

Our government has designated public libraries for one purpose: to provide every person access to information and ideas. Public libraries embrace the democratic ideals of our country, and are intended to serve every person, no matter who they are.

Our courts have ruled that public libraries, in serving the entire community, may establish policies that keep libraries safe and accessible to everyone.

“[T]he First Amendment does not merely prohibit the government from enacting laws that censor information, but additionally encompasses the positive right of public access to information and ideas.”

—KREIMER V. BUREAU OF POLICE, 958 F.2D 1242, 1255 (3D CIR. 1992).

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What Is
the First Amendment?

Art by Ralph Voltz



Freedom to Read Foundation
FREE PEOPLE READ FREELY®

Penguin
Random
House

Our public libraries of all types provide members of a community with opportunities to seek information that they want and need. They are vital lifelines that ensure opportunities for education, entertainment, and engagement.

People of all ages can:

- Browse the shelves to find and check out books
- Read books, newspapers and magazines
- Research job or housing opportunities
- Seek opposing viewpoints on controversial topics as reflected in the media
- Write a research paper
- Request professional librarian support for questions

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