

## **YALSA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan**

### **Foreword**

The purpose of this plan is to affirm YALSA's commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, and to highlight the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion related strategies that the YALSA Board is taking in the organization's Strategic and Implementation Plans. Given the predominant whiteness and femaleness of the profession and the diversity of the populations served by the profession it is crucial that equity, diversity, and inclusion are at the forefront of our member's minds and that we as an organization are working to make the YALSA a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization. The document provides YALSA's Mission; Vision; Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; Vision for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; and Strategies for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for 2018-2020. The strategies section lists five goals with their supporting strategies. Each strategy is embedded in the Strategic and Implementation Plan and will be evaluated as it is completed. It is a living document that the YALSA Board will revisit and revise as necessary and during future strategic planning processes.

### **Acknowledgements**

We wish to thank the Advancing Diversity Taskforce for laying the groundwork for this Plan. The taskforce members included Nicole A. Cooke (Chair), Amanda Barnhart, Shauntee Burns-Simpson, Veronica Rey, Alice Son, Valerie Tagoe, and Julie Winkelstein.

### **YALSA Mission**

Our mission is to support library staff in alleviating the challenges teens face, and in putting all teens – especially those with the greatest needs – on the path to successful and fulfilling lives.

### **YALSA Vision**

Our vision is that all teens, from a variety of backgrounds including, but not limited to ability, class, gender-identity, sexual orientation, race, religion and power-differentiated groups, will have access to quality library programs and services – no matter where they occur – that are tailored to the community and that create new opportunities for all teens' to promote personal growth, academic success, and career development, while linking teens and staff to resources, connected learning opportunities, coaching, and mentoring.

### **YALSA Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are ideals that the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) seeks to affirm in all facets of the organization. As a professional organization dedicated to enhancing library services for and with teens, YALSA recognizes that all teens, and particularly teens from underserved and marginalized communities, need and deserve to see themselves reflected in the library staffing, policies, signage, web site content and much more. Therefore, YALSA seeks to address the cultural mismatch between today's increasingly diverse teen population and the librarian workforce, which remains overwhelmingly white and female.

Although achieving greater representational diversity is an important component of YALSA's EDI goals, there are two equally important issues that the YALSA is committed to redressing on an institutional level: equity and inclusion. Attending to issues of equity and inclusion are important because they help move the organization away from mere platitudes about diversity and demand measurable actions to redress the systemic power asymmetries that have kept certain groups of people on the periphery of the organization. When YALSA attends to inequities in the organization, there is a direct benefit to all of

the nation's teens who are more apt to feel included and empowered in library and information spaces, both physically and virtually. Moreover, an explicit EDI statement can help undergird cultural competence training and professional development for the library staff charged with serving the diverse needs of all teens.

Further, YALSA affirms and supports the American Library Association's (ALA) EDI related policies, as outlined in the ALA Policy Manual, sections B3 through B8.

*–Adopted by YALSA's Board of Directors October 17, 2018*

### **YALSA Vision for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

The vision for YALSA is to be a diverse, inclusive and equitable organization which flourishes on the exchange of ideas from different perspectives. We believe the diversity of viewpoints that comes from different life experiences, identities, cultural backgrounds, and more enables YALSA to better achieve its mission to support library staff in alleviating the challenges teens face, and in putting all teens – especially those with the greatest needs – on the path to successful and fulfilling lives.

### **We are committed to:**

- Increasing diversity, which is expressed in myriad forms, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, culture, national origin, age, disability status, ideology, religion, power differentiated groups, and professional skill and experience levels, across the organization including among our members, leadership, staff, and partners.
- Working actively to redress institutional inequities and systemic power asymmetries that affect our society, to challenge bias, harassment, and discrimination, and to provide equal opportunity for all persons.
- Deliberately pursuing efforts to ensure that YALSA is an inclusive place where differences are welcomed, where different perspectives are respectfully heard and responded to, and where every individual feels a sense of belonging and inclusion.

### **Goals and Strategies for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion 2018-2020**

Over the next two years, YALSA seeks the following goals to move toward our Vision for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:

1. Audit existing YALSA activities to create a more inclusive, equitable, and welcoming organizational environment
2. Recruit, retain, and develop a more diverse membership and cadre of volunteers at all levels in the organization
3. Continue to align our policies, procedures and practices with our EDI vision
4. Ensure that YALSA members know how to develop inclusive and equitable library spaces, services and programs
5. Create and maintain formal and informal partnerships with other organizations around a shared commitment to redressing institutional inequities and systemic power asymmetries

### **Goal 1: Create an inclusive, equitable, and welcoming organizational environment**

#### **Strategies**

- Expand current YALSA Board member leadership training to include high-quality education and experiences in diversity, equity and inclusion
- Provide professional development experiences for YALSA staff focused on related topics such as cultural competency and handling diversity, equity and inclusion issues
- Provide training for committee, taskforce, and jury chairs related to diversity, equity and inclusion both as part of their onboarding process and as continued leadership support.
- Leadership and staff will apply what they learn from EDI-related training and implement it in member engagement, recruitment and retention
- Provide feedback mechanisms for participants in webinars, listserv discussions, committee meetings, and conference programs to ensure they are inclusive and respond to incidents of bias, harassment, discrimination, and intolerance if necessary
- Offer ongoing opportunities for YALSA members, leaders and staff to discuss EDI and what it means
- Conduct yearly surveys and periodic focus groups with YALSA members and potential members to help the association understand EDI perspectives related to YALSA's organizational environment
- Offer conference buddies for first-time attendees
- Ensure events and experiences at conferences, including networking opportunities, are inclusive
- Continue to encourage diverse participation in activities such as the weekly Member Spotlight in the eNews
- Provide regular communication to Members as laid out in the Communication Plan.

## **Goal 2: Recruit, retain, and develop a more diverse membership**

### **Strategies**

- Develop a recruitment campaign targeted at library staff from underrepresented groups
- Encourage ALA to investigate alternative dues structures
- Assess existing pathways to professional success and involvement within YALSA for underrepresented groups
- Provide support for members from underrepresented groups such as a mentoring program, networking opportunities at conferences or in ALA Connect, grants to attend YALSA's symposium or other events, and other opportunities.
- Continue to reach out to and engage with individuals representing underrepresented groups to serve on the YALSA Board, committees, task forces, and juries, and to present at conferences.
- Continue to provide guidance for committee appointments and volunteer opportunities to include and increase diversity, equity and inclusion
- Continue to expand member involvement in YALSA committees, task forces, and other volunteer activities that do not require conference attendance
- Promptly respond to volunteers who fill out the volunteer form
- Implement a member referral program aimed at individuals from diverse backgrounds
- Partner with other organizations to recruit diverse members
- Ensure recruitment materials prominently feature YALSA's commitment to EDI

## **Goal 3: Align our policies and practices with our EDI vision**

### **Strategies**

- Institute a practice to ask ourselves these questions: How does this policy, practice or partnership support YALSA's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion vision? Does it support equitable and inclusive access and opportunity? Is it neutral? Does it stand in the way of our vision?

- Audit existing policies, procedures and practices to align them with YALSA's EDI vision
- Use an equity lens to create messaging, resources, services and programs
- Require that all proposals that come to the Board include a section on attention to equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Hold ourselves accountable through annual internal review of all strategies in this plan, our values, and YALSA policies and adjust as needed.

**Goal 4. Ensure that YALSA members know how to develop inclusive and equitable library services and programs**

**Strategies**

- Continue to provide professional development experiences for YALSA members of all job types, including support staff, focused on cultural competency, diversity, equity and inclusion
- Embed cultural competency, diversity, equity, and inclusion in all YALSA professional learning opportunities no matter the topic focus
- Create a clearinghouse or speakers' bureau of people with expertise in equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Provide models of inclusive and equitable library services and programs
- Create and distribute materials, such as toolkits, to help members better serve diverse youth and to address issues of institutional bias and racism in their library

**Goal 5. Create formal and informal partnerships with other organizations around a shared commitment to redressing institutional inequities and systemic power asymmetries**

**Strategies**

- Work with LIS and iSchools to ensure that cultural competencies, equity, diversity and inclusion is included in all youth-oriented curricula
- Identify potential partners whose mission is in alignment with YALSA's EDI vision and build opportunities to move our work forward through the partnership
- Identify potential funding agencies who make diversity, equity, and inclusion central to their missions and philanthropic efforts

**Implementation**

The strategies listed in this plan have been and will be embedded in YALSA's current and future Strategic Organizational and Implementation Plans.

**Evaluation**

Each of the strategies will be evaluated separately as part of its individual implementation. The YALSA President will present a progress report at the 2019 ALA Annual Conference at the end of year one of this plan. For the ALA Annual Conference in 2020, a two-year annual report will be presented to give an update on the status of this plan, as well as an updated plan for the following two years.

**Additional Information/Resources Consulted**

- YALSA's Next Steps for implementing the Advancing Diversity TF recommendations, [www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/EDINextSteps\\_AN18.pdf](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/EDINextSteps_AN18.pdf)

- Draft YALSA Statement on the Value of EDI,  
[www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/EDlstatement\\_AN18.pdf](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/EDlstatement_AN18.pdf)
- ALA Policy Manual, [www.ala.org/aboutala/b3-diversity-old-number-60](http://www.ala.org/aboutala/b3-diversity-old-number-60)
- YALSA Advancing Diversity Task Force Report,  
[www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/AdvancingDiversityReport\\_AN18.pdf](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/AdvancingDiversityReport_AN18.pdf)
- Examples of EDI plans from other organizations:
  - <http://www.collinsfoundation.org/sites/default/files/DEI%20Vision%20and%20Strategies%2C%20approved%2012-9-15.pdf>
  - [https://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/content/edf\\_2014\\_diversity\\_strategy\\_full\\_report\\_0.pdf](https://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/content/edf_2014_diversity_strategy_full_report_0.pdf)