The Librarians' and Library Workers' Bill of Rights

Article I: The Right to a Safe, Respectful, and Discrimination-Free Workplace

All library workers have the right to perform their duties in an environment free from harassment, bullying, discrimination, and threats to personal safety.

Article II: The Right to Recognition and Respect for the Librarian's Role in Fostering Intellectual Freedom

Librarians and library workers shall not be censored, silenced, or punished for upholding intellectual freedom and professional ethics.

Article III: The Right to Fair Compensation and Ongoing Professional Development

All library workers deserve fair pay, professional respect, and opportunities for continued growth within their field.

Article IV: The Right to Reflect and Respect the Diversity of the Human Experience.

Librarians and library workers shall strive to represent the diversity of their communities in the materials they collect, in the displays they create, and the programs and services that they offer.

Article V: The Right to Protection from Workplace Harassment and Threats

No library worker shall endure intimidation, violence, or bullying from patrons, colleagues, or administrators.

Article VI: The Right to Fair Treatment and Due Process

Library workers shall be guaranteed transparency, fairness, and access to representation in all disciplinary or termination actions.

FAQ: Librarians' and Library Workers' Bill of Rights

1. What is the Librarians and Library Workers' Bill of Rights?

The Librarians and Library Workers' Bill of Rights is a guiding document that affirms the dignity, rights, and professional responsibilities of everyone who works in libraries. It calls for fair treatment, equitable pay, safety, respect, and professional freedom for all library employees — regardless of title, tenure, or background.

2. Who created the Bill of Rights?

The original concept and draft were developed by Richard Ashby Jr., Director of the Sharon Hill Public Library and a leader in library equity and inclusion.

He shared the initial document with his colleagues in the Professional Group of Directors and Managers for Diversity, who collaboratively refined, word-smithed, and contributed additional sections to strengthen the language and ensure it represented a broad range of library experiences.

3. Why was this Bill of Rights created?

Library workers are often the foundation of access to information, lifelong learning, an community service — yet they can face inequities, safety concerns, and professional disrespect.

This Bill of Rights was developed to protect and empower those who uphold the mission of libraries and ensure that library workplaces reflect the values of democracy, inclusion, and intellectual freedom.

4. Who does it apply to?

It applies to all library workers — librarians, paraprofessionals, assistants, pages, technicians, administrators, and support staff — across public, academic, school, and special libraries.

The document recognizes that everyone who serves the public in a library contributes to its mission and deserves fair treatment and respect.

5. What are the main principles of the Bill of Rights?

- The document outlines several core rights and responsibilities:
- Intellectual Freedom – To make professional judgments free from censorship or outside pressure.
- Equitable Pay & Conditions – Fair wages, benefits, and workloads that reflect each employee's contribution.
- Professional Respect – Recognition for the expertise and experience of all library workers.
- Safe and Inclusive Workplaces – Freedom from discrimination, harassment, and unsafe conditions.
- Professional Development – Access to learning opportunities and career growth.
- Voice and Representation – Inclusion in decision-making and policy development.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Commitment to ensuring that libraries are workplaces where all people are valued and supported.

6. How does it relate to the Library Bill of Rights?

The Library Bill of Rights protects the public's right to information. The Librarians and Library Workers' Bill of Rights protect the rights of the people who make that access possible. Together, they create a foundation for equitable, open, and democratic library service.

7. How was the collaborative process conducted?

After Richard Ashby Jr. drafted the initial framework, members of the Professional Group of Directors and Managers for Diversity reviewed and refined it collectively.

Their process included wordsmithing, expanding definitions, and ensuring that the final document reflected the lived experiences of diverse library professionals across roles and regions.

8. How can libraries use or adopt the Bill of Rights?

Libraries and organizations can:

- Formally endorses or adopts it through their boards or administrative bodies.
- Incorporate its principles into staff policies, codes of conduct, or union contracts.
- Discuss it during staff training or strategic planning sessions.
- Use it as an advocacy tool when addressing workplace equity and inclusion.

9. How does it benefit library staff and communities?

When the rights of library workers are protected:

- Morale and retention improve.
- Staff feel empowered to serve their communities fully.
- Libraries become safer, more inclusive, and more responsive to public needs.
- Strong staff rights lead to stronger libraries — and better service for all.

10. How can individuals support the Librarians and Library Workers' Bill of Rights?

- Share the document with colleagues and library boards.
- Advocate for its adoption in your organization.
- Educate others on the connection between worker rights and public service quality.
- Join professional groups that champion equity and inclusion.