



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan

Introduction

South Central Regional Library Council (SCRLC) is one of nine Empire State Library Network (ESLN) Councils of New York State. SCRLC's mission is to "lead and advocate for member libraries by promoting learning, collaboration, and innovation." SCRLC was chartered by the New York State Board of Regents on May 25, 1967 and functions under State law and the State Education Department. According to our Charter, the "purposes for which such corporation(s) are formed are to improve reference and research library services within the area, and to promote inter-library cooperation in the use of such resources."

SCRLC has nearly 80 members in its 14-county, 10,000 square mile service area, which comprise libraries, library systems, and cultural organizations of all types. Altogether through the direct members of SCRLC as well as the regional public library systems and school library systems, SCRLC reaches approximately 500 libraries.

SCRLC's programs and services include continuing education, resource sharing, digitization, innovative technologies, electronic services, and collaborative opportunities. SCRLC also administers the regional Hospital Library Services Program, created to provide programs and services to the area hospital libraries. Through our programs and services, SCRLC member libraries and cultural organizations are strengthened--all residents, students, lifelong learners of our communities should benefit from these programs and services.

Purpose of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Action) Plan

In 2019, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Working Group became the seventh SCRLC advisory committee, highlighting the importance and priority SCRLC places on DEI. We see DEI as a critical strategy toward creating an inclusive, equitable, sustainable, and environmentally just future for all libraries, cultural organizations, and the communities they serve. The Committee is comprised of SCRLC staff,

management, Board members, and staff from member organizations. More information about the Committee is [located here](#).

This Plan sets measurable goals to ensure that SCRLC's plan of service/strategic plan, programs, and services advance diversity, equity, and inclusion and that SCRLC leadership and staff are held accountable for their commitment to advancing this core value.

This Plan provides a framework to:

- Foster DEI in planning, policies, practices, programming, and services;
- Promote, support, sponsor and celebrate DEI within and among libraries/cultural organizations and their communities;
- Develop and promote a diverse workforce within SCRLC member libraries and cultural organizations.

This Plan affirms SCRLC's role in educating and supporting members and community partners in understanding that it is everyone's responsibility to create a welcoming, inclusive, respectful, safe, and equitable environment. The DEI Advisory Committee and all SCRLC leadership acknowledge that DEI work can at times be challenging and trusts that all members want to learn and commit to helping one another and our colleagues in that-process. The creation and maintenance of a safe, inclusive, and respectful space for a diverse and multicultural community is essential to the educational mission of libraries and other member organizations.

SCRLC Diversity Statement

As included in the [SCRLC Bylaws](#), SCRLC is "committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our operation from the Board of Trustees and guiding principles to staffing, programs, and services. Having representation and engagement from library workers from diverse and historically oppressed and marginalized groups - including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, ability, nationality, religion, spiritual traditions, skill sets, and experiences - can effectively position us to address the changing needs of our members and their communities. No one will be denied consideration for or participation in any of our programs, services, committees, special interest groups, or Board of Trustees on the basis of any legally prohibited discrimination involving but not limited to such factors as those mentioned above. We are an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer."

Framework to Address Diversity

What Diversity Means to Us. Representation and engagement from library and cultural workers from diverse and historically and systematically oppressed groups -- including

but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, ability, nationality, religion, spiritual traditions, skill sets, and experiences.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion may mean different things to various libraries and cultural organizations, depending on the communities served and how “community” is defined. The American Library Association’s Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services provides [these definitions](#).

Guiding Principles/Core Values for this Plan and all SCRLC’s Plans of Service/Strategic Plans

- To ensure that our commitment to and core value of diversity, equity, and inclusion as articulated in the statement above carries through to practice;
- To ensure that SCRLC’s plans of service/strategic plans--including its vision, mission, strategic directions, programs, and services--are aligned with this commitment;
- To acknowledge that though neutrality has been seen as a core value of librarianship, neutrality enforces the dominant culture and structural inequities;
- To assist SCRLC’s membership and other regional organizations with diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

SCRLC’s Programs & Services, using DEI as a Framework. To ensure that SCRLC’s programs and services incorporate the core value of diversity, equity, and inclusion, the DEI Advisory Committee will lead the Council in this important work of ensuring that DEI is built into the fabric of all plans, programs, and services.

RESOURCE SHARING

- Coordinated Collection Development Aid for Academics (CCDA):
 - Recommend sources for increasing diversity or accessibility in collection development through the CCDA SIG at least once per year;
 - Offer a continuing education program on inclusive collection development practices at least once per Plan of Service.
- Medical Information Services Program (MISP):
 - Promote (or offer) continuing education on cultural competency in medical reference and related areas.
 - Monitor Consumer Health Complete use for Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese languages;
 - Investigate provision of consumer health resources in additional languages;
 - Promote existing resources in various languages, as possible.

- Interlibrary Loan:
 - Ensure that all community members have access to interlibrary loan, digital collections, shared electronic resources and materials, and delivery (i.e. offer in multiple languages, make the process easy, etc.);
 - Suggest and promote standards for ILL materials (for example, all documents should be supplied as OCR);
 - Make issues of inclusion a regular focus at Resource Sharing meetings;
 - Explore inclusive Reciprocal Borrowing arrangements.
- Cataloging Services:
 - Offer a program or create resources on cataloging and metadata practices to support inclusion and to eliminate biases and discrimination.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

- Enlist at least 25% of speakers and presenters from underrepresented groups;
- Offer minimally 4 programs per year on issues of diversity and social responsibility;
- Support the educational work included in other areas of the plan.

CONSULTING & DEVELOPMENT

- Share ideas for diversity, equity, and inclusion (i.e. job ads, marketing materials, etc.), at least once per Plan of Service.
- Investigate electronic resources that contribute to the Council's DEI effort, including cost-sharing and collaborative models;
- Evaluate current electronic resource offerings through the lens of DEI.

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

- Partner with other organizations, e.g., ESLN, NYLA, to offer diversity, equity, and inclusion learning events, including implicit bias and bystander intervention training for staff and conference attendees;
- Provide code of conduct template and information to assist other organizations; updated annually;
- Participate in statewide DEI efforts.

HOSPITAL LIBRARY SERVICES PROGRAM

- Provide at least one National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM) or Medical Library Association (MLA) class focused on DEI at least once per Plan of Service;
- Promote NN/LM and MLA programs that focus on DEI.

LEADERSHIP & ADMINISTRATION

- Complete and present DEI Plan to the Board for approval; review annually;
- Ensure that all SCRLC events are held at accessible and inclusive spaces;
- Include Diversity Statement in bylaws, Employee Handbook, job ads, etc.;
- In addition to seeking representation reflective of SCRLC's multitype membership, recruit individuals from communities that have been historically and systematically oppressed for open positions on the board, committees, etc.'
 - Follow best practices for language in job ads;
 - Advertise job openings to targeted list of sites or listservs to attract diverse candidates.

DIGITIZATION SERVICES

- Ensure that all community members have access to electronic resources, New York Heritage and New York Historic Newspapers;
- Require RBDB grant applicants to include elements of diversity in their proposals (e.g., in the materials being digitized; with the group doing the digitization work);
- Encourage grant submissions for representation gaps in New York Heritage, both in the SCRLC region and among other ESLN Councils offering grant opportunities;
- Investigate alternative, under-collected formats, e.g. blogs, email threads, and other born-digital materials that may be the only representation of communities that have been historically and systematically oppressed;
- Encourage members to collect and curate these materials;
- Ensure that SCRLC/ESLN exhibits are fully representative of communities that have been historically and systematically oppressed;
- Ensure that items in NYH use inclusive metadata framework: https://wiki.diglib.org/Assessment:Cultural_Assessment/

AWARENESS & ADVOCACY

- Build relationships and partnerships with communities that have been historically and systematically oppressed; involve them with advocacy efforts as feasible and possible;
- Offer on-going “safe zone” training or train the trainer opportunities to library workers;
- Ensure that regional library organizations have access to lists that reach historically and systematically oppressed communities for purposes of advertising jobs, events, resources, and other opportunities.

COMMUNICATIONS AMONG MEMBERS

- Maintain and disseminate DEI information, including this Plan via:
 - [Diversity, Equity & Inclusion LibGuide](#);
 - [Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Special Interest Google Group](#);
 - *SCRLC News*;
 - Workshops, webinars, and programs/conference exhibits;
- Investigate interest in utilizing a DEI Special Interest Group to encourage members to share favorite sites for DEI information;
- Provide members with resources to support their own DEI efforts (e.g., Collection Development resources for LibGuides; under Recruitment and Retention it could be EEOC statements, Before & After examples for a job ad);
- Ensure that SCRLC’s website and associated ones follows current Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG2) guidelines.

Advisory Committee Members:

Nancy Abashian, Binghamton University

Camille Andrews, Mann Library, Cornell University

Sarah Glogowski, Finger Lakes Library System

Mechele Romanchock, Scholes Library, Alfred University

Beth Hylen, Rakow Library, Corning Museum of Glass

Jessica Philippe, SCRLC

Mary-Carol Lindbloom, SCRLC

Approved by the Board of Trustees, December 13, 2019