

Committee on Diversity (COD) Report to Council
2019 Midwinter Meeting
Seattle, WA

Submitted by Shauntee Burns-Simpson, Chair

Committee members: Shauntee Burns-Simpson (Chair and ODLOS Advisory Rep), Alexandra Gomez, Virgen Milagros Gonzalez, Sukrit Goswami, Amiya P. Hutson, Rebecca Kemp, Rodney Lippard, Kelsey Dawn McLane, Ella Mae Mulford, Miriam Nauenburg, Sarivette Ortiz-Sanchez, Jesse Bernard Sanders, Nichole Lynn Shabazz, Stewart Shaw, Ngoc-Yen Tran, Federico Martinez Garcia, Jr. (Associate), Jody Gray (Staff Liaison)

ACTION

Background

A group of members editing the Extending Our Reach toolkit requested COD review and **revise ALA Policy B.8.10, the old Policy 61, "Library Services to the Poor"** for more inclusive language.

B.8.10 Library Services to the Poor Policy was adopted by ALA Council in June 1990. The Committee on Diversity is proposing that the language from the original proposal be updated and would like to see the inclusion of 6 new points indicated below as numbers 15-20.

ALA Policy B.8.10, the old Policy 61, "Library Services to the Poor" Revision

Original	Proposed
<p>The American Library Association promotes equal access to information for all persons and recognizes the urgent need to respond to the increasing number of poor children, adults, and families in America. These people are affected by a combination of limitations, including illiteracy, illness, social isolation, homelessness, hunger, and discrimination, which hamper the effectiveness of traditional library services. Therefore it is crucial that libraries recognize their role in enabling poor people to participate fully in a democratic society, by utilizing a wide variety of available resources and strategies. Concrete programs of training and development are needed to sensitize and prepare library staff to identify poor people's needs and deliver relevant services. And within the American Library Association the coordinating mechanisms of programs and activities dealing with poor people in various divisions, offices, and units should be strengthened, and support for low-income liaison activities should be enhanced.</p>	<p>The American Library Association promotes equal access to information for all persons and recognizes the need to respond to people experiencing poverty, which include people experiencing homelessness, in the United States. Therefore, it is crucial that libraries recognize their role in supporting these communities, so they may participate fully in a democratic society, by utilizing a wide variety of available resources and strategies. Concrete programs of training and development are needed to prepare library staff to identify needs and deliver relevant services to people experiencing poverty. In addition, the American Library Association (divisions, offices, and units) should be strengthened to support low-income neighborhoods and people experiencing poverty through programs, services, and resources.</p>

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B.8.10.1 Policy Objectives (Old Number 61.1)

The American Library Association shall implement these objectives by:

Original	Proposed Change
1. Promoting the removal of barriers to library and information services, particularly fees and overdue charges.	Promoting the removal of barriers to library and information services, particularly fees, and overdue charges.
2. Promoting the publication, production, purchase, and ready accessibility of print and non-print materials that honestly address the issues of poverty and homelessness, that deal with poor people in a respectful way, and that are of practical use to low income patrons	Promoting the publication, production, purchase, and ready accessibility of print and non-print materials that focus directly on the issues of poverty, that engage people respectfully, and are practical and responsive to low income library users and their needs.
3. Promoting full, stable, and ongoing funding for existing legislative programs in support to flow income services and for pro-active library programs that reach beyond traditional service-sites to poor children, adults, and families.	Promoting full, stable, and ongoing funding for existing legislative programs and services in support of people experiencing poverty and for pro-active library programs that reach beyond traditional service-sites.
4. Promoting training opportunities for librarians, in order to teach effective techniques for generating public funding to upgrade library services to poor people.	Promoting training opportunities for librarians and library staff to learn effective funding techniques to improve accessibility for library users experiencing poverty.
5. Promoting the incorporation of low income programs and services into regular library budgets in all types of libraries, rather than the tendency to support these projects solely with "soft money" like private or federal grants.	Acknowledging economic equity in funding by promoting the incorporation of programs, services, and resources for people experiencing poverty into regular budgets in all types of libraries, regardless of the availability of "soft money" like private or federal grants to support these programs.
6. Promoting equity in funding adequate library services for poor people in terms of materials, facilities, and equipment.	REMOVE Number 6. The sentiment is covered in Number 5. All numbers after this will change.
7. Promoting supplemental support for library resources for and about low-income populations by urging local, state, and federal governments, and the private sector, to provide adequate funding.	Now number 6. No other changes.
8. Promoting increased public awareness through programs, displays, bibliographies, and publicity of the importance of poverty related library resources and services in all segments of society	#7 Promoting increased public awareness through programs, displays, bibliographies, and publicity related to libraries' responsibilities in addressing economic barriers to service.
9. Promoting the determination of output measures through the encouragement of community needs assessments, giving special emphasis to assessing the need so low-income people and involving both anti-poverty advocates and poor people themselves in such assessments.	#8 Promoting the determination of service outcomes through the active support of community needs assessments that directly involve community members who are experiencing poverty.
10. Promoting direct representation of poor people and anti-poverty advocates through appointment to local boards and creation of	#9 Promoting direct representation and support of community members who are experiencing, have

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<p>local advisory committees on service to low-income people, such appointments to include library paid transportation and stipends.</p>	<p>experienced, or advocate for people experiencing poverty on local boards and advisory committees.</p>
<p>11. Promoting training to sensitize library staff to issues affecting poor people and to attitudinal and other barriers that hinder poor people's use of libraries.</p>	<p>#10 Promoting library staff training that raises awareness; relates to issues affecting the daily realities of people experiencing poverty; recognizes and addresses attitudinal and other barriers that hinder equal access to library services and resources.</p>
<p>12. Promoting networking and cooperation between libraries and other agencies, organizations, and advocacy groups in order to develop programs and services that effectively reach poor people.</p>	<p>#11 Promoting networking and cooperation between libraries and other agencies, organizations, and advocacy groups to develop programs and services that are useful and relevant for people experiencing poverty.</p>
<p>13. Promoting the implementation of an expanded federal low-income housing program, national health insurance, full employment policy, living minimum wage and welfare payments, affordable daycare, and programs likely to reduce, if not eliminate, poverty itself.</p>	<p>#12 Promoting the implementation of expanded federal programs that acknowledge and address poverty.</p>
<p>14. Promoting among library staff the collection of food and clothing donations, volunteering personal time to antipoverty activities and contributing money to direct-aid organizations.</p>	<p>#13 Promoting, supporting and facilitating local community efforts to meet the basic needs of all community members, especially those experiencing poverty.</p>
<p>15. Promoting related efforts concerning minorities and women, since these groups are disproportionately represented among poor people.</p>	<p>#14 Acknowledging the disproportionate rate at which poverty affects underserved populations, including but not limited to women, people of color, LGBTQ+ people, non-Native English speakers, formerly incarcerated people, and people with disabilities.</p>

The following are additions to the policy; not changes:

15. Encouraging the use of respectful, inclusive and person-first language, such as “community members experiencing poverty.”
16. Ensuring a parity of library services, hours, resources, and facilities between affluent and low income library neighborhoods.
17. Promoting an attractive and inviting environment in all libraries including low income neighborhoods.
18. Promoting the development of collections, programs, and services to help bridge the literacy gap for non-English speakers and new readers in all libraries, including low income neighborhoods.
19. Promoting publications, outreach, and marketing in the native language for Speakers of Other Languages in all libraries, including low income neighborhoods.
20. Promoting the review of public conduct policies and administrative procedures to ensure they are not creating unintentional barriers to people experiencing poverty.

Revision in full

B.8.10 Addressing Poverty, Economic Inequality, and the Responsibilities of Libraries (Old Number 61)

The American Library Association promotes equal access to information for all persons and recognizes the need to respond to people experiencing poverty in the United States. People experiencing poverty may be affected by a combination of limitations, including illiteracy, illness, social isolation, homelessness, hunger, and discrimination, which hamper the effectiveness of traditional library services. Therefore, it is crucial that libraries recognize their role in enabling people experiencing poverty to participate fully in a democratic society, by utilizing a wide variety of available resources and strategies. Concrete programs of training and development are needed to prepare library staff to identify needs and deliver relevant services to people experiencing poverty. In addition, the American Library Association (divisions, offices, and units) should be strengthened to support low-income and people experiencing poverty through programs and activities.

B.8.10.1 Policy Objectives (Old Number 61.1)

The American Library Association shall implement these objectives by:

1. Promoting the removal of barriers to library and information services, particularly fees, and overdue charges.
2. Promoting the publication, production, purchase, and ready accessibility of print and non-print materials that focus directly on the issues of poverty, that engage people respectfully, and are practical and responsive to low-income library users and their needs.
3. Promoting full, stable, and ongoing funding for existing legislative programs and services in support of people experiencing poverty and for pro-active library programs that reach beyond traditional service-sites.
4. Promoting training opportunities for librarians and library staff to learn effective funding techniques to improve accessibility for library users experiencing poverty.
5. Acknowledging economic equity in funding by promoting the incorporation of programs, services, and resources for people experiencing poverty into regular budgets in all types of libraries, regardless of the availability of “soft money” like private or federal grants to support these programs.
6. Promoting supplemental support for library resources for and about low-income populations by urging local, state, and federal governments, and the private sector, to provide adequate funding.
7. Promoting increased public awareness through programs, displays, bibliographies, and publicity related to libraries’ responsibilities in addressing economic barriers to service.
8. Promoting the determination of service outcomes through the active support of community needs assessments that directly involve community members who are experiencing poverty.
9. Promoting direct representation and support of community members who are experiencing, have experienced, or advocate for people experiencing poverty on local boards and advisory committees.

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10. Promoting library staff training that raises awareness; relates to issues affecting the daily realities of people experiencing poverty; recognizes and addresses attitudinal and other barriers that hinder equal access to library services and resources.
11. Promoting networking and cooperation between libraries and other agencies, organizations, and advocacy groups to develop programs and services that are useful and relevant for people experiencing poverty.
12. Promoting the implementation of expanded federal programs that acknowledge and address poverty.
13. Promoting, supporting and facilitating local community efforts to meet the basic needs of all community members, especially those experiencing poverty.
14. Acknowledging the disproportionate rate at which poverty affects underserved populations, including but not limited to women, people of color, LGBTQ+ people, non-Native English speakers, formerly incarcerated people, and people with disabilities.
15. Encouraging the use of respectful, inclusive and person-first language, such as “community members experiencing poverty.”
16. Ensuring a parity of library services, hours, resources, and facilities between affluent and low-income library neighborhoods.
17. Promoting an attractive and inviting environment in all libraries including low-income neighborhoods.
18. Promoting the development of collections, programs, and services to help bridge the literacy gap for non-English speakers and new readers in all libraries, including low-income neighborhoods.
19. Promoting publications, outreach, and marketing in the native language for Speakers of Other Languages in all libraries, including low-income neighborhoods.
20. Promoting the review of public conduct policies and administrative procedures to ensure they are not creating unintentional barriers to people experiencing poverty.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- In July 2018, the Intellectual Freedom Committee formed a working group that brought multiple voices and a broad range of perspectives together, including representatives from the diversity community, to revise "Meeting Rooms: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*," which was adopted by the ALA Council at the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans. In August, Council voted to rescind the interpretation and reinstate the 1991 version of the interpretation.

Following the vote, work on a revised document continued. In September 2018, the working group asked ALA membership and the library community to provide suggestions on language and resources to include in the revised draft. The working group took these comments and suggestions into consideration to create a new draft.

The Intellectual Freedom Committee voted preliminarily to bring this revised draft of “Meeting Rooms: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights” to ALA Council for a vote at Midwinter 2019

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Shauntee Burns-Simpson, Chair of the Committee on Diversity and Martin Garnar, immediate past chair of the Committee on Diversity both served on this working group.

- Continue efforts to increase visibility of EDI work across association and profession to bridge divides.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

- COD continues to develop an online resource explaining Responsible/Safer Spaces that identifies materials, programming, marketing/outreach, and staff training and other best practices to help libraries establish themselves as safer spaces. This resource is slated to be available before Annual 2019 in Washington D.C.
- COD will continue efforts to assist the Diversity Councilors Caucus with convening and improve communications between the Councilors on the Caucus and the Committee between conferences.
- COD will continue to review its charge. The ODLOS Advisory committee was restructured in 2015 (includes representatives from all the groups with which ODLOS liaisons, including groups that historically the Office for Diversity worked with, the Chair of COD represents the committee on it). Prior to the merger of the Office for Diversity with the Office for Literacy and Outreach Services, the Office for Diversity did not have a separate Advisory Committee hence when Committee on Diversity changed its name and last rewrote its charge (2002) the request to also serve in advisory capacity to the ALA office was included in the charge. Now that both groups work with one office and the Advisory Committee is charged with advising the office the Committee is looking its charge in the context of how COD might focus its work on its relationship to Council, ALA Policy, and the EDI Strategic Direction.

Interactions with other units within ALA:

- Diversity Councilors Caucus: Committee meets with the Diversity Councilors Caucus. The Committee is interested in supporting new Councilors in joining the Diversity Councilors Caucuses and in hearing from more experienced Councilors about their expectations for the Committee. Working with current leaders of the Diversity Councilors Caucus and the Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services to explore ways to support the communications and presence of this group widely.
- The Chair of the Committee is an ex-officio member of the ODLOS Advisory Committee

Relationship of the committee's work to the ALA strategic plan:

The Committee supports various strategies under the initial three Strategic Directions and is working closely with the implementation and ongoing measurement of the fourth strategic direction: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Current level of committee members' involvement:

The group is active in attending committee meetings and providing feedback as requested although the changes to ALA Connect have interrupted committee voting leading into ALA Conference.

Committee self-check on its value and viability:

- COD would like to continue to strengthen its visibility to Council and Membership.