

ILA EDI survey results and ILA Voices breakout discussions

Executive summary

Introduction

In September 2020, ILA's Diversity Committee conducted a survey to identify the diversity training needs of ILA members. At the 2020 Annual Conference, they held a listening session to obtain additional feedback. This document summarizes the survey results and the notes from the breakout sessions. It is intended to inform the work of the ILA Board, Forums, and Committees as they more fully integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion into their activities.

Summary of quantitative data from survey

Demographics

Of the 248 respondents, 79% work in a public library, 16% work in an academic library, and 3% work in a school library. The remainder work in special or government libraries, a library system, or are retired. Nearly 62% of respondents work in suburban libraries, while nearly 22% work in rural libraries and nearly 17% work in urban libraries.

Communities not currently served

There were 222 people who responded to this question. It was not qualitative, but the answers grouped into specific categories, which are listed in the table below. Many respondents listed more than one community.

Category	Number of responses
Non-English speakers/ESL/Immigrants	41
BIPOC/Black	32
Latinx/Hispanic	26
Teens/ Young adults	22
Low income	19

People with disabilities/special needs/mental illness	19
People without transportation/unable to visit library	16
People without internet access/tech access/tech skills	15
Seniors	14
Non-residents/people who live outside library taxing area	14
Don't know	13
Remote learners	8
Homeless	8
We serve all of our community/none	7
LGBTQ+	6
People outside of campus/university	6
Non-library users	5
Children	4
Job seekers/unemployed	3
Local schools	3
People new to the community	2
Undergraduate students	2
Businesses/small business owners	2
Students	2
Asian	2
Working parents	1
Affluent	1
Students who are first in family to attend college	1
Students not aware of services	1
New adults (20-30 yo)	1
Students not in nursing	1
All	1

Adults who work third shift	1
Community members without library cards	1

When asked what factors contribute to the lack of services to these communities, 33% of the 222 respondents identified money, 33% said small staff, 27% identified location, 25.68% identified language barriers, and 17% said digital divide. Over 56% also identified other factors. The table below groups the responses into categories.

Factor	Number of responses
COVID	24
Not a priority/lack of interest/lack of knowledge (staff/admin)	23
Lack of interest/request from population	19
Don't know how to find them/what they need/lack partnerships	14
Lack of time/staffing issues	10
Lacking city support/services/public transportation	6
Lack of trust in government	6
Limited/no outreach	5
Systemic community injustice/inequities	5
Non-resident barriers (not within district, fees for cards, etc.)	4
Lack of staff diversity	4
Physical space	3
Don't know	3
Lack of ebook/audiobook collection for remote learners	1
Historical bias in selection/publishing	1
Lack of training	1
Can't find programs/resources	1
Operating hours	1
Library isn't welcoming to them	1

DEI Training Needs

Current training sources

When asked where they most often receive training on diversity topics, 43% of the 244 respondents said ILA, 42% said their employer, 41% said ALA, 41% said RAILS, 25% said PLA, 8% said ACRL, 7% said IHLS, 3% said ALISE, and 2.5% said Chicago Public Library. 12% said they do not receive training on diversity topics.

22.5% of respondents identified other organizations. Some of those include:

- School Library Journal webinars
- Webjunction
- Author talks
- Project Ready
- Embrace Race
- Teaching Tolerance
- Facing History
- Family Action Network
- Abolitionist Teaching Network
- National Council of Teachers of English
- EdWeb
- LIRA/Brit
- HRSource
- Scholastic
- I-schools
- TED
- Community-based organizations
- Other states' library associations
- Local agencies
- Conferences
- Librarians/libraries that advertise on social media
- The news
- SEED
- Beyond Diversity
- Medical Library Association

Of those receiving some type of training, nearly 63% reported that they were optional. Nearly 25% said the training was required.

Training topics

When asked what topics they would like to see covered in training sponsored by ILA, nearly 69% of the 245 respondents identified anti-racism/unconscious bias training. 57% identified Courageous Conversations; nearly 57% identified conflict resolution/reduction; 51% identified avoiding stereotypes; 42% identified gender identities; 39% identified disability rights; 36% identified health equity and COVID; 34% identified discrimination inside and outside the workplace; and 17% identified religion/non-religion.

Thirty-one respondents identified some other category not already listed. These are categorized in the table below:

Topic	Number of responses
Bias in library policies/collections/librarianship	6
Trauma-informed practices	3
Collection development	2
Equity in recruiting & hiring/employment issues	2
Microaggressions	1
How to convince administrators that these topics are important and ongoing	1
Training that doesn't center white voices	1
Staff technology training	1
Cataloging	1
How to do programs in smaller libraries/with limited budgets	1
Empathy and interruption topics from https://ljist.com/	1
How to be an ally	1
Having hard conversations with patrons	1
LGBTQ+ inclusive practices and policies	1
Services (financial resources) for seniors	1
http://www.povertysimulation.net/about/	1
Restorative justice/PBIS (schools)	1

Why workplace diversity is important	1
Training by professionals/experts rather than librarians	1

When asked how in-depth they wanted these trainings to be, nearly 75% said intermediate, while nearly 42% said beginner and nearly 24% said expert.

Delivery method

When asked how they wanted the training delivered, 83% said by recorded webinar, over 72% said by live webinar, and just over 27% said by PDF/Powerpoint or handouts. Respondents identified other delivery methods, categorized in the table below.

Delivery method	Number of responses
Community of Practice/Learning Circle/Journal club	4
Online modules/self-paced course	4
In-person	3
Open discussion	1
Offer programs in a variety of ways	1
Series	1
Any online event that includes closed captioning	1
Training kits so libraries can do their own staff training	1

Desired outcomes from training

When asked what outcomes were most important to them, over 91% identified practical applications, nearly 43% wanted shareable materials, and 38% identified educational. Other desired outcomes are categorized in the table below.

Outcome	Number of responses
Not made to feel guilty because white	3
Training that all staff can be required to take	1
Move beyond diversity to inclusion	1

Understanding that this is an ongoing process	1
Have a robust anti-harassment policy	1
Small groups (online or Zoom)	1
Ability to recognize previous blind spots	1
Ability to recognize systemic oppression	1
Open communication	1
Persuasion techniques to use with "non-believers"	1
Easy implementation	1
Awareness of scope of diversity (includes disability)	1
Lifting up oppressed voices	1
Racial theory	1
Train the trainer	1

Other themes from qualitative survey responses and ILA Voices breakout sessions

Some common themes emerged when looking at the survey responses and the notes from the ILA Voices breakout sessions from conference.

Barriers to DEI training

- COVID
- Knowing how to take what you have learned and put it into practice. People want practical information that they can use in their libraries.
- Training is often white centered and is sometimes done by librarians who aren't experts. In both the conference session and the survey comments, people said that they'd like to see training done by people of color and by experts who aren't necessarily librarians but can apply their knowledge to libraries. It's difficult for individual libraries to afford to bring in experts to do staff training.
- Knowing where to start is an issue because people don't have a common baseline of knowledge and because these are difficult conversations to have. Training is ad-hoc, not cohesive and is based on employee interest and comfort levels.
- Administrators and staff don't always see the need for continued training. They need help to understand that diversity is a process, not an event and that it needs to be

integrated into everything the library does. It's much harder to do when staff and the community are primarily white because they don't understand why it's important or to shift the mindset that they've already done this training once, so they're good to go.

- Some libraries are afraid of backlash from their community if they offer DEI training or programs.
- Trump Administration directive to federal agencies to stop DEI training (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/M-20-34.pdf>)
- People want a mix of beginning, intermediate, and advanced training. Most current training available is foundational.

Biggest DEI needs

- Help with recruiting and retaining a diverse staff, especially in environments where favoritism seems to play a huge role in hiring and promotion. Teach people how to mentor existing employees and encourage them to pursue a library degree.
- Having enough confidence to start an ongoing discussion among staff (including volunteers) and getting them to buy in. Need help to make DEI relatable.
- How to serve different communities during a pandemic.
- Need formal protocols for reporting workplace discrimination/treatment.
- More advanced DEI training that isn't white centered.
- More training opportunities for all staff, not just librarians.
- Help with building a more positive culture and shared values so that DEI is baked into the organization. It should include a written plan for people to reference.
- Help with providing access to materials and technology for seniors and less advantaged kids. How to do remote learning without internet access.
- Training that includes all kinds of diversity (neurodiversity, disability, age, race, LGBTQ+, gender, income, cultural background, religion, etc).

Examples of DEI in libraries

During the ILA Voices conference session, participants were asked to provide examples of effective methods that libraries had used to make their services more equitable and diverse.

- Outreach to shelters and half-way houses and residential facilities for domestic violence.
- Building and promoting more diverse collections can open the door to having respectful conversations about diversity. Collection audits for diversity.
- Libraries going fine free and eliminating card expiration dates. Finding ways to help people without addresses obtain a library card. Remove barriers to computer access.
- Consistently promoting the different languages that library staff speak to make the library more welcoming to non-English speakers. Some libraries also offer immigration services and host social workers who work with immigrants.
- Making wifi accessible outside the library during COVID

- Nashville PL has a collection for adult people learning to read English (Fresh Fiction) that appeals to a broad range of people and takes the stigma away from adults learning to read.
- Use local history as a jumping off point. Nashville PL has a Civil Rights room in the library with an associated collection. The Johnson County Public Library has a curriculum and tour about redlining in Kansas City (based on the book *Some of My Best Friends Are Black* by Tanner Colby).
- Library uses sound recording studio as quiet, calm place for people experiencing sensory overload
- Teen program at Addison PL partners with a local food bank for after school snack/free lunch program. Skokie PL also does this (curbside pickup). Little Free Food Pantry.
- Skokie partners with mental health social service agency to discuss stigma in mental health with teens.
- Using data analytics and neighborhood demographics to reconfigure bookmobile services.
- Expand home delivery service during COVID by opening it to everyone
- “We Read Diverse Books” book club for youth
- Multi-language classes that aren’t focused on language acquisition
- Social group for teens with disabilities
- Access to online resources for people outside library’s taxing boundary but who have kids who attend district schools
- Making programs more accessible (closed captioning, asking about accommodations during registration, adding programming for people with sensory disabilities
- Initiatives that acknowledge that libraries are changing and trying to do better.
- Bring in people to do public programs with discussion that highlight different aspects of diversity