

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Plan (DEI):

The Santa Cruz Public Libraries launched an internal team (the Equity Team) in 2020 that consisted of volunteers from different levels of the organization and that was led by the Assistant Library Director. They drafted the following statement of purpose: *To create an organizational culture of equity and inclusion, and to provide equitable and relevant services to all of the Library's patrons.* The Santa Cruz Public Libraries have endorsed this purpose and will also work to create a culture of belonging and accessibility for staff and all patrons. As an institution, the Library supports a learning culture which drives the DEI statement of purpose.

The team then focused its work in three areas:

Focus Areas:

1. The Library's External Services: Collection, Services and Programs.
2. The Library's Internal Services and Goals: Library Culture.
3. The Library's Hiring and Onboarding Practices.

The goal now is to ensure that the work of the Equity Team becomes an embedded and permanent work within all aspects of the Library. The following outline serves as a three-year guide for taking action within the Library to fundamentally advance diversity, equity and inclusion within the Library and in the community.

The plan begins with DEI training for the Library's senior staff and the senior management team responsible for ensuring the success of this plan. Training will cover core competencies for increasing awareness and vocabulary and communication skills to effectively support DEI work within the Library. Training will also support the development of further leadership skills to improve inclusion, a sense of belonging, and tolerance and the development of a further understanding of both conscious and unconscious bias. The team will also engage Consultants to assist senior management in assessing current staff's understanding of DEI, identifying staff training needs, and building trust among staff.

Focus 1: External Services: Collection, Services and Programs

The Library will align its DEI work on its collections, services and programs with the County of Santa Cruz's work on equity.

Year One:

1. The Library will focus on early childhood literacy to improve educational outcomes for all students in Santa Cruz County. It will also foster greater curiosity among all students. Community survey data provided by the United Way and in partnership with Applied Research Survey (ARS) indicates that significant inequities exist in third grade reading levels, college readiness, socioeconomic status, and in health disparities. We know that children learn to read up until third grade and then read to learn after third grade. Those not reading by third grade will therefore struggle to learn. The consequences for students who fail to read on grade level by third grade has far reaching implications for the individual and society. This plan begins by focusing primarily on third grade level reading outcomes as a long-term investment in addressing the many inequities within the County. It will also provide a roadmap for expanding learning outcomes for all students. The plan will develop a pilot program to increase the number of students reading on a third-grade level by 50% within its chosen school or schools by 2025. Lessons learned from that pilot program will be used throughout the County.
2. The library will work to reduce inequities in learning outcomes and raise outcomes for all students. Targets for success still need to be developed by Library and school staff. The Library will continue with annual Community Conversations with the prioritized groups as identified in the strategic planning process. The results of that feedback shall be incorporated in service and program development by using the best practice DEI methodology.
3. Identify, develop, and maintain appropriate programming and services based on the data and input from community partners that support the DEI Plan.
4. Develop an audit plan for the Library's Collections. Identify, analyze, and implement best practice DEI methodologies for building the collection. Use an equity lens in evaluations of vendors, service, and content providers. Establish a more robust process for cataloging Library materials in other languages, involving affiliates such as Pacific Library Partnership.
5. Remain adaptive to the lessons learned through the library's work with the County and other partners.

Year Two:

1. Evaluate and expand relevant, successful equity-focused programming and services.
2. Implement measurements developed in year one.
3. At the end of year two, the Assistant Library Director will draft a report on the services and programs identified in year one and analyze the success of the programs. The report should make recommendations and be presented to the Library's governance: Library Advisory Commission (LAC), and the Library Joint Powers Board (LJPB).
4. The Collection Management Services (CMS) Manager will identify gaps found in the collections audit and make recommendations for change.

Year Three:

1. Implement recommendations from year two.
2. Provide a report to the LAC and the LJPB at the end of year three on the success of the program and provide recommendations for next steps including how this work can be integrated into the next Strategic Plan.

Focus 2: The Library's Internal Services and Goals: Library Culture

Organizational culture is intricately tied to organizational readiness and the ability of staff to carry out the goals of the DEI Plan and Strategic Plan. Beyond building staff knowledge and skills, this focus area is crucial to building trust and creating an environment where DEI efforts can flourish.

Year One:

1. Identify a consultant to develop an understanding of staff knowledge about Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI). Additionally, utilize the consultant(s) to gain a better understanding of staff wellbeing, levels of trust within the organization, and feelings of belonging and accessibility. Together, this data will inform training needs and help identify organizational development processes that need to be put in place.
2. The Training Coordinator and senior managers will identify staff trainings and

workshops to provide in year one through year three. All Training will support and develop the competencies listed above.

3. Identify tools through The Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) or other best practices that can become regularly used in evaluation of practices and all-policies through a DEI lens.
4. The Assistant Director of Libraries will provide a report to the staff that outlines senior management's plan for addressing the results of a consultant driven survey that captures the baseline of the organization's well-being on DEI.
5. With the assistance of a consultant, support peer groups for the purpose of developing community and constructive feedback for DEI leadership skills and professional development.
6. Continue community conversations throughout the year with staff. Senior management will prepare a report for the staff on its lessons learned from those conversations and how it intends to incorporate those lessons learned within the current strategic plan and the next plan.

Year Two:

1. Include in the consultant's contract a requirement to return in year two to conduct and report out on a follow up staff survey. The consultant should provide methods for identifying DEI progress and accountability.
2. In collaboration with the same consultant, identify additional staff trainings and workshops for all staff in response to year two's survey data.
3. Maintain an ongoing survey of knowledge and staff well-being as it relates to DEI.
4. The Assistant Library Director will provide a report to staff, the LAC and the LJPB that outlines senior management's plan for addressing the results of the survey, enriching the culture of the Library, and meeting the purpose of this plan.
5. The Library will consider how the lessons learned from this work and its recommendations can be integrated into the next Strategic Plan.

Year Three:

1. The same consultant used in year one and year two will return to conduct a third staff survey and compare results.
2. Identify staff trainings and workshops with the Training Coordinator and senior managers in response to year two's survey data.
3. The Assistant Library Director will create a report for staff and the Library's governance that provides a three-year history of the Library's work on improving its culture. The report will make recommendations for next steps including how this work can be integrated into the next Strategic Plan.

Focus 3: The Library's Hiring and Onboarding Practices

Systemic inequities in hiring practices have long affected the ability of marginalized groups to benefit from and participate in various organizations and institutions, including the Library. Employing a diverse workforce is intricately tied to achieving each goal of the Strategic Plan and this DEI Plan.

Year One:

1. A diverse workforce is critical for supporting a culture of learning at the Library. The Santa Cruz Public Libraries recognizes the immeasurable value of listening and responding to varied perspectives, philosophies and life experiences. A goal within year one is to develop a recruitment plan resulting in a workforce that reflects the diverse community served. Our community is made of every resident in the County and the Library also serves patrons who commute in from other counties. We are local as well as regional and we seek to learn more about our connection to our global community. The Library's senior management will establish meetings with HR to support an employment pipeline. Those meetings should focus initially on examining the following: job descriptions; skills and educational requirements; recruitment advertising practices; and hiring processes such as interviews and candidate vetting. The Library will also identify community partners that support diversity and will work with them to develop recruitment strategies. Lastly, the library will develop an exit interview forms to document whether DEI issues were a factor in a staff person's departure.
2. Identify funding sources for paid internships to encourage young people to consider librarianship.

3. At the end of year one, the Assistant Library Director will develop a report to the Library's governance on the Library's recommendations regarding hiring.
4. Conduct annual diversity audits on staff and ensure accountability through transparent benchmarks.
5. Develop an onboarding program for new employees and volunteers that incorporates the key findings around staff knowledge on DEI.

Year Two:

1. The Library will develop and implement a development plan to provide staff with a clearer understanding of opportunities for professional growth and promotion.
2. At the end of year two, the Assistant Library Director will provide a report that documents the history of its actions and recommendations based on the work that came out of its year one report regarding the Library's hiring practices. The Library will consider in its report how the lessons learned from this work and its recommendations can be integrated into the next Strategic Plan.

Year Three:

1. At the end of year three, the Assistant Library Director will report on progress to date and next steps to be integrated in to the next Strategic Plan.