

Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services (ODLOS)

ALA Annual Virtual 2021 Report

Covers the period between 2021 ALA Midwinter Virtual and 2021 ALA Annual Virtual
Submitted by Amber Hayes, Outreach and Communications Program Officer

KEY INITIATIVES

Cultural Competencies for Racial Equity Task Force

The [Building Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity Framework Task Force](#), a joint initiative of ALA (the Association of College and Research Libraries, the Public Library Association, and the Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services) and the Association of Research Libraries, continues the work of its charge: to create a framework for cultural proficiencies in racial equity that can be used in public and academic libraries through: scanning the environment, including review of relevant documents to identify literature and similar statements and frameworks related to racial equity; drafting the framework; seeking comment from stakeholders and the library community on the draft, and revising as needed.

The task force includes four working groups: the Survey group, which released a “Racial Equity Task Force Survey” to assess public and academic libraries’ racial equity efforts, employees’ perceptions of those efforts, and employees’ experience with racial equity and inequity within their library; the Data and Competencies Groups, which compiled data on racial equity trainings and current standards and guidelines for library audiences; the Glossary group, which is determining key terms and definitions to accompany the Framework; and the Framework Development group, which is in the process of drafting the framework and is led by member leader Christina Fuller-Gregory. The plan is to share the draft framework for public feedback by late summer or early fall 2021. During ALA Annual Virtual, members of the task force will present information about the process and status of the task force and share a first look at the framework. The session will be on Sunday, June 27, 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Central.

EDI Assembly

Established at the direction of the ALA Executive Board at the 2020 Midwinter Meeting, ALA’s EDI Assembly has held quarterly meetings since August 2020. The charge of the Assembly is to provide a forum for all groups within ALA and ALA-affiliated organizations working on initiatives related to equity, diversity, and inclusion to discuss their activities, identify opportunities for collaboration and coordination, and explore new initiatives related to the association’s strategic direction on equity, diversity, and inclusion.

In keeping with this charge, the Assembly is holding an information-sharing forum during ALA Annual Virtual. The event, scheduled for Saturday, June 26, 1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Central, is an opportunity for groups represented on the Assembly to provide updates on their activities and initiatives.

National Library Outreach Day

In late 2020, [the Association for Rural and Small Libraries](#), [the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services](#), and ALA's Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services agreed to rebrand National Bookmobile Day to [National Library Outreach Day](#) to be more inclusive and celebrate the passion and dedication of library outreach professionals. Held on April 7, library workers everywhere celebrated their outreach initiatives through blog posts, social media posts, and photos.

Spectrum Scholarship Program

In April and May, 24 Spectrum Jurors reviewed 226 applications for the 2021-22 Spectrum Scholarships and the jurors are in the process of finalizing their decisions. The 2021-2022 cohort is expected to be announced in early July.

Recent engagement activities for the Spectrum community include [monthly Twitter chats](#) and a [webinar](#) hosted by Spectrum Scholar Andrea Lemoins on using Emergent Strategy to organize workers and shift power in institutions.

World Refugee Day

On June 20, 2021, the world observed the United Nations' (UN) [World Refugee Day](#). This event honors the courage, strength and determination of women, men, and children who are forced to flee their homeland under threat of persecution, conflict, and violence. Commemorate this day by pledging, sharing, and learning. The theme for 2021 was "together we heal, learn and shine."

ALA's Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services, [ALA's International Relations Office](#), and [the Mortenson Center for International Library Programs](#) have collected resources and sample activities that library workers can use to celebrate World Refugee Day.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Trainings

The Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services continues to see a high demand for equity, diversity, and inclusion trainings for library audiences. The Office is averaging six trainings per month, with hundreds of participants, across a diversity of library systems, institutions and associations. Trainings in May included the flagship series, “EDIcon: Foundations of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion,” for the Dorchester (MD) Public Library, the Boards of Cooperative Educational Services of New York State and the Utah Library Association conference. ODLOS also presented “Uncovering Privilege and Addressing Microaggressions” as a keynote for the Utah Library Association conference and as a staff training for the Whatcom County (WA) Library System.

June trainings include “Cultural Competence,” as part of the virtual institute “Developing Responsive Library Leaders” held by the University of Oklahoma School of Library and Information Studies, and the “EDI Elements” series for the Northeast (PA) Library System.

The evaluation feedback from these recent trainings has been very positive, and some themes have emerged around sensitivity and new perspectives. For example, as one participant shared, “I have read and thought a lot about these topics, but this training approached them in a new way that gave me new understandings.” Others shared, “Very well done with sensitivity, good resources, good pace and very engaging,” and “the facilitators did an excellent job treating these topics with sensitivity.” Finally, one participant left this feedback: “Thank you for a well-crafted presentation. [The presenters] were engaging, thoughtful, respectful, kind, and compassionate. I appreciated learning of your personal stories; thank you for being vulnerable in sharing with us.”

MEMBER-LED ACTIVITIES

Rural Libraries Summit

The Rural, Native and Tribal Libraries of All Kinds (RNTLOAK) Committee hosted the inaugural Rural Libraries Summit in partnership with the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services, the American Indian Library Association, and the Association for Small and Rural Libraries. The summit responded to the need for greater visibility and focus on rural libraries while also prioritizing outreach, equity of access and partnerships. More than 100 rural and tribal library workers attended the two days of sessions, which included supporting staff and the community during the pandemic, opportunities to increase library revenue through unique funding and sharing initiatives from attendees' libraries. The summit opened with a welcome by ALA President Julius C. Jefferson, Jr. and closed with a presentation by ALA President-Elect Patty Wong.

Webinars

Sunday, June 20, marked [World Refugee Day](#), an international observance honoring the courage, strength, and determination of women, men, and children who are forced to flee their homeland under threat of persecution, conflict and violence.

ODLOS recognizes this day through a partnership with the International Relations Office and the Mortensen Center at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Library. They arranged a webinar on June 18 titled, "[Library Services to Refugees during the COVID-19 Pandemic.](#)" featuring speakers from Toronto Public Library, The Kansas City Public Library, and the Daniel F. Cracchiolo Law Library at the University of Arizona.

INTERSECTIONS BLOG POSTS

[Intersections](#), the ODLOS blog, highlights the work of library and information science workers as they create safe, responsible, and all-inclusive spaces that serve and represent the entire community, as well as initiatives and projects supported by the office that promotes their work. Below are the blog posts featured since late January.

- [2021 ALA Elections: Spectrum Leaders](#)
- [ABOS Expands Its “Reach” in 2020 To Celebrate Everyone Who Provides Outreach To Their Communities](#)
- [An Opportunity for All: UB Libraries Tackles Equity in Hiring](#)
- [Auraria Library: Taking Steps to Address Algorithmic Bias in Library Systems](#)
- [Candidate Q&A: Interviews with candidates for ALA President 2022-2023](#)
- [Developing Global Citizens & Supporting Social Justice on Campus](#)
- [Early Lessons from the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Collections Committee at Providence Public Library: Forming the Committee](#)
- [Early Lessons from the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Collections Committee at Providence Public Library: The Work So Far](#)
- [Every Voice Matters: The Process of Building a Library Values Statement](#)
- [Hard Pivoting: COVID-19 and Outreach Services](#)
- [How Library Outreach Workers Became a Lifeline to Their Communities During COVID-19](#)
- [Linda White, 2001 Scholar, Shares History on Legacy List with Matt Paxton](#)
- [Next Chapter Provides Life Skills Training, and a Second Chance, for County Jail Inmates in North Georgia](#)
- [Outreach is Squishy](#)
- [Practicing Gratitude for Wellbeing](#)
- [Q&A: April M. Hathcock \(2012\), Dr. Antonia Olivas \(2002\), Lalitha Nataraj \(2005\), Sofia Leung, and Jorge López-McKnight of Knowledge Justice are interviewed by Mimosa Shah \(2020\)](#)
- [Q&A with Javier Barrios, interviewed by Tommy Vinh Bui \(2015\)](#)
- [Slicing into the Privilege Layer Cake](#)
- [Subject Heading change at the University of North Texas Libraries](#)
- [The Successful Applicant](#)
- [Taking Equity into Account: Our Experience with Project Ready](#)
- [Using Social Media to Overcome Barriers in Connecting with the Outreach Community: Successes from ABOS](#)
- [Where Do We Talk about Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion? Staff Meetings, Of Course!](#)

ODLOS UPDATES

Staffing

After 20 years of exceptional service, Gwendolyn Prellwitz, ODLOS Assistant Director of Recruitment and Retention, departed ALA on June 5 due to relocation. Throughout the years, Gwendolyn has been a leader in coordinating the Spectrum Scholarship Program, expanding its funding, and growing it into its current status as a widely renowned program in the library community. For our members, Gwendolyn has always been warm and welcoming, quick to offer help, or extend an invitation for a meal or beverage of choice.

The American Library Association announced that Kevin D. Strowder has been selected to lead the organization's Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services. His first day was Monday, June 21. An experienced nonprofit professional with more than a decade of leading and designing programs to promote diversity metrics and uphold inclusive practices, Strowder will take leadership of an office with three focus areas – diversity, literacy, and outreach services to underserved populations – that manages prominent programs, initiative, awards, and relationships that support equity and inclusion through a lens of social justice. Strowder comes to ALA from Embarc Chicago, an organization that serves low-income high school students and prepares them for college and career success, where he served as senior program manager, climate and culture. His previous position includes work with Chicago Cares, the Center on Halsted, and Mercy Home for Boys and Girls. He earned a B.A. in Industrial Psychology from Lakeland University and an M.A. in Organizational Development from Roosevelt University.

UPCOMING AT ALA Virtual

ODLOS staff has been helping to coordinate a number of events as part of and in proximity to ALA Annual Virtual. Find ODLOS-related sessions below.

- [Building Community with Dementia Services](#)
- [Celebrating Welcoming Week: Libraries Fostering Immigrant Integration and Inclusion](#)
- [Coretta Scott King Book Awards Celebration](#)
- [Coretta Scott King Book Awards Community Meeting](#)
- [Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity Framework: An Update](#)
- [EMIERT's Virtual Taste of the Town](#)
- [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Assembly](#)
- [Libraries and Dementia Services Discussion](#)
- [Library Services to the Justice-Involved Discussion](#)
- [Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Multi-Cultural Idea Exchange](#)
- [Mirroring Community in the Library: Growing Momentum for Tribal Libraries and Tribal Librarianship](#)
- [Rainbow Round Table Social](#)
- [SRRT Feminist Task Force](#)
- [Stonewall Book Awards Celebration](#)