



## New Jersey Library Association Statement on Privatization

Free access to information is an essential component for any democratic society. Historically, strong local public libraries have provided this service to New Jersey residents.

The cornerstones of effective public library service are governance by lay trustees, the anticipation of and responsiveness to community needs, and adherence to professional standards and practices. Under state law, the trustees of a public library have specific duties and responsibilities and the work of librarians must be performed by certified librarians. Furthermore, librarianship is first and foremost a service profession dependent on the commitment of qualified and competent staff.

The above must serve as the backdrop against which any effort to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of libraries must be viewed. It is the position of the New Jersey Library Association that:

1. The primary goal of a public library must be to meet the wide-ranging educational, informational, and cultural needs of its community.
2. All applicable laws and regulations must be obeyed and upheld, including- but not restricted to- all library laws, civil service regulations and state aid requirements.
3. Services including children's services, reference, management, material and resource selection, and technical services must remain the function of professional librarians.
4. The rights of library workers to negotiate their conditions of employment must be preserved. This emphasis carries with it a responsibility to treat library employees fairly and equitably.
5. The prerogatives of the Library Board of Trustees shall not be abridged or preempted. The Trustees must retain final authority and responsibility for all policy development, advocacy, goal-setting, fiscal accountability, and personnel action.
6. The public library provides services to all residents without regard to economic status. The institution of user fees that would limit access to library services must be avoided.

For these reasons NJLA stands in opposition to the privatization of library services.

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