

Sustainability Statement

Alexandria Library seeks to foster a caring, informed, and livable world in which all of our natural habitats, community members, and visitors are able to not only survive but thrive.

As recognized by the foremost national library organization, the American Library Association (ALA), sustainability is a core value¹ of librarianship. Libraries serve an important role in facilitating community awareness about resilience², climate change³, and a sustainable⁴ future. In Alexandria, this will take the form of community programs and institutional practices.

The Library acknowledges the urgency with which action is needed. Throughout modern history, institutional policies and practices have contributed to climate change, which threatens both our environment and the society relying upon it. Alexandria Library leads by example through a commitment to the “triple-bottom line”⁵ definition of sustainability adopted by ALA (in their [2019 “Resolution for the Adoption of Sustainability as a Core Value of Librarianship”](#)), of using practices that are environmentally sound, economically feasible, and socially equitable⁶.

Continuing Alexandria’s long tradition of leading in regional sustainability, and embracing the priorities expressed in the [Eco-City Alexandria Charter](#) and [Environmental Action Plan 2040](#), the Library will focus on the following key areas:

- Collective Impact
- Energy
- Financial Sustainability
- Materials & Collections
- Outdoor & Indoor Spaces
- Resilience Planning
- Social Cohesion
- Transportation
- Water

The Library takes its responsibility of environmental stewardship seriously and will strive to make a positive environmental impact in service of the wellbeing of all people in both our local and global community. The Library’s commitment to sustainability extends to its patrons, administration, employees, and the general community.

All employees will receive a copy of this statement upon hire, will be educated regarding the library's sustainability efforts, and will be empowered to act in alignment with these goals throughout their daily tasks. The Library's Sustainability Committee is responsible for overseeing the execution of these goals and will revisit the statement every 3 years. Staff can learn more about the Sustainability Committee and view Committee meeting minutes on the [Alexandria Library intranet](#).

Definitions

- [1] **ALA core value** - Statements of the library profession's principles and highest aspirations, officially pronounced by the American Library Association, meant to guide and unite library workers and all "people who make libraries work" in furthering the library mission to build policies, make decisions, set goals, and prioritize actions to bring equitable library access to all users. These describe the rights library workers seek to protect and the ethical guidelines library workers look to for direction, declaring a shared set of ideals and professionalism that unites and motivates library workers, volunteers, trustees, and advocates throughout the nation. *These can be found where this definition is paraphrased from: "[Core Values of Librarianship](#)", American Library Association, July 26, 2006, accessed July 2024.*
- [2] **Resilience** - The quality of being able to recover quickly or easily from, or resist being affected by, a misfortune, shock, or illness - robustness; adaptability. *Taken directly from [Communities Responding to Extreme Weather \(CREW\)](#), at https://www.climatecrew.org/learn_more, retrieved July 2024.*
- [3] **Climate change** - An alteration in the composition of the global atmosphere that can be directly or indirectly attributed to human activity and occurs in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods, leading to changes in the physical environment or biota (the animals and plants living in a particular place, time, or habitat) which have significant deleterious effects on the composition, resilience, or productivity of natural and managed ecosystems; or on the operation of socio-economic systems; or on human health and welfare. *Paraphrased from [the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#), retrieved July 2024.*
- [4] **Sustainability** - The creation and maintenance of conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony to support present and future generations. This concept is based on the principle that everything needed for human survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. This was declared a national priority via The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. *Paraphrased from the [Environmental Protection Agency's website](#), <https://www.epa.gov/sustainability/learn-about-sustainability>, retrieved July 2024.*
- [5] **Triple bottom line** - The assertion that "to be truly sustainable, an organization or community must embody practices that are environmentally sound AND economically feasible AND socially equitable." Originally introduced in the fields of economics and business, this conceptual framework was adopted by the Council of the American Library Association in 2019 in their [Resolution for the Adoption of Sustainability as a Core Value of Librarianship](#).

[6] **Equity** - Equity is not the same as formal equality. Formal equality implies sameness. Equity, on the other hand, assumes difference and takes difference into account to ensure a fair process and, ultimately, a fair (or equitable) outcome. Equity recognizes that some groups were (and are) disadvantaged in accessing educational and employment opportunities and are, therefore, underrepresented or marginalized in many organizations and institutions. The effects of that exclusion often linger systemically within organizational policies, practices and procedures. Equity, therefore, means increasing diversity by ameliorating conditions of disadvantaged groups. *Taken directly from the [ALA Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Final Report \(June 2016, accessed July 2024\)](#) which paraphrases the University of British Columbia.*