

DEI Statement

In recent years, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) has become widely accepted as a cornerstone of libraries, with the American Library Association (ALA) listing diversity and social responsibility as two of its core values of librarianship. DEI is vital for libraries of all types to embrace in order to properly serve their patrons. Whether it is in an academic university's library promoting resources by BIPOC researchers, or a school library purchasing books to ensure that the identities of all children are represented, DEI practices are necessary to guarantee that all patrons' needs are properly addressed. However, I believe that the effects of DEI are often most pronounced in public libraries. Due to the wide variety of identities inherently present in a public library's community, a single public library can have patrons representing identities from all over the spectrum of identity, such as age, gender, religion, primary language, political beliefs, and every other facet of one's identity. Many libraries strive to increase their DEI footprint by promoting a diverse library staff. While I think this is an efficient approach, it is my opinion that DEI can be better promoted through collection development and programming.

Library patrons don't visit with the purpose of making conversation with library staff, they're there for the library's resources, and I want them to have resources that reflect their needs and identities. Ranganathan's second law of library science states that every person has their book—a simple factual statement that necessitates a complex scope of materials and subjects. In light of this law, I believe that when patrons use a library's collection they should be able to find resources reflective of their community and identity without difficulty. In order for this to occur, however, libraries must promote DEI in their collections through diversity in authors—not only in there being a wide variety of authors, but in including authors of diverse identities as well—as

well as in subjects. While a library may be able to identify various populations in its community that would greatly benefit from increased DEI, there will also be those that may not be identifiable or quantifiable through tools and resources. To account for this, I want to ensure that acquisitions are cognizant of DEI goals to perpetually increase the DEI footprint of the library's collection so that an individual of any identity may reliably be able to find resources.

The other primary resource of DEI in libraries is programming. Whereas a library's collection needs to provide materials that guarantee reliable information, support, and relatability to all individuals, I see programming as a complement to DEI collection materials by supplementing them with additional information, but more importantly community support and rapport. Like many other programs, they may be guest lecturers who teach a subject that's relevant to the community's DEI needs. Or, patrons can benefit greatly from using the library to meet others with similar identities, needs, and interests through social events, such as LGBTQ+ events, or monthly book clubs in a language that's spoken in the community. Connecting people is not always thought of as a responsibility of libraries, but social knowledge is shared and formed through networks. Consequently I believe that libraries are an ideal, neutral space to provide opportunities for networks to form, and DEI programming should be designed to promote this. All in all, I want patrons to have greater access to DEI resources in every way that may benefit them, and positioning library programs to foster community for members of the community who may need and benefit from it should be a high priority.