

## **CONFIDENTIALITY OF LIBRARY RECORDS**

Rockford Public Library is a government institution bound by the United States Constitution. The Library's confidentiality policies aim to uphold the First Amendment, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, of assembly and association, and the constitutional right to privacy, protecting Library patrons from government intrusion or dissemination of personal information in which they have a reasonable expectation of privacy. Rockford Public Library recognizes its responsibility to protect its patrons' intellectual freedoms by maintaining the confidentiality of all records and information concerning each patron and his or her use of Library materials, facilities and services.

Rockford Public Library has endorsed the American Library Association's Code of Ethics. In that document, staff responsibility is defined as follows:

- It is the ethical responsibility of librarians and all library staff to protect each library user's right 'to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received, and resources consulted, borrowed acquired or transmitted.' This includes database search records, reference interviews, circulation records, interlibrary loan records, Internet sign-up records and other personally identifiable uses of library materials, facilities or services.

Rockford Public Library has endorsed the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights. In that document privacy and confidentiality are defined as follows:

- Privacy is essential to the exercise of free speech, free thought, and free association. In a library (physical or virtual), the right to privacy is the right to open inquiry without having the subject of one's interest examined or scrutinized by others.
- Confidentiality exists when a library is in possession of personally (patron) identifiable information about users and keeps that information private on their behalf.

Confidentiality laws are found in the Illinois Compiled Statutes at 75 ILCS 70/1-. Illinois Library Records Confidentiality Act governs Rockford Public Library. For administrative purposes, Rockford Public Library may establish time, place and manner restrictions on the use of library resources. In keeping with this principle, the collection of patron identifiable information should only be a matter of routine or policy when necessary for the fulfillment of the mission of the library. All patron-identifiable information is strictly confidential.

Patron-identifiable information refers to a wide range of information kept by the Library, including any information that links a patron to use of particular Library materials or services, or the patron's choices, taste, interest, or research. Patron-identifiable information does not include statistical records relating to use of the Library or its materials and services that cannot be used to identify particular patrons or information concerning behavioral issues in the Library's records regarding a patron.