



We Stand Together

The Arkansas Library Association stands with library workers, with library users, and with the communities we serve who encounter and are subjected to acts of prejudice, threats of violence, and discrimination based solely on their race or ethnicity. The pervasive racism present in our society stifles equitable access and serves as a barrier to everything that libraries stand for. In most instances, libraries are neutral and do not enter into the world of politics. However, this is not politics. There is no neutral ground. There is no debate. Safety, basic freedoms, and having a voice is a human right.

We, as an Association, and I, as your colleague and friend, commend you for serving our communities during these tumultuous times. Arkansas libraries are providing resources, creating booklists, promoting social discussion, and supporting those who depend on us as a safe place to engage and as the authority of open, factual information. I urge all Arkansas libraries and library workers to build a work and community culture that accepts and embraces all people, in the way that best meets the needs of your individual communities. Ideas for changing the culture from deep within may include new booklists, new programs, new hiring practices, and more - and making those changes for good, not just for today, but for our future.

Crystal Gates
ArLA President