



**Position Statement on the Fundamental Right of People
who are Incarcerated to Read, Learn and Access Information
September 2014**

The Canadian Library Association (CLA) and the Canadian Association Law Libraries /Association Canadienne des bibliothèques de droit (CALL/ACBD) endorse the fundamental right of people who are incarcerated to read, learn, and access information.

As correctional institutions in Canada continue to face population management pressures, a growing population with complex needs, and a lack of program capacity¹ the CLA and CALL/ACBD recognize the importance of prison libraries within all levels of correctional institutions.

Literacy and the prison library play an important role inside institutions as well as in reintegration planning. The prison library has the opportunity to mirror the outside world and help prepare the incarcerated person for release.

People serving their sentences have not given up the right to learn and to access information, including legal information. Inmates should therefore have access to materials, services, and opportunities to develop literacy skills, pursue personal and cultural interests, and engage in life-long learning that properly-resourced prison libraries provide.

Qualified, trained and paid staff should work with the collections to meet the education, recreation and rehabilitation needs of the prisoners. The CLA and CALL/ACBD are calling for a renewed focus and reallocation of resources to allow libraries in prison to provide access to books, information, and related relevant programming that can contribute to safety and success both within and outside correctional institutions.

¹ Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator 2012-2013. Retrieved September 5, 2014
<http://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/rpt/pdf/annrpt/annrpt20122013-eng.pdf>