

**TO:** ALA Executive Board

**RE:** Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:**

Update on equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives of the Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services (ODLOS), ODLOS Advisory Committee, and other key stakeholders

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:**

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**DRAFT OF MOTION:**

No motion proposed – informational only

**DATE:** January 8, 2021

**BACKGROUND:**

The report details key initiatives and efforts related to equity, diversity, and inclusion within and beyond the Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services.

## Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Updates

January 2021 Executive Board Meeting

### Key Initiatives

#### EDI Assembly

Established at the direction of the ALA Executive Board at the 2020 Midwinter Meeting, ALA's EDI Assembly has now met twice, with an inaugural meeting on August 4<sup>th</sup> and a second quarterly meeting on November 17<sup>th</sup>. The charge of the Assembly is to provide a forum for all groups within ALA and ALA-affiliated organizations working on initiatives related to equity, diversity, and inclusion to discuss their activities, identify opportunities for collaboration and coordination, and explore new initiatives related to the association's strategic direction on equity, diversity, and inclusion.

In light of the timing close to the election, the current climate, and the messages both sent and received about equity, diversity and inclusion, the November 17<sup>th</sup> meeting focused on the theme of messaging, specifically in relation to these areas: the erasure of Native Americans around the election and beyond; media literacy; intersectionality; Historically Black Colleges and Universities; the role of libraries; and responding to negative messaging. Attendees chose breakout rooms based on the areas, and members of the ODLOS Advisory Committee facilitated the conversations. Participants added themes and takeaways from the conversations to the ongoing [shared meeting notes](#).

#### Cultural Competencies for Racial Equity Task Force

The [Building Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity Framework Task Force](#), a joint initiative of ALA (specifically the Association of College and Research Libraries, the Public Library Association, and ODLOS) and the Association of Research Libraries, continues the work of its charge: to create a framework for cultural proficiencies in racial equity that can be used in public and academic libraries through: scanning the environment, including review of relevant documents to identify literature and similar statements and frameworks related to racial equity; drafting the framework; seeking comment from stakeholders and the library community on the draft, and revising as needed.

Two members of the task force, Kristyn Caragher and Tatiana Bryant, went through IRB at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) and University of California Irvine (UCI), respectively, and released their "Racial Equity Task Force Survey" to assess public and academic libraries' racial equity efforts, employees' perceptions of those efforts, and employees' experience with racial equity and inequity within their library. The co-investigators are now in the process of analyzing the survey data.

Project facilitator Katherine Skinner has convened two of three planned Working Sessions (using a logic model process to develop the draft framework) on November 9 and December 7; the third session is scheduled for late January. Finally, task force co-conveners Marcela Isuster and Jennifer Garrett host monthly virtual coffee breaks to develop rapport among the task force members.

#### Libraries Respond: National Day of Racial Healing

The National Day of Racial Healing (NDORH) is an opportunity for people, organizations, and communities across the United States to call for racial healing, bring people together in their common humanity, and take collective action to create a more just and equitable world.

January 19, 2021 will mark the fifth annual National Day of Racial Healing. The day was established in 2017 by more than 550 leaders from around the United States who wanted to set aside a day to take action together.

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The [Libraries Respond page](#) links to several resources, including ALA's 2021 [Proclamation](#), an [action guide for libraries](#), and tools for self- and organizational assessment.

### Spectrum Scholarship Program

In November, ODLOS received a \$170,000 grant from an anonymous funder to provide an additional 20 scholarships as part of the 2020-2021 Spectrum Cohort. Recipients will be announced in January 2021.

As part of the Community Catalysts project category of the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program, ODLOS submitted a preliminary proposal to IMLS to fund another round of Spectrum Doctoral Fellowships. If invited by IMLS, ODLOS will submit a full proposal in February to fund 10 Spectrum Doctoral Fellowships and begin its support of a cohort of future LIS faculty committed to fostering racial equity through teaching and research. The grant would also involve building partnership models among degree programs to support new course development and cross-listing of courses in a social justice curriculum.

On December 2, 2020, Heather VanDyne (2018 Scholar) and Nancy S. Kirkpatrick (2005 Scholar) hosted an online informational/recruiting session focused on common application questions and early mentoring that had over 100 advance registrants and 60 live participants.

Finally, the application for the 2021-2022 Spectrum cohort opened September 1, 2020 through the [ALA Scholarship Clearinghouse](#) and will close March 1, 2021.

### Continuing Education

#### EDIcon and Other Trainings

The Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services facilitates a portfolio of equity, diversity, and inclusion trainings for library systems, state chapters, and organizations. In the fall of 2020, we adapted several of our in-person trainings to virtual ones and experienced a high demand for trainings. In fact, between October 2020 and January 2021, Kristin Lahurd, ODLOS Interim Director, and Mariel Colbert, Program Officer in the Chapter Relations Office, conducted 11 virtual trainings for more than 400 participants, across several groups: the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, the NASA @ your Library team with the Space Science Institute, the State Library of North Carolina, and the San Mateo County Libraries.

The most significant undertaking – and success – during this time was adapting our flagship training, EDIcon: Foundations of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, from a half-day in-person training normally facilitated at conferences or staff in-service days to a series of three consecutive 1.5-hour virtual trainings. The evaluation feedback from our first virtual EDIcon in December 2020 has been very positive. As one attendee wrote, “Terrific training! I thought you did a great job adapting to an all virtual environment. I thought the length of the sessions and overall training arc also worked.” Another noted, “I feel the DEIA [diversity, equity, inclusion and access] principles were explained in a very warm, inviting way that led to strong discussions. I've been part of other DEIA trainings that caused an immediate defense response. This did not.” In partnership with the Chapter Relations Office, ODLOS will continue to provide virtual trainings in the coming months, including for the Utah Library Association / Mountain Plains Library Association virtual conference in the spring.

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### Member-Led Webinars

In October and in partnership with the American Indian Library Association (AILA), ODLOS hosted the webinar, “The American Indian Youth Literature Awards: Discussion and Reflection.” The webinar provided an overview of the American Indian Youth Literature Awards, highlighted the 2020 award winners, and reflected on the impact of the Awards on kidlit publishing. Indigenous stories are all around us, but fewer than 1% of books published for kids in the U.S. are by Indigenous writers. US publishers overwhelmingly ignore the contributions of 574 Tribal Nations. The session was presented by AILA President Cindy Hohl (Santee Sioux) and Naomi Bishop, Akimel O'otham/Pima and a member of the Gila River Indian Community of Arizona.

In November, ODLOS hosted “Out-Doing Outreach in a COVID-19 World,” in partnership with the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services (ABOS). ABOS leaders Cathy Zimmerman and Susan Parkins presented on how COVID-19 has affected library outreach programs as libraries continue to provide outreach services in a COVID-19 world and on implementing new innovative programs to meet the public need.

The recordings of these webinars can be accessed on the [ODLOS archive page](#).

In December, EMIERT hosted the webinar “[Combating Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia with Multicultural Children's Literature](#).” Panelists included Heidi Rabinowitz from the Association of Jewish Libraries and “Book of Life” Podcast and Sadaf Siddique, co-author of *Muslims in Story: Expanding Multicultural Understanding Through Children's and Young Adult Literature*. The speakers recommended titles and discussed publishing issues common to both groups. The webinar included resources for positive representation of these groups in our communities, giving attention to the issue in representation of educating “window” readers while reflecting on the authentic experience of “mirror” readers.

### EDI & Social Justice Opportunities for Library Workers

ODLOS [maintains a list of equity, diversity, and inclusion \(EDI\) opportunities](#) that are geared toward the LIS profession. Library workers contribute to [a form](#) to add information about upcoming EDI events that include registration options for individuals outside of a particular institution/membership organization.

### Midwinter 2021 Highlights

#### MLK Sunrise Celebration

Part of the 2021 Midwinter Virtual Meeting, the 22nd Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Observance and Sunrise Celebration will be held as a prerecorded program from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. CST on Monday, January 25, 2021. The Celebration will feature selected passages from the works of Dr. King and a keynote address by Dr. V.P. Franklin, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of History and Education at the University of California, Riverside, and author of the upcoming *The Young Crusaders: The Untold Story of the Children and Teenagers Who Galvanized the Civil Rights Movement* (Beacon Press, 2021). The Call to Action will be delivered by the 14th Librarian of Congress, Dr. Carla Hayden. Member Leaders from multiple ALA round tables, committees, and affiliates will also participate in the celebration. The 22nd Annual MLK Sunrise Celebration is sponsored by SRRT, BCALA, OCLC, Beacon Press, and ODLOS.

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### Microaggressions Session

Midwinter 2021 will include an experiential learning session on microaggressions in libraries, envisioned and sponsored by ALA President Julius C. Jefferson, Jr. and coordinated by ODLOS. This live session, a LibLearnX preview, will take place on Sunday, January 24, 2021, from 9:45 -11a.m. CST. It is intended to be the first in a series of experiential equity, diversity, and inclusion sessions.

The effects of microaggressions are well documented. For those who experience them, microaggressions tend to create a hostile and invalidating climate. Not as well known or applied are the skills needed to intervene when microaggressions take place, particularly in ways that maintain relationships with patrons and colleagues. This interactive session will focus not just on microaggressions and bystander intervention but also explore how library workers may also perpetuate or be targets of microaggressions. Attendees will explore personal experience scenarios and intervention strategies from various perspectives, including perpetrator, witness/bystander, and target.

The session will be hosted by ALA President Jefferson and moderated by Alanna Aiko Moore, Past President of APALA. The breakout conversations will be facilitated by member leaders, with significant representation from ALA President Jefferson's Advisory Committee: Dr. Ling Hwey Jeng, Aaron LaFromboise, Janice Welburn, Yvonne Dooley, Mike Marlin, Madeline Peña, Ann Crewdson, Amanda Wilson, Willie Miller, and Jaena Alabi.

Due to the session's focus on experiential learning in small groups, capacity will be limited, and attendees will need to register in advance. An email from Conference Services prior to the start of Midwinter will provide registration details.