

ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services Updates January 2022 Executive Board Meeting

TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion updates from the Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:

Update on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives of the Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services (ODLOS) and other key stakeholders

ACTION REQUESTED BY:

Kevin D. Stowder, Director, Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services

CONTACT PERSON:

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DRAFT OF MOTION:

No motion proposed – informational only

DATE:

January 2022

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.

ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services Updates

January 2022 Executive Board Meeting

Notable Initiatives

Committee on Diversity

The American Library Association's (ALA) Committee on Diversity has unveiled its **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Scorecard for Library and Information Organizations**.

Drafted in 2021 by Natisha Harper, Kimberly Franklin, and Jamia Williams under the auspices of the ALA Committee on Diversity, the DEI Scorecard promotes accountability and transparency in gauging institutional performance on five measures of DEI presented in rubric format along with supplemental reflection questions: Embeddedness of DEI into the Culture and Climate of the Organization; Training and Education; Recruitment, Hiring, Retention, and Promotion; Budget Priorities for DEI; and Data Practices.

Development of the DEI Scorecard was informed by ALA's Core Values of Librarianship, ACRL Diversity Standards: Cultural Competency for Academic Libraries, and other report card/scorecard measures of DEI performance. The DEI Scorecard can be used as-is or adapted to accommodate local context.

[Download the template.](#)

2021 Coretta Scott King Book Donation Grant

The Coretta Scott King Book Awards awarded 3 organizations with over 200 books that were donated as part of the Coretta Scott King Book Donation Grant. The 3 grant recipients are Marion-Perry County Library (Marion, Alabama), Southwest Baltimore Charter School (Baltimore, Maryland), The West Philadelphia Alliance for Children (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania). Grant recipients will receive a copy of each book sent for consideration for the 2021 Book Awards and were published in 2020. They also received copies of the 2021 Coretta Scott King Book Award Winning and Honor books which include "Before The Ever After" and "R-E-S-P-E-C-T: Aretha Franklin, The Queen of Soul".

Coretta Scott King Book Awards Round Table Status

In 2021, the Coretta Scott King Book Awards Committee started the process to obtain Round Table status. Working with EMIERT, they created a task force to research and provide recommendations on how to move forward with this charge. With the support of EMIERT, CSK submitted their request to COO by collecting over 100 signatures, a summary of the "past, present, and future" of the committee, and letters of support from ALA members. As of January 10th, 2022, COO approved CSK's proposal and will move forward with presenting the proposal at the next Council Meeting.

ALA Awards Spectrum Scholarships for 2021

ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services Updates

January 2022 Executive Board Meeting

The American Library Association's (ALA) Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services awarded the 2021 Spectrum Scholarships to 60 exceptional students pursuing graduate degrees in library and information studies.

Since 1997, the ALA has awarded more than 1,300 Spectrum Scholarships. During the 2021 application cycle, the Spectrum Scholarship Program received four times as many applications as there were available scholarships, and the majority of this year's applicants were deemed highly fundable. A prestigious committee of 28 jurors selected this year's Spectrum Scholars based on their commitment to community building, leadership potential and planned contributions to making social justice part of everybody's everyday work in LIS.

[Meet the Scholars.](#)

EDI Assembly

Established at the direction of the ALA Executive Board at the 2020 Midwinter Meeting, ALA's EDI Assembly maintains a quarterly standing meeting. 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.

Most recently, the Assembly established guidelines to navigate and facilitate conversations that would propel the EDI work of ALA. With the goal of positioning ALA as the leading thought-partner and advocate regarding those marginalized in the field, a set area of focus was deemed necessary. Working sub-committees discussed the following:

I. **Barriers to Intellectual Freedom and Social Justice** (including "CRT" pushback)
(Suggested Pre-Reading: [ALA Statement](#))

II. **Barriers to Participation in ALA for Marginalized Groups** (Suggested Pre-Reading: [The Inaccessibility of ACRL 2021](#))

III. **Barriers to Advancement/Retention in the Field for Marginalized Groups** (Suggested Pre-Reading: [The Problem of Retention in Librarianship](#))

IV. **Barriers to Recognition of BIPOC Labor** (Suggested Pre-Reading: [Statement Against White Appropriation of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color's Labor](#))

The Assembly has now moved to seeking out external partners to speak on the topics listed and provide context around the work from the field.

Spectrum Doctoral Fellowship

In July 2021, the Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services received notification from IMLS of funding for the four-year project, Spectrum Doctoral Fellowship Program: Catalysts for Change. With co-Project Director Dr. Nicole A. Cooke, ODLOS will recruit 8-10 racially and ethnically diverse doctoral students focused on advancing racial equity and social justice in LIS curricula. The project will build capacity and cooperation amongst partnering LIS degree programs to expand social justice curricula and increase support for BIPOC doctoral students and faculty in LIS. Applications for

ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services Updates

January 2022 Executive Board Meeting

this fellowship have now closed as of December 13th, 2021. The review committee is now working to orient jurors and begin the selection process.

Diversity Research Grants Advisory Committee, a subcommittee of the ODLOS Advisory Committee

As it stands, the Diversity Research Grants (DRG) Advisory Committee has made the collective decision to extend the hiatus of grant distribution until members are able to move the needle on existing work streams. Envisioning the application process with a new criterion is a large part of what is being addressed and edited by the committee. Meaningful conversations are around access, intent, and transparency when it comes to the need for race, inequity, and social justice to remain priority themes across all grants awarded through the Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services. Members currently serving on chair roles are also looking to begin the process of transition or co-leadership which has contributed to the delay.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Trainings

The Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services continues to experience high demand for equity, diversity and inclusion training for library audiences. Kristin Lahurd, ODLOS Assistant Director, and Mariel Colbert, CRO Program Officer, facilitated fifteen trainings between the months of October to December. These included both interactive and webinar-style trainings, presented across four library organizations: San Mateo County Libraries; HELIN (Higher Education Library Information Network) Library Consortium; Prairie Trails Public Library District and RAILS (Reaching Across Illinois Library System); and the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association. Over 300 people participated in the live sessions, with more viewing the recordings of the webinar-style training sessions.

Cultural Competencies for Racial Equity Task Force

The [Building Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity Framework Task Force](#), a joint initiative of ALA (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. On January 19, the task force will launch the public comment process, seeking feedback from the library community on the draft Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity Framework, via a CommentPress site. The comment period will close on March 2. The task force will also hold two online forums soliciting additional input on the draft in February -- the first for library workers from all library types and the second for library workers from public libraries.

Interest Groups

Since ASGCLA's dissolution in 2020, these 3 interest groups (below) were moved to our Office (Office of Diversity, Literacy, Outreach Services).

- Consumer Health Information Libraries

ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services Updates January 2022 Executive Board Meeting

- Tribal Librarians Interest Group
- Universal Access Interest Group

Because there is interest to dissolve these interest groups and the committee that would have dissolved this group (per the ASGCLA manual, "Interest Group Coordinating Committee") no longer exists, the recommendation by governance is to go through the Committee on Organization, especially since this is currently being housed under an ALA Office (not Division).

We are looking to leave it up to COO to determine if they can provide their recommendation to ODLOS to sunset, form an assembly to possibly combine interested members, or if it needs Council's approval.

Revision of 2017 Standards and Guidelines for Service for the Library of Congress Network of Libraries serving the Blind and Physical Handicap

ODLOS and LSSPS (Library Services to Special Populations) will work on the standards with NLS agreed under a contract that is being developed to be implemented for a project coordinator and meetings between Conferences to update the standards for the next 2 years.

The standards process is initiated by NLS asking for a proposal and budget from ODLOS. After the contract is set, ODLOS will work with NLS, and the member interest groups to identify members of the Working Group and the Advisory Committee. The work plan for the next contract will be different if more of the work can be done virtually and less travel is needed.

The opportunities for user / member / librarian input is still important and members of the 2015-2017 working group indicated that the public hearings scheduled during ALA Midwinter and Annual for the different drafting stages are valuable and allowed the working group to discuss the changes and receive feedback.