

**Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive Staffing:
Go from Ordinary to Extraordinary**

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PROLOGUE

On a cold February night in Fresno, California, a fight broke out at Quigley Park between two rival gangs. Approximately sixty people were involved. From the vantage point of the library across the street, it looked like waves of people crashing into each other. Within minutes, police helicopters were circling the area, sirens from multiple patrol cars blazed, red and blue lights painting everything in watery colors. The fight quickly dissolved, but the presence of the police lingered for hours.

A half hour later a young boy named Tyreese walked into the library. He was crying loudly, tears marring his face. He was screaming for his mom. The librarian at the desk got Tyreese to sit down. They tried calling his mom, but there was no answer. After a few minutes, Tyreese explained what had happened. He had been riding his bike with friends when the fight broke out. They had hidden near some trees as the melee played out. When the cops arrived, they started grabbing and handcuffing people. Tyreese was taken off his bike, put in handcuffs, and thrown in the back of a cop car. Tyreese was ten. According to Tyreese, he cried the whole time, and after a few minutes the cops realized he wasn't involved with what had happened, and let him go.

Tyreese had gone home, but his mom was working late. The only other safe place he could think of to go was the library. He sat at the reference desk with the librarian, crying, shaking his head, and asking himself why this had happened to him.

After talking together, Tyreese told the librarian what he wanted to do. They walked across the street together and moved towards a patrol car with several police in front of it. All the officers turned towards these two people walking towards them, one

officer even lowering his hand towards his gun. The librarian, in the dark of February and the flashing of police lights, told the police that they needed to talk to Tyreese. The librarian retold the story. Some of the officers denied it, saying that hadn't happened. They were aggressive and angry, asking Tyreese to give them the name of the officer. They blamed local security, saying it was probably one of the guards that grabbed him, that the description sounded like one of their vehicles. The police asked the librarian who he was, why was he out here. At this point, the librarian started to describe Tyreese to the officers. He listed it off like a litany, like it was a prayer. Tyreese is a library patron. He is ten years old. He gets all A's. He loves school. He's an Arianna Grande fan. After the second repetition, it started to click with the police. They started to look at Tyreese as a boy. Talking to him. Talking, not interrogating. After this, the police spent time with Tyreese. Later, they spoke to his mother. It was a moment of people coming together.

A few days later, Tyreese came back to the library. He sat at his usual spot near the reference desk, talking to the librarian. He asked the librarian for some information. "How do I become a librarian?"

This story highlights an intense experience during which a young boy begins to look at the profession of librarianship as a viable career. Tyreese is in high school now and a regular volunteer. He still talks about library work, hoping to one day have a job at his local library. But without having such a dramatic event, how can librarianship be viewed as a viable career option for those from diverse backgrounds?

WHY DO WE NEED DIVERSITY IN LIBRARY STAFFING?

According to the American Library Association's (ALA) Strategic Plan on Diversity, "libraries play a crucial role in empowering populations for full participation in a democratic society." (ALA, 2018) The plan goes on to say that library work, job training, recruitment, staff development, and promotion are needed "in order to increase and retain diverse library personnel who are reflective of the society we serve." Essentially, in order to provide equitable and inclusive service to the public, those who work for the library should reflect the diverse populations that they serve. There have been many articles and blogs recently about the lack of diversity in librarianship. Despite various efforts on the part of professional organizations such as the ALA, the Public Library Association (PLA), and the California Library Association (CLA) affirming that a diverse workforce is important, current statistics indicate that the profession is still overwhelmingly white and female. According to ALA's own statistics, "88% of credentialed librarians are white." (ALA, 2018)

The following examples demonstrate how professional library organizations have embraced the need for diversity in the workforce.

- ***Diversity in the workforce aligns with the core values of the profession.***

Section B.1.1 of the [American Library Association Policy Manual](#) (ALA, 2019) include Diversity among its core values.

B.1.1 Core Values of Librarianship

The foundation of modern librarianship rests on an essential set of core values which define, inform, and guide all professional practice. These values reflect the history and ongoing development of the profession and have been advanced, expanded, and refined by numerous policy statements of the American Library Association. Among these are:

- Access
- Confidentiality/Privacy
- Democracy
- **Diversity**
- Education and Lifelong Learning
- Intellectual Freedom
- Preservation
- The Public Good
- Professionalism
- Service
- Social Responsibility

Section B.1.2 Code of Professional Ethics for Librarians states that “we strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.”

In addition, the [2018-2022 PLA Strategic Plan](#) (ALA, 2018) clearly states that "in the future, the library not only reflects the diversity of its community, but also becomes the leader of practicing inclusion at all levels, starting with the people who work there."

- ***A diverse staff helps meet the needs of a diverse population and fosters social inclusion.***

The current momentum to actively address this issue is growing. The Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) provided these powerful statistics in a recent briefing paper, [*Advancing Racial Equity in Public Libraries*](#):

Among the nation's 74 million children (age 0 to 18), 46 percent are youth of color. Ten million children live in extreme poverty and another 31 million live in low-income households. Nationwide, 50 percent of students of color attend schools in high poverty areas, compared to just 10 percent of white students. In 2015, 82 percent of African American fourth graders scored below reading proficiency, as did 79 percent of Latino and 78 percent of Native American students, compared to 54 percent of white and 47 percent of Asian students. "Children who fail to read proficiently by the end of third grade are more likely to drop out of high school, reducing their earning potential and chances for long-term success" (Bernabel, 2017).

The [full briefing report](#) (Sonnie, 2018) is worth referencing in its entirety as it provides case studies of cities and counties that have partnered with the GARE to advance racial equity and opportunities for all. Another report illuminates further alarming statistics:

Only 62 percent of the United States population identifies as white and 12 percent are black, 6 percent are Asian and 19 percent identify as Hispanic or as more than one race. This disconnect between the demographics of librarians and those of the general population results in stunning contrasts: there is one white librarian for every 1,830 white people in the general population, compared to one Latino librarian for every 9,177 Latinos in the general population. The statistics regarding black Librarians are also alarming. Of nearly 12,000 credentialed librarians, a mere 6,160 are black and there are only 138 African American Directors in the entire country. (Bernabel, 2017)

Past success becomes difficult to define with statistics such as these. Clearly there is a disconnect between who is hired in libraries and the communities they serve. Therefore the need for action presents itself now more than ever.

- ***A diverse staff and workforce strengthens organizations and institutions.***

An article in [Public Libraries magazine](#) (Larsen, 2017) from December 2017 states that: “Diversity is beneficial not only because it facilitates a greater ability to understand and provide service to diverse communities of patrons, but because organizations that embrace diversity are ultimately more successful. Organizations that rely on individuals who are all the same gender, race, and age, and who think similarly and have similar backgrounds and approaches, are more likely to fall prey to biases, which can diminish the success of the organization. Public libraries that wish to succeed in a rapidly changing environment need diversity in the workforce to be a part of their strategies.”

In March 2018 at the PLA conference in Philadelphia, five ALA Emerging Leaders presented “Reflecting Community: The Importance of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Library Staffing”. This session was the result of their findings from research done at ten libraries that were considered “changemakers” related to recruitment, hiring, promotion, professional development, and other areas. Their [webpage](#) provides an overview of their project findings as well as links to EDI resources (ALA, 2017).

A recent interview of a Spectrum alumna stresses the importance of equity in relation to effective customer service. Palacios states (2019): “Having worked as a

substitute clerk at 37+ branches of Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL) I noticed that out of their 72 branches I had only encountered a handful of Spanish-speaking librarians. Noticing the customer service aspect of librarianship and the community based impact, I developed a desire to enter the field in hopes of providing culturally competent services to community members with the goal of having visitors feel support and community ownership over their library.”

Research supports the value of a diverse workforce, regardless of field. ClimateQUAL: Organizational Climate and Diversity Assessment details a project hoping to develop internal staffing survey regarding workforce diversity. It indicated “workforce diversity is actually an organizational imperative in our rapidly changing environment (2009).”

INTENT OF PAPER

This paper presents a snapshot of diversity in the library: a brief history and successes. We will outline programs that have been implemented to further diversity in library staffing and will highlight and discuss several of the roadblocks and challenges that are being encountered. We will conclude with recommendations for action and outcomes at the state level which will address the issue. By taking further immediate action we can assure that the library workforce aligns with the core goals of the profession, meets the needs of an increasingly diverse population and strengthens the internal operations and functioning of libraries.

DIVERSITY IN LIBRARIANSHIP: A BRIEF HISTORY

The topic of diversity in the field of librarianship and library work is not a new one. This section will provide a brief history and overview of landmark movements towards diversity and equity in the library profession. The American Library Association has a long history of members fighting for equality in the profession. “One of the earliest instances of such interest occurred in 1913 when a white librarian, William F. Yust, read a paper at the Annual conference titled ‘*What of the Black and Yellow Races*’.” (Knott-Malone, 2009 p.47) Yust’s paper brought early visibility to then ignored communities. Early on, libraries created residency programs to promote involvement in the profession. “The first residency program was piloted by the Tennessee Valley Authority in 1938.” (Mediavilla, 2011)

Perhaps no other person better illustrates the activist vision for equality in librarianship more than E.J. Josey. Born in 1924 in Norfolk, Virginia, Josey received his master’s degree in Library and Information Science from the State University of New York at Albany after having already received a master’s degree in history from Columbia University. He was first elected to the ALA governing Council in 1970 and served in this role until 2000.

Josey’s most influential action occurred in 1964 when he authored a resolution which forbid ALA officers and staff from participating in segregated southern state library associations. When it passed, this was seen as a courageous act which directly led to the integration of all ALA state chapters. (Kniffel, 2009, p. 29) The full integration of the ALA sparked immediate change and lit the fire for equality in the profession – a

torch still proudly carried by contemporary librarians. Upon Josey's passing, former ALA President Jim Rettig said: "Through his leadership he opened doors to segregated library associations and acted as librarianship conscience, encouraging the field to live up to and operate by the fundamental American principles of justice and equity." (as cited in Kniffel, 2009, p. 29)

The lack of diversity in library staffing has had a negative impact on providing services to marginalized groups. The GARE Report, *Advancing Racial Equity in Public Libraries* (Bernabel, 2017) states that libraries have historically been "white institutions". It continues (Bernabel, 2017): "During the 20th century, many libraries – from North to South – upheld racially segregated facilities. Many more failed communities of color through neglect, paternalism and tacit approval or prevailing norms." The prevailing thought by most was that these spaces were not meant for them. During an interview for *The Guardian* famed Civil Rights activist, John Lewis stated: "We were told that the library was for whites only, not for coloreds."

As recently as 1988, a [RAND study](#) (Payne et al, 1988) was conducted leading up to a California State Library conference at which California librarians were debating, discussing and addressing "the systematic obstacles libraries face when responding to diversity."

WHAT HAS WORKED IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

This section provides examples of recent programs and initiatives that have had a positive influence on racial diversity in library staffing.

Public Library Youth Mentoring Program

The collaborative *Seeds to Trees* program created by the Santa Ana Public Library and the Orange County Chapter of REFORMA represents a comprehensive workforce initiative that not only increased diversity within the library field, but successfully prepared young people of color for various professional endeavors. In 2013, the program received funding from the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Grant made possible by the Institute for Museum and Library Services. The program introduced bilingual and at-risk teens to the field of librarianship by pairing them with professional mentors. The final performance report indicates that *Seeds to Trees* introduced 717 bilingual teen volunteers to the library profession, nurtured the library career and advocacy aspirations of 77 bilingual high school and college age internship participants, and supported the educational and professional development of 14 bilingual graduate LIS students. Presentations were made to 500 professionals and a “From *Seeds to Trees*: Grow Your Own 21st Century Bilingual Librarian” manual has been produced with plans for distribution to libraries.

This project successfully accomplished several goals. Library staff became more culturally representative of the community it served. It bridged the information access gap for at-risk teens by providing them with solid professional skills. And finally, the project benefited the library by creating a new generation of young advocates. “The project taught the interns the importance of being library advocates and having them in turn teach library patrons about advocacy. The Latino community in Santa Ana is not used to attending council meetings and the concept of keeping their local politicians accountable. However when our patrons saw that the library was being threatened and

armed with information that they had received from interns and library staff, they begin attending and speaking up at council meetings.” (Eberty, 2013)

Public Library Marketing Campaign

The Dayton Public Library’s Diversity and Inclusion recruitment campaign is a recent example of progress being made towards equitable hiring practices. The campaign features bright, attractive photos of racially diverse library professionals with the caption “see yourself here”. While seemingly simple, this slogan encourages people from all backgrounds to see themselves as library employees. “Our Diversity and Inclusion Committee is dedicated to sharing varied perspectives and creating an inclusive, welcoming environment,” said Julie Buchanan, Programming Manager for the Library. “We hope to spread communication and dialogue both within and beyond the Library.” (Dayton Metro Library, 2018)

Residencies, Mentorship and Internship Programs

Mentorships, internships and residency programs have proven to be mutually beneficial for the participating residents or interns and for the organizations that sponsor them. They frequently are designed to specifically address and improve equity, diversity, and inclusion in the library profession.

Mentorship proves essential to recruiting diverse candidates and keeping them in the profession. Spectrum scholar, Eva (2019) states: “I put all my energy into finding employment in libraries, but it was in 2007 when the economy had collapsed and librarians were being fired in Los Angeles. I was living in Echo Park at the time. I

happened to meet Lisa Palomi from LAPL doing outreach at the local Lotus Festival. Lisa put me in contact with a wonderful librarian who became a mentor and supporter, Nadine Flores, who I worked for at Echo Park library for about 2-3 years.” Eva’s experience was fortunate. She is a woman of color and was provided with the unique opportunity to be mentored by another woman of color. The support she received assisted with achieving her professional pursuits.

The benefits can be equally worthwhile for those who serve as mentors. Mentors have reported rewarding experiences in providing guidance and support to new librarians to the profession. Mentors involved with new professionals and fresh procedures keep their work from being stagnate. (Taylor, 2005) Senior staff who have the opportunity to mentor new librarians and residents are often recognized for their expertise and experience. (Brewer, 2010)

More common in academic libraries than public libraries, residencies are beneficial to new MLIS graduates with little professional experience. Residency programs provide on-site training, mentorship, opportunities for professional development and sometimes financial support.

Residents in the Dr. Henrietta M. Smith Residency program at the University Of Southern Florida (USF) are paired with a professional librarian who directly mentors them through their program, facilitating both growth and development. (Taylor, 2005) This positive and continuous engagement with staff and peers contributes to building strong relationships. (Florida, 2005)

At USF, residents acquire proficiency in reference, instruction, collection development and management; research library outreach activities; collaborate with

other faculty members on grant projects and engage in numerous opportunities for professional development through both conference and workshop attendance. (Taylor, 2005)

Residency programs sometimes offer financial support with stipends to help newly graduates with their financial burdens. The Association of Research Libraries offers a 2-year program for MLIS students from underrepresented communities. The students become members of American Library Associations' five ethnic caucuses and receive a stipend of \$10,000 over two years to help defray the cost of graduate school. (Offord, 2007)

Residents bring a different perspective and currency with emerging technologies as well as a different perspective as to how students use libraries. (Brewer, 2010) Residents also bring new ideas, questions and energy for change and keeping libraries and staff relevant and current with technologies and trends. (Brewer, 2010)

Though less common than mentorships or residencies, fellowships have also proven to be beneficial. The Louise Parker Berry Fellowship ran from 2005-2009. "This privately funded program has hosted two fellows for two years each, but is now on hiatus until further financial support can be secured." (Mediavilla, 2011) While this project was a positive step towards inclusion, lack of funding sources make it challenging to expand or replicate.

ACHIEVING DESIRED OUTCOMES

Increasingly, public libraries are addressing EDI issues from a different perspective and recognizing that a new approach is needed if the desired outcomes are

to be realized. The GARE Libraries Interest Group offers an approach that stems from the ideal for institutional change. This involves implementation on a larger scale (municipal or state level) for structural and institutional change. The following section is an examination of public libraries that have implemented trainings, staff conversations, or partnered with other municipal departments to strengthen their vision for equity, diversity and inclusion.

Hennepin County Library- Held learning retreats for its Senior Team allowing them to share early experiences with race and racism, and build a shared understanding of key concepts around the history of racism and the role of government. (Bernabel, 2017) Frontline staff were also brought together to identify concrete actions they could take to advance racial equity and where they saw opportunities for institutional change (Bernabel, 2017). Staff participate in engagement and training that focuses on examining administrative and everyday policies, practices and procedures. The library will also develop ongoing learning opportunities. (Bernabel, 2017)

Saint Paul Public Library- Addressed workforce diversity and employment security among staff of color as part of their racial equity work plan. As the City of Saint Paul set a goal to increase the diversity of its full-time workforce by 3 percent, so too did the library. (Bernabel, 2017)

Madison Public Library - Staff trainings with a consistent emphasis on building awareness of racial equity have helped to normalize conversations about race and

create space for honest dialogue about practices that may result in barriers to opportunity. (Bernabel, 2017) MPL created a multiple-agency citywide community conversation process enabling them to hear recommendations from those who weren't traditionally served. These conversations resulted in identifying the need for new services, which were implemented in the 2016 Strategic Plan. (Bernabel, 2017)

Multnomah County Library - Addresses implicit bias in recruitment and hiring through analyzing job requirements to reduce barriers. (Bernabel, 2017)

Seattle Public Library- Conducted an equity analysis of existing programs and services resulting in a variety of programs and materials that reflected the community. (Bernabel, 2017)

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS

After extensive review of programs and initiatives that focus on recruiting and retaining a diverse pool of librarians that reflect the diversity of contemporary communities, we've compiled a list that represent effective programs and identified elements that accounted for their success. Elements include length of program, program structure, and benefits of a residency or mentorship component. We have included examples of programs from academic libraries, public libraries, and the American Library Association.

Academic and Research Libraries

In June 2008 at the Indiana University School of Library and Information Science at the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis campus, Associate Executive Director, Dr. Marilyn Irwin and Special Services Consultant, Marcia Smith-Woodard applied for and received an IMLS grant to recruit 30 fellows from ethnically/racially underrepresented populations to encourage a statewide interest in librarianship as a viable career option. A total of 70 candidates applied during the four cohort rounds of applications. The fellowship included tuition payment, a stipend, and some travel expenses. Fellows agreed to maintain a minimum 3.0 grade point average and to work in Indiana libraries for two years. The fellows graduated between May 2010 and August 2011. The four cohorts included 32 successful applicants resulting in 29 fellows who successfully completed the fellowship project and received the MLS Degree. (Smith-Woodward, 2008)

Some academic libraries have attempted to address the lack of diversity in librarianship by creating librarian residency programs. While residencies are by no means a new idea, they are gaining in popularity, as demonstrated by the recent creation of the Association for College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Diversity Alliance, a group of 37 (as of 2018) North American universities that have committed to creating residencies specifically for early career librarians from underrepresented groups. (Donaldson, 2018)

From 2003 through the fall of 2009, St. Catherine University (formerly the College of St. Catherine) and the Saint Paul Public Library collaborated to create the Urban

Library Program (ULP), an Institute of Library and Museum Services (IMLS) supported project to recruit, educate, hire, and retain a diverse paraprofessional workforce in the metropolitan Twin Cities of Minnesota. Studies of graduates of the ULP demonstrate its success in educating diverse individuals for employment in libraries in spite of the complexity of their language, economic, and educational challenges. (Wagner, M. M., & Willms, D., 2010)

2016 PROMISE and Diversity Scholar Program, Oregon State University

A ten-week paid internship program that includes job shadowing, information interviews, mini-projects, visits to other libraries and other professional development and mentorship opportunities. There's a particular emphasis on providing pathways for historically underrepresented students to professional careers. The categorization of historically underrepresented students include but is not limited to first generation students, low-income, LGBTQ, students of color, veterans, transfer students, and students with disabilities. The program helps students further professional skill sets by creating an online ePortfolio, crafting resumes, building and maintaining professional networks, and job search guidance (Oregon State University, 2016).

Diversity Librarianship Fellowship and Residency Program, University of Pittsburgh

A two-year program that provides support to a student as they pursue an MLIS degree. The goal of the program is to increase the number of underrepresented racial/ethnic minorities within academic librarianship by offering valuable, hands-on practical

experience critical for successful entrance into the profession of librarianship. The program is structured to include full-tuition along with a stipend and a graduate student assistant position within the library system. After completion of an MLIS, the student receives a 12-month residency appointment and financial support to attend professional conferences (University of Pittsburgh School of Computing and Information, 2017).

Diversity Resident Librarian Program, Florida State University

A three-year appointment that seeks to recruit and retain qualified early-career academic librarians from traditionally underrepresented groups. The objective of the program is to gain more diversity, inclusion, and innovation in program development and library practices and to better serve a diverse student and faculty population. The program offers opportunities for the resident to develop their skill sets and provide an opportunity to improve competencies and skills in the areas of higher education librarianship. Experienced librarians also provide mentorship and guidance throughout the residency and work closely together on forming career-focused individual professional development plans. (Jordan, 2019)

Librarian-In-Residence Program, University of Arkansas

The purpose of this program is to increase and enhance diversity of professional staff and encourage underrepresented groups to pursue careers in academic librarianship. This two-year residency seeks to provide the participant with the skillset and experience to achieve a competitive advantage in the search for a professional position in the field of librarianship upon completion. The features of the program include an individualized

professional development plan through structured mentoring, opportunities to serve on library committees, specialized training and workshops, financial support to attend professional conferences and registration for professional library organizations and associations. (University of Arkansas Libraries, 2019)

Association of Research Libraries Kaleidoscope Program

A program that seeks to attract students from historically underrepresented groups to pursue careers in academic and research libraries and archives. This is a program that recognizes the value diversity brings to organizations and institutional decision-making. The program strives to diversify the profession by providing participants with financial support for an MLIS, mentoring, leadership and professional development, and career placement assistance. Almost 200 students have been supported by this program with retention rates within the profession at over 90%. More than half of Diversity Scholars are currently employed in libraries and archives and are assuming leadership positions within the field of librarianship. (Association of Research Libraries, n.d.)

Association of Research Libraries/Society of American Archivists Mosaic Program

A program that promotes diversity, similar to the Kaleidoscope Program, by providing financial support, work experience, leadership development, mentoring, and career placement assistance to emerging professionals from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic minority groups. The program seeks to advance diversity within the field by recruiting and retaining librarians dedicated to archival science and special

collections. The program includes tuition support, a paid internship, relocation assistance, and membership to professional library associations. (Association of Research Libraries, n.d.)

Association of College & Research Libraries Diversity Alliance

The purpose of this initiative is to advocate for diversity and enrich the profession by strengthening the hiring pipeline of qualified individuals from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. The initiative creates residency programs that provide library professionals opportunities to gain knowledge, skills, and competencies to thrive in the workplace. Participants are provided opportunities for leadership, take advantage of shared resources, and explore best practices within the field. The initiative creates residency programs that last a minimum of two years, design an experience that will enhance the skill set of the participant through mentorship, and financial support. (ALA, 2016)

Public Libraries

Public Library Association Inclusive Internship Initiative

A program aimed at bolstering the value of equity, diversity, and inclusion among staff of public libraries. This program seeks to attract diverse candidates from high schools to the viable, rewarding, and meaningful career path of librarianship. The program is structured as a summer-long mentored learning project that includes a stipend, travel funds, and opportunities to collaborate with other library professionals.

Los Angeles Public Library Diversity and Inclusion Apprenticeship Program

The goal of this program is to introduce students from diverse backgrounds to careers in librarianship through a paid eleven-week mentored learning project and to develop library talent and establish a pipeline to success in a library setting. Participants are involved with multiple facets of librarianship from administration to programming to user services. The program targets high school seniors and college freshmen/sophomores and are given an opportunity to tour neighboring library systems and be familiarized with professional library associations and local universities that offer Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) programs. (Los Angeles Public Library, 2018)

Skokie Public Library hosted two high school interns in 2018 as a part of the Inclusive Internship Initiative (III) created by the Public Library Association, which is a division of the American Library Association. The purpose of the internship is to increase diversity in librarianship. With the help of a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the program allowed 50 U.S. high school students, entering their junior or senior year in the fall, to receive a paid, mentored internship. A kickoff event was held in Washington D.C. in June where the selected interns from 25 states had the opportunity to meet each other and attend a two-day master training class in librarianship. The Inclusive Internship Initiative program was created specifically to introduce librarianship to students from underrepresented backgrounds with diversity and inclusion as central themes. (Auman, 2017)

The American Library Association

American Library Association Spectrum Scholarship Program

A program committed to diversity and inclusion seeking to actively recruit new generations of racially and ethnically diverse librarians to transform libraries and library services. The program offers financial and professional support and assists participants in obtaining a graduate degree and guides students to leadership positions within the field of librarianship. Scholarships are offered to American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Middle Eastern and North African, and/or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students. The program has demonstrated its success by funding 1,063 masters degree scholarships and 18 Doctoral Fellows since its inception. (ALA, 2017)

American Library Association Discovering Librarianship

A program that seeks to increase the capacity to introduce, engage, and recruit ethnically diverse high school and college students to careers in the field of librarianship. This three-year national initiative developed recruitment material and a stronger professional presence at local career, education, and cultural events as a part of its overarching strategic plan to target these groups. Early career librarians from past diversity-focused programs created recruitment content and increased visibility of the profession by serving as ambassadors to a new generation of potential diverse librarians. Early-career librarians from traditionally underrepresented groups provided relevant and persuasive recruitment messaging by emphasizing the value of diversity in librarianship, career opportunities in librarianship, and overall library advocacy through library career statistics and data. The program also paired ethnically diverse high school

and undergraduate college students interested in pursuing careers in librarianship with mentors. The program also provided the early-career librarians with trainings and increased opportunities for leadership roles in their profession and within their communities (ALA, 2010).

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICES IN DIVERSE HIRING FROM OTHER PROFESSIONS

Struggles with diverse and inclusive hiring practices are not unique to libraries. Many private corporations have faced similar issues and addressed them successfully. These programs could be used as a guide for moving librarianship in a similar direction.

Procter & Gamble has been in the top ten of Diversity Magazine's Top 50 Companies list for the last 12 years. They believe that inclusion is at the core of their strategy and critical to their success, helping them stay close to global markets and assisting with innovation and talent acquisition. According to Mark Pritchard, Chief Brand Officer and Executive Sponsor for the African Ancestry Leadership Network, "Our aim is focused squarely on better understanding each other through respect, inclusion, and making life better inside and outside our walls." (Procter & Gamble, 2019)

A few of the programs Procter and Gamble has implemented over the years include the Global Diversity and Inclusion Awards celebration; teaming up with 400 other companies to drive diversity & inclusion and advance the conversation; connecting African ancestry male employees with law enforcement to bridge the two communities; diversity recruiting; and global supplier diversity, which has been awarding

contracts to women and minority-owned businesses—including military vets, people with disabilities and LGBT owners.

According to aperianglobal.com Google emphasizes transparency as one of the best practices in achieving workforce diversity. Google stresses that 24% of leadership positions in 2015 were held by women, an increase of 2% over the year before. The site also notes that 4% and 5% of new hires in 2015 were black and Hispanic, respectively. In addition, the Google diversity program includes the launch of the Googler-in-Residence Program to improve access to coding education at historically black colleges and universities; tripling the number of colleges where Google recruits; and offering unconscious bias training to Google employees, in which 65% of Google workers have participated.

Many large companies are taking extensive approaches with varied and wide-ranging programs. They have gathered information, inspired new hiring practices, and backed programs that motivate students from underrepresented backgrounds to enter technology fields. Such efforts, which often include large teams and their leaders, suggest that many organizations are thoughtful about this topic and taking steps that will eventually have the potential of making a real impact. Many of these approaches could be emulated in the field of librarianship.

BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

Many library systems require graduate education in Library & Information Sciences in order to qualify for librarian and administrative positions. Given this, many underrepresented groups face challenges in obtaining these positions or even imagining

them as potential career options. Pitre and Pitre (2009) state: "Over several decades in the United States, African American, Hispanic, Native American, and low-income students have completed high school and attended college at consistently lower rates than their White and higher income student counterparts." (p. 98)

If obtaining higher education is an obstacle for many due to financial and racial disparities, it then follows that librarianship is faced with a challenge in recruitment and retention of staff who have higher education including a post-secondary degree. This is particularly true for higher job classifications. Given the financial barriers higher education may present, it is no surprise that professional librarians from underrepresented groups may be forced to leave the field for higher-paying positions. Falcon (n.d.) states: "Many first-generation college students come from a low social economic status and may lack the financial knowledge and resources that students with college-educated parents have." Mentorship, advocacy and financial support then becomes a key element to recruitment.

Implicit bias in hiring also presents obstacles for underrepresented groups attempting to enter the field. Implicit bias occurs when a person's unconscious feelings and thoughts impact their actions towards outside groups (Roberts, 2011). Roberts also states: "Scientists have learned that we only have conscious access to 5 percent of our brains—much of the work our brain does occurs on the unconscious level. Thus, implicit bias does not mean that people are hiding their racial prejudices. They literally do not know they have them."

In hiring practices, this can manifest in hiring decisions. Therefore it is essential that implicit bias be discussed and addressed at various organizational levels. One

example of a California library system attempting to address this issue is Marin County Free Library. They recently instituted a blind application process, assigning applicant numbers in lieu of including names on application materials forwarded to hiring committees. This process is one way to address a potential ethnic bias based on a perceived association with a person's name.

CONCLUSION

There is much to be learned from successes within the library profession and in private industry. With standards being set by organizations such as the ALA and ClimateQUAL, steps are being made in terms of acquiring and retaining librarians from diverse backgrounds. Scholarships and internships such as those offered by various universities, the ALA, the PLA, and the LAPL are giving opportunities to students and current library workers to assist with their journey to becoming a librarian. The intention of this paper was to present a brief history and to provide examples of new standards and programs that different types of libraries are implementing to promote diversity among library staff. These movements forward serve as an excellent starting point. Our recommendations for immediate action come directly from this research. The authors of this paper are hopeful that this information can be used to increase opportunities for diversity in library staffing in the near future.

EPILOGUE

Yer Vang is employed by her public library and works in their literacy department. She is a first-generation Hmong American, and the first in her family to attend college and graduate. She is married and has a family. She is also attending graduate school to get her MLIS.

When asked about her time at grad school, she says she loves it. “But in all honesty, it’s really hard. I work full time, take care of my family, and then study all night.” Because of her many commitments, she is planning on taking a part-time position, so that she will have enough time to finish her schooling. “I’m worried about money, but I have no choice.” Yer is a Spectrum scholar and has won many scholarships and grants, but financial worries are making her path to becoming a librarian more difficult. “It’s just so expensive. I almost didn’t do it. But now I’m this far and I just want to finish. I’m just afraid of how much debt I might be in.” She also explains that this is what kept her from getting her degree sooner.

But Yer is hopeful. “I love going to school. I want to make a path, to show others from my community that they can do it too. I want to make the mistakes so that it can be easier for them in the future. I helped a little girl the other day, and the little girl was so excited. She said that I was the first librarian she had seen that looked like her. And that’s so important to me.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

Through our research we have come to the conclusion that it is in the State’s best interest to move forward with the suggested recommendations listed below. The authors feel that these recommendations strongly align with and support the mission, vision and values of the California State Library.

1. We recommend the California State Library create a task force or division that works on issues of diversity and supports libraries throughout the state. We propose this division create a statewide diversity and inclusion plan.
2. We recommend the State Library conducts an extensive statewide needs assessment, resulting in an RFP for library systems to fund efforts at recruiting and hiring diverse staff.
3. We recommend the State Library serves as a repository for archives and current research/publications for library programs addressing these issues.

The following suggestions provide more detail based on the above recommendations.

Overall Division Goals

- Hire/recruit staff to work within the proposed division on diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Publish past reports, including this briefing paper and serve as a repository for archival program records and reports.
- Support for research so library systems may develop their own initiatives.
- Develop a toolkit for libraries with tips on how to talk with administration and library staff about equity and inclusion.
- Division oversees a strategic plan for inclusion. This may include:
 - A state-wide RFP from the State Library wherein library systems can apply for funding to support their diversity projects.
 - Support for research so library systems can access the tools they need to develop their own initiatives.

The Division can assist library systems with accomplishing specific goals.

Programs

- Develop programs, services and purchase collections that represent the diversity in their community.
- Outreach projects to recruit potential librarians and support them in building skills for career readiness, assistance in creating a strong peer-network in efforts to strengthen the pipeline from paraprofessional to librarian.

Human Resources and Administration:

- Develop initiative to recruit directly from local communities to ensure staff at all levels reflect the community they are serving.
- Invite leadership from other departments (City or County municipalities) to participate in strategic planning for inclusion.
- Support membership to Urban Libraries Council, GARE and other potential non-library professional organizations working on similar issues.

Professional Development and Staffing:

- Create and implement strong mentorship programs for library staff.
- Librarian job search guidance.
- State-wide initiative for public librarian residencies and internships.

Examples of other State Libraries that have strategic plans or statements on diversity:

- New Jersey State Library
https://www.njstatelib.org/services_for_libraries/consulting_services/diversity_and_literacy/
- Oregon State Library
<https://www.oregon.gov/Library/operations/Documents/State%20Library%20Affirmative%20Action%20Plan%2017-19.pdf>
- South Carolina State Library
<http://guides.statelibrary.sc.gov/inclusion>
- Washington State Library
<https://www.sos.wa.gov/library/libraries/projects/diversity/>

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