

# Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Updates

## October 2021 Executive Board Meeting

**EBD #12.9**  
**2021-2022**

**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. Strowder, Director, Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services

**CONTACT PERSON:**

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**DRAFT OF MOTION:**

No motion proposed – informational only

**DATE:**

October 11<sup>th</sup>, 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

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### Notable Initiatives

#### **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](#))

#### **Committee on Diversity**

The American Library Association's (ALA) Committee on Diversity has revealed 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.](#)

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### **2021 SRRT Afternoon of Social Justice**

On July 8, ALA's Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) hosted its second Afternoon of Social Justice. This free virtual event featured librarians and scholars as they presented on a variety of topics including racial justice and social activism in libraries, youth homelessness, and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Multi-Cultural Idea Exchange in the age of COVID.

[Learn more.](#)

### **ALA Awards Spectrum Scholarships for 2021**

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.](#)

### **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. ODLOS has taken the preliminary steps to ensure a strong foundation with all partner institutions, affiliate committees, and potential fellows is underway with the application portal opening this fall.

### **Diversity Research Grants Committee**

As it stands, the Diversity Research Grants (DRG) 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 be remain priority themes across all grants awarded through the Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services. Member currently serving 9n chair roles are also looking to begin the process of transition or co-leadership which has contributed to the delay.

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### **Library Services to Refugees during the COVID-19 Pandemic Webinar**

On June 20, 2021, the world observed the United Nations' (UN) [World Refugee Day](#). This event honors the courage, strength and determination of women, men and children who are forced to flee their homeland under threat of persecution, conflict, and violence.

The American Library Association and the Mortenson Center for International Library Programs hosted a webinar on June 18, 12 p.m. Central. The webinar will present the experiences of libraries in and outside the United States serving refugees, and policies implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic that have impacted the welfare of refugees and asylum seekers