our apprehensions are directed against an ideology. The expression of a dissident idea becomes a thing feared in itself, and we tend to move against a hostile deed, with suppression.

And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it less able to deal with stress.

Now as always in our history, books are among our greatest instruments of freedom. They are almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. They are the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. They are essential to the extended discussion which serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures towards conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free men will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those which are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer if every new thought is a rebel until his idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept which challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation contained in the books they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what books should be published or circulated.

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one man can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to determine the acceptability of a book on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author

A book should be judged as a book. No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free men can flourish which draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.

To some, much of modern literature is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters taste differs, and taste cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised which will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any book the prejudgment of a label characterizing the book or author as subversive or dangerous.

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for the citizen. It presupposes that each individual must be directed in making up his mind about the ideas he examines. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people’s freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large.

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society each individual is free to determine for himself what he wishes to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive.

7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression.

By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, bookmen can demonstrate that the answer to a bad book is a good one, the answer to a bad idea is a good one.

The freedom to read is of little consequence when expended on the trivial; it is frustrated when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for his purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of their freedom and integrity, and the enlargement of their service to society, requires of all bookmen the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all citizens the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of books. We do so because we believe that they are good, possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

A Joint Statement by: American Library Association, Association of American Publishers

Subsequently endorsed by: American Booksellers Association, American Civil Liberties Union, American Federation of Teachers AFL/CIO, Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith, Association of American University Presses, Bureau of Independent Publishers & Distributors, Children’s Book Council, Freedom of Information Center, Freedom to Read Foundation, Magazine Publishers Association, Motion Picture Association of America, National Association of College Stores, National Book Committee, National Council of Negro Women, National Council of Teachers of English, National Library Week Program, National Board of the Young Women’s Christian Association of the U.S.A., P.E.N. – American Center , Periodical and Book Association of America, Sex Information & Education Council of the U.S., Women’s National Book Association,

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

The Freedom to View

THE FREEDOM TO VIEW, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore, we affirm these principles:

It is in the public interest to provide the broadest possible access to films and other audiovisual materials because they have proven to be among the most effective means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.

It is in the public interest to provide for our audiences, films and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.

It is our professional responsibility to resist the constraint of labeling, of pre-judging a film on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.

It is our professional responsibility to contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public’s freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Educational Film Library Association’s Freedom to View Committee, and was adopted by the EFLA Board of Directors in February, 1979. It was endorsed by the American Library Association’s Intellectual Freedom Committee and the ALA Council in June, 1979.

**2.I Special Collections Policies**

2.I.1. The Library System, fulfilling its role of serving as the collective memory of this community, shall develop and maintain special collections of various formats to document the history and heritage of the communities it serves, its culture, its businesses and institutions, its artistic heritage, and the history and heritage of its people. As such, the System maintains an “Arkansas Room” with materials related to regional history, in the county seat libraries in each county it serves. The Library System may also create

2.I.2. As these collections are intrinsic, they may require special rules regarding their use and regarding the provision of information services using these resources. Public access to these collections shall be granted and the following rules shall apply:

General Usage Rules:

* Certain items, due to preservation requirements, might not be available for photocopying. The Executive Director/Regional Librarian or his designee shall determine those items and mark them accordingly.
* Archival Collections will not be collected or held by the libraries.
* In no instance may a patron borrow an item from the Special Collections to take it to a third-party vendor (or elsewhere) for copying or for other reasons without the written permission of the Executive Director.
* The Library System retains copyright on all original items in the collection, including manuscripts and photographs. Permission to copy may be granted as long as proper credit is given to the East Central Arkansas Regional Library System.

2.I.3. Special Collections Department Service Standards:

1. Due to staffing, the Library System's employees cannot conduct in-depth genealogical or historical research for patrons by mail, telephone or from requests received via the Internet. Staff will assist patrons in any way possible who visit the Special Collections and are conducting their own research.

2. On requests for obituaries, a correct name and approximate date of death must be provided. Library staff will check local newspapers for the week of the date given and for two following weeks and will copy the obituary, assuming that the material can be photocopied due to preservation needs.

3. Persons needing in-depth research work or assistance may be referred to a list of persons in the area who conduct genealogical research for a fee, or to a local historical or genealogical society.

4. Staff may, on being asked a clear, specific historical or genealogical question related to a specific reference work, check that reference work for the information and provide such information to the researcher, providing that time and staffing permit.

5. The Service Standards of the Library System’s Information Services Policy shall also apply to Special Collections Information Services where they do not conflict with preservation issues.

**2.J. Services to Children and Young Adults**

The Library System shall provide equitable service to persons of all ages, including children. Collection expenditures for children shall be a set portion of the Library System’s operating budget annually, and the library shall provide programs and services for children consistent with the services it provides for other age groups.

Library Staff may designate certain areas of library facilities for children and young adults for purposes of segregation of materials only.

All service standards in place by the Library System shall apply equitably to children and Young Adults.

**2.K. Service to Library Users with Disabilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act gives civil rights protection to people with disabilities, including:

Equal access to employment

Public services

Public accommodations provided by public and private entities

Transportation

Telecommunications resources.

The Library System shall make reasonable and necessary accommodations on request for physical access, communications or other needs that ensure our services, activities and employment are available to people with disabilities. In doing so, the Library System shall offer:

• Sign-Language interpreters for Library programs (must be arranged two weeks before the event by contacting the specific library.

• Sign-language interpreters for meetings of a Library Board (must be arranged two weeks before the meeting by contacting the Executive Director).

• Orientation to and escort within the Library System's service outlets.

• Sign-language interpreted or sight-guided Library tours with two week’s notice.

• Assistance in finding and removing material from Library shelves and files

• Special interest programs and material about disability concerns for families, individuals and groups on request by groups.

• Information about area resources and services for people with disabilities

• The Library shall work closely with area handicapped transportation providers in coordinating the services of the two agencies and shall assist those agencies in their efforts to serve the handicapped.

• Books and information helpful to the handicapped on various topics.

• Popular Fiction and Non-fiction materials in large-print format at all library service outlets.

• Provide access and liaison services to the Regional Library for the Blind and Print Handicapped at the Arkansas State Library, including facilitating such services.

It is the policy of the Library Boards that every employee shall insure that the disabled have as positive an experience as possible in its use of its public libraries and that equitable service shall be provided.

**2.L. Information Services Policies**

2.L.1. Information Service Defined

Good information service involves identifying a person¹s information need and proceeding to fulfill it accurately, efficiently and pleasantly, using the resources available in the Library system, and including referral to resources in other libraries or agencies, if necessary. It also includes providing instruction in Library use.

2.L.2. Information Service Mission Statement

The Library System regards as valid every reference and information question asked by any patron. All questions will be given equal consideration, and each will be answered as accurately and completely as possible within a reasonable time limit. Full library service will be available to all patrons and no questions asked by a patron will be considered unanswerable.

2.L.4. General Objective:

Reference service will be provided through direct provision of information or through provision of instruction in the use of sources to each person to the degree that he or she individually requires. Patrons will have opportunity to receive instruction in the use of sources and facilities but will not be denied information on the basis of whether or not they learn or accept instruction. However, the Library will encourage patrons who will need to use reference tools repeatedly to learn the use of these tools.

Priority of Service and Reference Triage:

The following service will be offered to patrons (listed in order of priority):

a. Direct personal service to library users who come to the library. Patrons are served on a first come, first served basis.

b. Telephone/TTY/Relay Service inquiries

c. Library orientation and bibliographic instruction

d. Mail reference

e. Email reference

Simultaneous requests will be managed at the librarian's discretion with regard to urgency, complexity and availability of staff resources, following rules of service priority spelled out above and in the following standards.

2.L.5. Information Service Standards

* Basic reference services (ready reference, homework resources and reader's advisory services) will be offered at all full-service outlets during all hours those service outlets are open. Such services are not available at deposit station libraries. Detailed and extensive reference services may be limited to certain libraries (i.e. the county seat library) and to certain times (i.e. times when professional librarians are scheduled to be on duty, or by appointment).
* All information requests are to be handled. If information is available, it is provided to patrons without making a judgment on its moral or aesthetic worth.
* No effort will be made to determine whether library users are entitled to library cards before reference service is given except to decide whether or not information material will be checked out or interlibrary loan requested. A current, valid ECARLS Membership card shall be required for Inter-library loan of materials.
* The needs of every library patron will always be taken seriously and treated with utmost respect and confidentiality. Discussion of any individual or group of individuals, whether adult or child, or their inquiries, outside the professional context, is strictly prohibited without the consent of the patron.
* While on desk duty, service to the public takes precedence over any other duties, and service to the patron in the library takes precedence over telephone inquiries.
* It is not sufficient for the staff to wait for a patron to request assistance. Since many patrons are reluctant to request aid, it is the responsibility of staff to anticipate public needs and offer service when it appears needed.
* Information given will always be based on accurate printed sources or learned from a reliable authority. The opinion, evaluation or interpretation of staff, even when requested, is never to be given as fact. Answers to reference questions will only be given after the answer has been verified and a source cited, even for the most common knowledge.
* Neither the patron's nor the staff member's personal opinions and beliefs should influence the quality of service given.
* Staff shall not offer their personal opinions on social issues, politics, religion, etc., to patrons.
* No time limit should be put on searching. However, lengthy searches of periodicals, bibliographic sources, or searches through extensive reference materials are beyond the libraries resources to perform in most instances. The agency head should consult with their supervisor or Executive Director before making an exception to this general rule.
* Telephone reference service should be used for short, factual information questions that do not require extensive reading or (any) interpretation on the staff member's part.
* In all in-person and telephone contacts, if the librarian cannot answer a request immediately, he or she will obtain contact information from the patron and see that the patron receives a follow-up contact detailing what research has been completed within 2 business hours, and an adequate, appropriate response within 24 hours.
* Staff will always offer to make an appointment with a professional librarian for cases determined to be detailed or lengthy in nature.
* In all cases, official requests from local, state and federal government agencies have the highest priority.
* Every effort will be made to complete each reference transaction successfully, consulting with colleagues, colleagues in other libraries, or representatives of appropriate agencies when necessary.
* Informational/Reference services in the subject areas of local history and genealogy shall generally follow these service standards, but may be subject to specific limitations as spelled out in this section.

2.M. Bulletin Board and Information Distribution Areas Policy

The Library System may maintain in various facilities bulletin boards for the posting of materials and designated areas (such as literature racks and spaces on countertops and tables) for the passive distribution of information. This policy shall govern the use of those facilities.

2.M.1. Bulletin Boards and Distribution Areas That Are Reserved for Use by ECARLS:

Some bulletin boards, literature racks, countertops, and tables are reserved for the exclusive use by the Library to post and distribute materials about Library services, programs, and events; from the Friends of Library; and from other governmental entities including local, state, and federal governments.

2.M.2. Other Bulletin Boards and Distribution Areas

A limited number of bulletin board and distribution areas may be available within the Library System for the posting and passive distribution of materials from other entities. In each facility, the branch or department manager (or designee) of a Library facility may designate specific areas as available for these purposes. A branch or department manager (or designee) must authorize all posting and distribution before it occurs. Authorization will be based upon the provisions of this policy and will not be based upon the viewpoint, beliefs, or affiliations of the non-profit group or the viewpoints expressed in the materials. Posting or distribution of any such materials in the Library does not indicate Library endorsement of the ideas, issues, or events promoted by those materials.

2.M.3. Community Bulletin Boards

Space may be available for announcements, for sale items, or other similar activities. Items placed on these Community Bulletin Boards are not moderated regularly by library staff and any event, product, service, issue, or idea promoted in such postings does not indicate Library endorsement. Such Community Bulletin Boards shall be clearly designated as such and include the statement that items posted on the Board are not endorsed by the Library System. Boards shall be cleared monthly, or on a regular basis. The Library shall not provide supplies to hang items on such boards. The Library reserves the right to remove anything from these Boards on a regular basis and/or at any time.

2.M.4. Distribution Areas

Non-profit organizations may provide dated materials related to their not-for-profit purpose for passive distribution only in areas designated for that purpose. Passive distribution means leaving the materials with Library staff for Library visitors, if they so choose, to review and/or take with them. Passive distribution does not include verbally or visually (by means of signs, placards, etc.) encouraging Library visitors to review or take any materials with them.

2.M.5. General Rules and Prohibitions

The following items may not be posted on bulletin boards or left in material distribution areas:

* Materials that support or oppose any current or pending ballot measure or political candidate. The Library is not intended to be a forum for the support or opposition of political candidates or ballot measures. Official election information from the local election officials is often made available in the Library.
* Because it is not consistent with passive distribution, materials asking Library visitors to sign a petition or letter are not permitted.

2.M.6. Terms for Use

All materials posted or distributed must comply with this policy and any other applicable Library regulations or guidelines. No other materials may be posted or distributed.

To ensure equitable access to limited display space available at each facility, a branch or department manager (or designee) may establish criteria for that facility regarding posting and distribution of material, including:

• the maximum size of material to be posted or distributed;

• the maximum length of time materials may remain posted or displayed;

• the maximum amount of time before or after an event a posting may occur;

• the frequency with which material may be posted or displayed by the same non-profit organization; and

• consistent methods for allocating space should the amount of material exceed the space available for posting or distribution.

All posting and placement of materials in distribution areas shall be done by personnel from Library System. Individuals requesting posting or distribution shall not themselves post or leave materials in distribution areas. The public may post items on the Community Bulletin Boards where available, pursuant to the terms detailed under "Community Bulletin Boards" above.

Materials left for posting or distribution without authorization from the Library will be discarded.

The Library assumes no responsibility for the preservation or protection of materials posted or distributed. Materials will not be returned.

The Executive Director/Regional Librarian, or his/her designee, is responsible for the administration of this policy on a system-wide basis. Branch/unit managers are responsible for the administration of this policy within their facilities.

**2.N. Exhibits**

The Library System offers exhibits in library facilities. Library exhibits are used to assist patrons in their exploration of educational, cultural, intellectual and civic activities. The displays incorporate library materials whenever possible, as a means of informing users of the range of library resources and services. The Library endeavors to offer exhibits of diverse subject matter for children, adults and families.

The Library reserves the right to arrange exhibits in all library facilities and to make the final decision regarding content and physical presentation of all exhibits and displays.

Certain areas of library service outlets may be designated as gallery space for regular exhibitions, particularly of the work of local artists. The Executive Director/Regional Librarian shall develop rules and procedures for the operation of such facilities subject to the review of the Public Library Board.

The Executive Director/Regional Librarian is responsible for administration of this policy.

**2.O. Value added services and related fees**

2.O.1. PURPOSE

To provide a policy to charge patrons for the value-added service of computer printouts, faxes and photocopies. The policy must be equitable for our patrons and support the Library System in its efforts to be good stewards of its resources. The Library System underscores its commitment to provide free basic library services. For the purposes of this policy, basic library services include, but are not limited to research and reference services and online searching of remote databases.

2.O.2. GENERAL POLICY

It is the policy of the Library System to charge for faxes, photocopying and printing at public-access computers to defray financial costs, conserve resources and ensure equity-of-access standards. Discretionary guidelines will be established to help staff make exceptions to this policy in a uniform, unbiased, and non-discriminatory manner. The Executive Director/Regional Librarian shall regularly review such charges and recommend changes in policy to the Board as necessary.

2.O.3. FAX SERVICE POLICY & FEES

The Library System may elect to provide public fax service at any service outlet of the Library System. The Library System shall not be responsible for public misuse of fax services, and does hereby reserve the right to refuse to fax any item for any reason.

Outgoing Fax Service:

The Library shall fax outgoing items at a rate of not less than $.20 per page 1, with there being no charge for the cover sheet or the confirmation sheet. It shall be the sender’s responsibility to determine that appropriate addressing information is provided on a cover page or on the first page of the document. The Library makes no representation and does not guarantee that faxes will be received by the intended recipient. If requested by the sender, a receipt showing date and time of transmission may be provided.

Incoming Fax Service:

The Library will receive faxes for library users. There will be a charge of not less than $.20 per page, and this charge will be levied to all pages. A valid I.D. will be required to pick up the fax. Faxes not picked up within three business days will be discarded.

2.O.4 PHOTOCOPYING SERVICE & FEES

The Library System may elect to provide public photocopiers at any service outlet of the Library System. This may include equipment to print items from microfilm, microfiche, or other similar media formats. Public use of photocopiers and similar equipment shall not be routinely regulated and persons using photocopiers and similar equipment are responsible for any and all violations of federal copyright law and other related laws that inherently apply to the copying of documents. The Library System accepts no responsibility for public misuse of photocopying equipment.

Fees for photocopying service shall not be less than $.20 per page.

2.O.5. COMPUTER PRINTOUTS & FEES

The Library System may elect to provide public printers and other similar peripheral devices at public computer workstations at any service outlet of the Library System. Public use of such equipment may be regulated to control waste and protect privacy, but for no other reason; and persons using photocopiers and similar equipment are responsible for any and all violations of federal copyright law and other related laws that inherently apply to the copying of documents. The Library System accepts no responsibility for public misuse of such copying equipment.

Fees for black and white printouts shall not be less than $.20 per page. Fees for color printing shall not be less than $1.00 per page.

The Library System reserves the right to utilize hardware or software to adequately control the use of printing systems, which may require users to identify themselves.

2.O.6. SETTING OF FEES

The right to set any and all fees is reserved by the Regional Library Board.

**SECTION 3. EMERGENCY AND DISASTER POLICIES**

*Fiscal Note: Such policies are required by the Arkansas State Library per state administrative regulations.*

**3.A. General**

Because all libraries are susceptible to disasters, the East Central Arkansas Regional Library System is committed to maintaining a vigilant state of disaster preparedness for staff, the collection and our facilities. Enlightened self-interest tells us that to be prepared is the greatest weapon against disaster. This plan, along with continual training, provides library staff with a set of disaster priorities, emergency procedure guidelines and floor plans for each location.

 Emergency operations planning activities are divided into four phases that form a cycle. The phases of the cycle are:

Mitigation —Taking sustained actions to reduce or eliminate risk to people and property from hazards and their effects.

Preparedness — Building the emergency management function to respond effectively to, and recover from, any hazard.

Response — Conducting emergency operations to save lives and property by doing such things as - evacuating potential victims; providing medical care to those in need; and restoring critical services, and helping in our community response.

Recovery — Rebuilding our library so that we can return to normal services and protect against future hazards, as well as providing services to our community to help it recover.

With each disastrous situation we learn how to mitigate, prepare, respond and recover better. As we revise our efforts, the cycle repeats. The phases often overlap to fit individual situations and events.

Guidelines and procedures were approved by the Regional Library Board noting that the Executive Director has the authority to make immediate decisions concerning the safety of staff, patrons, and library facilities as necessary. These disaster response procedures are not provided within library policy as this is considered confidential information and unnecessary for public consumption. Disaster procedures shall be available through the system’s Intranet. A print version of disaster procedures will be held locally at each location, in the homes of top-level management, and at the Arkansas State Library in Little Rock.

The Executive Director shall be responsible for a plan of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery in conjunction with local and state authorities. He may appoint a Disaster Preparedness Coordinator among the staff and committees as are necessary to develop and implement fire prevention, preparedness and recovery plans. Such plans will be presented to the appropriate County Library Board for approval as they are necessary or updated.

**3.B. Library Service in Case of Disaster**

Being an agency of the county governments, the library system, in the event of a declared emergency affecting the any part of the region, shall cooperate with any and all emergency response or government agencies in the dissemination of emergency information, providing assistance to response agencies and responders, supporting recovery from a disaster or any other duty as may be directed by the County or Regional Library Board/s, the County Judge and/or Quorum Courts of the respective counties, or state and federal emergency response agencies. In such cases, employees may be directed to work at facilities or undertake tasks that are not normally called for within their job descriptions.

**3.C. Fire Safety**

The Library System will conduct fire drills on a routine basis at facilities directly under their control.

All Staff will immediately assist in the evacuation of facilities upon the announcement of a fire drill, the announcement of an actual fire emergency, or on the sounding of corresponding alarm systems, and will themselves evacuate facilities.

Each location manager shall insure that their respective areas are evacuated accordingly.

The assembly point for fire evacuees at libraries shall be as follows:

Augusta Branch – parking lot or area otherwise directed by the incident commander from the Augusta Fire Department.

Wynne Branch – Jessie Wynn Park or as directed by the incident commander from the Wynne Fire Department.

All other locations – at assembly points designated by local municipal emergency officials.

Employees at their discretion may attempt to contain a fire with extinguishers while fire authorities are responding. By no means should any employee risk their health or safety.

Once a fire is contained, the Library’s Disaster Preparedness Plan will dictate and govern recovery efforts, if necessary.

**3.D. Severe Weather Policy**

3.D.1. Safe areas at each facility under direct system control will be designated by the Executive Director and/or respective county Emergency Management Agency.

3.D.2. In general, in the event of a Tornado Watch issued by the National Weather Service, library employees will be mindful of the potential for deterioration of weather conditions and be prepared to evacuate themselves and employees to a safe area of the facility.

3.D.3. In the event of a Tornado Warning issued by the National Weather Service, library employees will evacuate themselves and employees to designated safe areas. No library services will be provided during the duration of the warning period. Patrons may leave library facilities, but the Library is not responsible for their safety. Persons entering facilities during warnings will be asked to take shelter in safe areas or be asked to leave library facilities.

3.D.4. In the event of severe thunderstorm watches and warnings, the Executive Director, library location manager or ranking officer in charge may take steps similar to the above depending on the severity of the situation.

**SECTION 4 – MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES**

**4.A. Physical Facilities**

4.A.1. To achieve the goal of good library service the County and Regional Boards of Trustees accept the responsibility to see that public library building facilities are provided which will adequately meet the physical requirements of modern, aggressive library service. Such facilities will offer to the community a compelling invitation to enter, read, look, listen, and learn. Each building will fit an expanding program of library service

4.A.2. Each County Board of Trustees will acquire sites and/or new buildings only after a service program has been adopted and the library has developed an outline of the community's library building needs with board, staff and community input.

4.A.3. The County Board of Trustees accepts the responsibility to secure the funds for needed facilities.

4.A.4 The Executive Director, the architect, and the Board of Trustees as a planning team, with the assistance of consultants if necessary, will endeavor to plan facilities to meet recognized standards and the needs of the community.

**4.B. Public Relations**

4.B.1. A primary public relations goal of the library is the understanding of the library's objectives and services by governing officials, by civic leaders, and by the general public.

4.B.2. The Board recognizes that public relations involve every person who has any connection with the library. The Board urges its own members and every staff member to realize that he or she represents the library in every public contact. Good service supports good public relations.

4.B.3. The Executive Director and professional staff will be expected to make talks and to participate in community activities. A reasonable amount of library time will be allowed staff members for preparation and speaking.

4.B.4. Materials to be used by press, radio, or television will be approved by the Executive Director or his designee.

**4.C. Friends of the Library Organizations**

The County Library Boards and the Regional Library Board of ECARLS looks upon Friends organizations as extremely worthwhile community organizations which greatly benefits their respective libraries.

The Boards of Trustees acknowledge that Friends organizations are organizations separate and apart from the Boards of Trustees, and that the Friends groups have their own Board and their own goals and purposes in supporting their respective library. In order to maintain open communication between the County Boards of Brustees and the Friends groups a liaison from the Boards of Trustees to the Friends groups will be appointed by the Chair of each County Board of trustees.

Friends groups are distinct and separate from the Library, and neither the Friends as an organization nor any member or participant thereof may assume any liability or take or authorize any act on behalf of the Board of Trustees. Library trustees or staff acting within their capacities are exempted.

Because Friends groups are organizations comprised solely of volunteers distinct and separate from Library personnel, no Library personnel shall be required to perform any duty or take any act on behalf of the Friends of the Library, except that Library staff members may act in an advisory capacity for Friends activities.

Operating expenses of ECARLS are provided through voter-approved property taxes, grants, and donations which are audited by state officials and/or an independent auditor. Friends’ funds and Library funds shall not be commingled or integrated, except that gifts from Friends may be accepted by the respective library, whereupon said gifts shall become solely the funds of the library but shall be expended for the specific purpose for which the gift or donation has been made by the Friends. In the event a County Library Board becomes the custodian of any Friends funds, those funds shall be kept as separate “funds” for audit and bookkeeping purposes.

Complete advance information regarding all Friends of the Library projects and public relations programs on behalf of the library shall be provided to the Executive Director and the appropriate Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees acknowledges that it does not supervise the public relations programs of the Friends of the Library, but the Board reserves the right not to participate in any public relations project or program in which the Board does not believe the best interest of the Library is being served. Projects and public relations programs adopted by the Friends shall not be part of the budget of or funded by the library.

**4.D. Programming Policy**

The Library supports its mission of connecting people with the world of ideas and information by developing and presenting programs that provide additional opportunities for information, learning, and entertainment. Programming is an integral component of library service that:

•Expands the Library’s role as a community resource

•Introduces customers and non-users to Library resources

•Provides entertainment

•Provides opportunities for lifelong learning

•Expands the visibility of the library

Ultimate responsibility for programming at the Library rests with the Executive Director, who administers under the authority of the Boards of Trustees. The Executive Director, in turn, delegates the authority for program management to appropriate staff.

Programs and exhibits provided by the libraries utilize Library staff expertise, collections, services and facilities in developing and delivering programming. The Library’s staff use the following criteria in making decisions about program topics, speakers, and accompanying resources:

•Community needs and interests

•Availability of program space

•Treatment of content for intended audience

•Presentation quality

•Presenter background/qualifications in content area

•Budget

•Relevance to community interests and issues

•Historical or educational significance

•Connection to other community programs, exhibitions or events

•Relation to Library collections, resources, exhibits and programs

In addition, the Library draws upon other community resources in developing programs and actively partners with other community agencies, organizations, educational and cultural institutions, or individuals to develop and present co-sponsored public programs. Professional performers and presenters that reflect specialized or unique expertise may be hired for Library programs; performers and presenters will not be excluded from consideration because of their origin, background, or views, or because of possible controversy. Library staff who present programs do so as part of their regular job and are not hired as outside contractors for programming.

All Library programs are open to the public. A fee may be charged for certain types of Library programs. The Library’s philosophy of open access to information and ideas extends to Library programming, and the library does not knowingly discriminate through its programming. Library sponsorship of a program does not constitute an endorsement of the content of the program or the views expressed by participants, and program topics, speakers and resources are not excluded from programs because of possible controversy.

Registration may be required for planning purposes or when space is limited. Programs may be held on site at any Library agency, or off site. Any sales of products at Library programs must be approved by the Library and benefit the Library. Programs are not used for commercial, religious, or partisan purposes or the solicitation of business.

External organizations or individuals partnering with the Library on programs must coordinate marketing efforts with the appropriate employee or the Executive Director.

The Library welcomes expressions of opinion from customers concerning programming. If a customer questions a library program, he/she should first address the concern with a Library staff member. Customers who wish to continue their request for review of Library programs may submit the Request for Reconsideration form. Requests for review of programs will be considered in the same manner as requests for reconsideration of library materials as outlined in the Library’s Collection Development Policy.

**4.E. Volunteer Policy**

The Boards of Trustees recognizes that volunteers are a valuable resource for the Library. Their energy and talents help the Library meet its commitment to providing quality service to the public. Volunteers enhance, rather than replace, adequate staffing. Their services aid the Library in making the best use of its fiscal resources and help connect the Library to other community groups and organizations. Volunteers can also be valuable advocates for the Library in the community. The Library and its volunteers must work together to ensure a successful relationship. Library staff will continually work to recognize the contributions of Library volunteers and seek to expand the Library volunteer group as needed.

Volunteers are coordinated by the library location manager and must be at least 14 years of age. Each volunteer must complete an application which will be kept on file in the Library. Application forms are available at the Library or on our website. In some cases, volunteers will also be interviewed to better determine their interests and levels of experience. Volunteer talents, experience, availability and interests will be considered in placement and job assignments.

Library volunteers are bound by rules contained in all Library policies and guidelines as applicable, especially as they relate to patron privacy and confidentiality.

Volunteers working in the Library have liability coverage for property damage and/or bodily injury to others which results from the performance of their volunteer duties, and to themselves, if the Library is negligent.

Volunteers are recognized by the public as representatives of the library and shall be guided by the same work and behavior codes as employees. They work with the status of "at-will" employees

Volunteers are asked to record their hours of service in the Volunteer Log Book located behind the Circulation Desk as these statistics are reported on a regular basis to the Board of Trustees.

The Library accepts volunteers requiring court ordered community service or ordered public service through other means at the discretion of Library management. Court ordered community service volunteers are required to be interviewed by Library management prior to being accepted for service.

Junior volunteers under the age of 14 required to perform service for specific programs are accepted on a short-term basis. Parents of junior volunteers must sign consent forms for their children to perform service hours at the Library.

**4.F. Materials Donations Policy**

The Library System welcomes donations of books and other materials and accepts monetary contributions toward the purchase of materials. The Library reserves the right to decide the disposition of all gifts received. Gifts accepted for addition to the Library's collection become the property of the Library System and will be placed where most appropriate. Materials containing mold or which are damaged may be discarded or recycled. Material not utilized in the Library's collection may be sold in Library book sales or be transferred to a Friends of the Library, a non-profit organization, for use in their book sales. The proceeds from both the Library and Friends of the Library book sales are donated to the Library in support of our mission, programs, and to enhance the Library's collections.

**SECTION 5 – PERSONNEL POLICIES**

**5.A. Code of Ethics**

In addition to following any specific laws regarding their responsibilities and duties as public servants set by the State of Arkansas, the employees of the East Central Arkansas Regional Library System shall follow the most recent Code of Professional Ethics as set forth by the American Library Association, as follows:

*We significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations.*

*The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision making. These statements provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations.*

* 1. *We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.*
	2. *We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.*
	3. *We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.*
	4. *We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders.*
	5. *We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.*
	6. *We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.*
	7. *We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.*
	8. *We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.*

**SECTION 6 – POLICIES FOR THE OPERATION OF THE BOARDS OF TRUSTEES**

**6.A. Board Bylaws**

(TO BE ADDED WHEN AMENDED 5/2014)

**6.B. Board Ethics**

In addition to following any specific laws regarding their responsibilities and duties as set by the State of Arkansas, any person appointed as a trustee of a county library and, as such, a trustee of the East Central Arkansas Regional Library System shall follow the most recent ethical conduct statements set by the American Library Trustee Association and the Public Library Association (both sub-units of the American Library Association), as follows:

**Ethics Statement for Public Library Trustees**

* *Trustees in the capacity of trust upon them shall observe ethical standards with absolute truth, integrity and honor.*
* *Trustees must avoid situations in which personal interests might be served or financial benefits gained at the expense of library users, colleagues, or the situation.*
* *It is incumbent upon any trustee to disqualify himself/herself immediately whenever the appearance or a conflict of interest exists.*
* *Trustees must distinguish clearly in their actions and statements between their personal philosophies and attitudes and those of the institution, acknowledging the formal position of the board even if they personally disagree.*
* *A trustee must respect the confidential nature of library business while being aware of and in compliance with applicable laws governing freedom of information.*
* *Trustees must be prepared to support to the fullest the efforts of librarians in resisting censorship of library materials by groups or individuals.*
* *Trustees who accept library board responsibilities are expected to perform all of the functions of library trustees.*