TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Diversity Counts 2009-2010

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT: n/a

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DRAFT OF MOTION: n/a

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BACKGROUND:
The American Library Association’s (ALA) Diversity Counts report is a comprehensive study of gender, race and age in the library profession. The Office for Diversity and the Office for Research and Statistics worked with Decision Demographics to conduct both the 2012 study and the 2006 study. The resulting data provided reliable estimates of the age, gender, and ethnicity for those who indicate participation in the library profession.

ATTACHMENTS: Diversity Counts: A Summary of Findings
Diversity Counts: Summary of Findings

Introduction
The American Library Association’s (ALA) Diversity Counts report is a comprehensive study of gender, race and age in the library profession. The Office for Diversity and the Office for Research and Statistics worked with Decision Demographics to conduct both the 2012 study and the 2006 study. The resulting data provided reliable estimates of the age, gender, and ethnicity for those who indicate participation in the library profession.

As with the original Diversity Counts, following Decision Demographics’ analyses of the 2009 and 2010 American Community Survey data, ALA applied the age, gender, and race and ethnicity distributions to reliable data for library staffing provided by two federal government agencies. Distributions were applied to data reported by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (for public libraries) and the National Center for Education Statistics (for public K-12 and academic libraries). For public and academic libraries, ALA used data from 2010 surveys conducted by IMLS and NCES; for public K-12 schools, ALA used data from 2007-2008 surveys conducted by NCES, the most recent data available. As in the original report, information for credentialed librarians (or state certified library media specialists for public K-12 libraries) and library assistants is reported.

Major Findings for 2009-2010
While the population of credentialed librarians still does not reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the general population, the profession moved incrementally closer—11.9% of credentialed librarians identified as non-white in 2009-2010 compared to 11% in 2000. Other major findings include:

- Credentialed librarians are
  - Predominantly female (82.8%) and white (87.9%);
  - Between the ages of 55-64 (34.8%)—2000 estimates placed the majority between the ages of 45-54.
- Library assistants, show higher rates of diversity, with 73.3% identifying as non-white.
- Latinos compose 16.3% of the population, but just 3.1% of credentialed librarians and 9.0% of library assistants.
- African Americans compose 12.6% of the population, but just 5.1% of credentialed librarians and 9.3% of library assistants.
- Asian and Pacific Islanders compose 5.0% of the population, but just 2.7% of credentialed librarians and 5.5% of library assistants.
Native Americans were less than 1% of the population, but just 0.2% of credentialed librarians and 0.7% of library assistants.

14.8% of credentialed librarians in public libraries identified as non-white.

9.7% of public school state-certified library media specialists identified as non-white.

13.9% of credentialed librarians in academic libraries identified as non-white.

Discussion

Decision Demographics used American Community Survey (ACS) data from 2009 and 2010 to develop averages for the 2012 report. For the original report, Decision Demographics analyzed samples from the 1990 and 2000 decennial Census, specifically information collected from the long form questionnaire sent to one-in-six households in the 2000 Census.

Why the change? Beginning in 1994, the Census Bureau began developing what became the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS was designed to replace the decennial census long-form questionnaire and as part of its development, a large test sample of the ACS was fielded in 2000 for direct comparison to the 2000 Census. The Census Bureau’s evaluation report of this test concluded that the “ACS would provide a reasonable alternative to the decennial census long-form sample.” In 2005, ACS was fully implemented after applying improvements identified in the 2000 test and tests samples fielded in subsequent years. Today the ACS has fully replaced the decennial long-form questionnaire both in Census Bureau reports as well as in the demographic data user community.

As with the original Diversity Counts, following Decision Demographics’ analyses of the 2009 and 2010 American Community Survey data, ALA applied the age, gender, and race and ethnicity distributions to reliable data for library staffing provided by two federal government agencies. Distributions were applied to data reported by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (for public libraries) and the National Center for Education Statistics (for public K-12 and academic libraries). For public and academic libraries, ALA used data from 2010 surveys conducted by IMLS and NCES; for public K-12 schools, ALA used data from 2007-2008 surveys conducted by NCES, the most recent data available. As in the original report, information for credentialed librarians (or state certified library media specialists for public K-12 libraries) and library assistants is reported.

In the interest of providing as informed a discussion as possible, it is important to recognize some of the limitations for interpreting and analyzing Diversity Counts.

The United States Census Bureau has provided a caution for comparing 2010 American Community Survey data with Census 2000, especially in regards to age and sex and race. The ACS question on race was revised in 2008 to make it consistent with the Census 2010 race question. Any changes, compared with Census 2000, may be due to demographic changes,
questionnaire changes, differences in ACS population controls, and/or methodological differences in population estimates.

For the purposes of this report, most analysis will compare the whole of 2009-2010 data to the whole of 2000 data, noting changes in distribution of the wholes for each given data set. This report will not explore changes in a given population (e.g. the number of Hispanic academic librarians in 2000 to the number of Hispanic librarians in 2009-2010) as such an analysis may be misleading.

One noticeable change in this iteration of Diversity counts versus the 2006 (and the 2007 revised) reports will be the reporting of gender, age and disability data for libraries by type—public, academic, and school. In consultation with Decision Demographics, the decision was made to not report this level of specificity due to concerns for the validity of the sample. The data for academic, public, and K-12 public school libraries can become too small to accurately derive characteristics such as gender and age. Decision Demographics advised against compiling three years of data or seeking other solutions to provide a larger sample as those may introduce issues of sample validity. The report does provide information on race and ethnicity by type of library as advised by Decision Demographics.

Finally, it is important to remember that the information provided in this report is based on an analysis of samples from larger data sets. Findings for 2000 and 1990 were also based on small samples of larger data sets. Especially when reporting on smaller populations within those samples (e.g. Native Americans, males in racial and ethnic categories, etc.), the numbers become more subject to sampling and may therefore be less accurate. While it may be tempting to take the numbers as definitive or near definitive (e.g. “There are 572 African American male credentialed librarians”), these numbers may be subject to the limitations of the sample used. Instead of attaching expectations to specific numbers within the data, it may be more accurate to explore trends from year to year, to see if there are consistencies in the growth or change in the population (e.g. “African American males continue to constitute a very small number and percentage of the larger credentialed librarian population”). While these smaller numbers may seem to create challenges for our analysis, their inclusion is still important and necessary. If nothing else, the reporting of small populations within our profession demonstrates a continued need to recruit in these areas to help eliminate their under-representation both in these reports and, more importantly, in the profession.

The racial and ethnic distribution of credentialed librarians has changed slightly from 2000 to 2009-2010. In 2009-2010, 87.9% of credentialed librarians identified as white and in 2000, 88.9% of credentialed librarians identified as such. Two racial and ethnic categories saw significant changes in their representation from 2000 to 2009-2010. African Americans account
for 5.1% of credentialed librarians in 2009-2010; they accounted for 4.8% of credentialed librarians in 2000. Latinos account for 3.1% of credentialed librarians in 2009-2010 whereas they accounted for just 1.9% in 2000. Credentialed librarians identifying as multiracial saw their representation remain relatively constant from 2000 to 2009-2010. Two racial and ethnic categories, Asian and Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders and Native American including Alaskan Natives, experienced changes in the percentage representation. For the Asian and Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders these changes may be part of a declining trend from 1990. For the Native American including Alaskan Natives changes from 1990 to 2000 to 2009-2010 appear to vary widely.

The population of non-white credentialed librarians saw some changes in percentage distribution from 2000 to 2009-2010, though major trends continue. African Americans remain the largest population of non-white credentialed librarians—43% of the total population of non-white credentialed librarians in 2009-2010 and 2000. Latinos increased their representation among non-white credentialed librarians—25.6% of the total population of non-white credentialed librarians in 2009-2010 and 17.6% in 2000—and rose from the third largest population of non-white credentialed librarians in 2000 to the second largest in 2009-2010. Asian and Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders went from being the second largest population of non-white credentialed librarians in 2000 at 28.9% to being the third largest in 2009-2010 at 22.8%.

There was no significant change in the distribution of credentialed librarians by gender. The population of credentialed librarians was 17.2% male and 82.8% female in 2009-2010; 17.7% male and 82.3% female in 2000.

White credentialed librarians see a gender distribution similar to that of the larger credentialed librarian population. As was the case in 2000, the African American credentialed librarian population includes a slightly larger percentage of females—90% in 2009-2010 and 89% in 2000—than the general credentialed librarian population.

The age distribution of credentialed librarians saw some minor changes. As stated earlier, in 2009-2010 the largest portion of credentialed librarians, 34.8%, are between the ages of 55-64—in 2000, the largest portion of credentialed librarians, 45.6%, were between the ages of 45-55. This change affected changes in most other categories, though the percentage distributions for those age 65 or older—5.2% in 2009-2010 and 4.3% in 2000—, those age 35, and younger—12.9% in 2009-2010 and 11.0% in 2000 — remained relatively unchanged.
White credentialed librarians see an age distribution similar to that of the larger credentialed librarian population. With the exception of African American credentialed librarians, most other non-white racial and ethnic groups skew slightly younger, continuing trends from 2000.

Changes from 2000 to 2009-2010, show that the population of library assistants is becoming increasingly diverse in many demographic categories. Gender distribution increased from 82.5% female and 17.5% male in 2000 to 80.9% female and 19.1% male in 2009-2010. Racial and ethnic distribution has also broadened, from 76.2% white in 2000 to 73.3% white in 2009-2010—and almost all racial and ethnic categories seeing higher representation in 2009-2010 than in 2000 (only African Americans saw decreased representation)

Resources

ALA Diversity Counts < http://www.alac.org/offices/diversity/diversitycounts/divcounts>


Library Statistics Program http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/libraries/  

Public Libraries in the United States Survey  
<http://www.imls.gov/research/publiclibraries_in_the_united_states_survey.aspx>