

EDI Assessment Recommendations: 2020 efforts

1. *Issue a statement that explicitly recognizes historic racism in Evanston and commits the Library to social justice. (Completed)*

- *The Evanston Public Library Board approved our Equity statement at the April, 2020 board meeting. Please refer to [this link for the statement](#) in both English and Spanish.*

2. *Invest in cultural competence development for EPL leadership and staff. (Ongoing)*

- Evanston Public Library participated in mandatory, yearlong training using the [Project Ready](#) curriculum that began in January, 2020.
- In addition to Project Ready, library staff attended numerous professional development workshops and seminars on EDI topics such as “Becoming a Trans Inclusive Library” from the University of Illinois, “We Know Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion are Important...Now What?” and “Creating Pathways to Civil Legal Justice” from WebJunction, and Racial Healing Circle training from the YWCA.
- Staff goals reflect a commitment to completing EDI training and reviewing their work through an equity lens. EPL will be repeating Project Ready’s initial modules for new staff. Existing staff wishing reinforcement of the content may repeat modules and/or continue their learning through the study of additional modules.
- Foster environment that allows for open staff discussion on difficult racial and diversity issues.
- Crown Staff EDI development: Branch Assistant was selected to join RAILS EDI committee and is presenting on inclusive programming for Reaching Forward Conference. Branch Assistant participated in YWCA workshop on Power, Privilege and Oppression, is a board member of Environmental Justice Evanston (EJE), and attends monthly meetings of a local White Anti-Racist Group issues

3. *Develop a talent management plan that identifies goals for hiring, developing, and promoting people of color. (Ongoing)*

- Led by bilingual Supervising Librarian, our Robert Crown branch library staff reflects and serves our diverse community in English and Spanish.
- Recruitment efforts expanded to place job notifications with Illinois Library Association, American Library Association Black Caucus and REFORMA (Latinx Caucus) and locally with partners such as Cherry Preschool, Evanston Township High School and Youth Job Center which serve our diverse students and families.
- BIPOC staff enrolled in accredited MLIS programs and participated in tuition reimbursement.
- Job descriptions have been rewritten to attract a more diverse pool of applicants.
- Two new Family Engagement Coordinator positions were staffed to connect with and foster deeper engagement with Evanston’s Black and LatinX communities.

4. *Create a group focused on equity and race composed of Library staff and community members. (Ongoing)*

- The Racial Equity Task Force (RETF) is comprised of 8 community members, 2 library trustees, and is supported by 4 staff persons. Met monthly in 2020.

5. *Create and use metrics to assess and adjust efforts in support of the Library's EDI values. (Ongoing)*

- Staff are discussing metrics that can be tracked that reflect improvement over time.

6. *Create an innovative approach to space and services in Fifth Ward. (Ongoing)*

- Shared inventory of EPL programs produced in the 5th Ward with Alderman.
- Continued discussions with groups seeking to redefine the future of the Family Focus facility.
- Continued to provide an electronic Pop-Up library at Fleetwood Jourdain Community Center.
- EPL has enhanced our presence in the 5th Ward through partnerships with Y.O.U., Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Evanston Own It, Fleetwood-Jourdain Community Center, Family Focus, Gibbs-Morrison Cultural Center, Freedom School, Teen Baby Nursery (IWSE), Home Daycare Provider Book Bag Delivery (4 daycare homes), YMCA Headstart, EvanSTEM, and Connections for the Homeless, Over the Rainbow/Hill Apartments, Jacob Blake Manor, and Ebenezer Primm Tower.
- Provided Foster Seniors Group with hardware and training to support their virtual meetings during the pandemic.

7. *Expand book collections that reflect the needs and interests of the Black and Latinx communities. (Ongoing)*

- Created the Collection Advisory Committee to advise and aid in the purchase of materials to better serve the Black community, (<https://www.epl.org/announcing-the-collection-advisory-committee-of-evanston-public-library/>)
- In 2018, we began to track book purchases of Black authors and subject matter. The total number of purchased titles (not number of copies) was 447. This did not include Urban and Romance titles. In **2019** we expanded to include those genres as well. In 2020 the number of purchased titles was 485. This in spite of a 35% budget decrease.
- The 101 Great Books for Kids 2020 list (<https://www.epl.org/announcing-evanston-public-librarys-101-great-books-for-kids-list-of-2020/>) was released in November of 2020. This list exemplifies the wide diversity and variety of children's literature published that year.

- Opening Day collection of materials at the Robert Crown branch included both English and Spanish languages and culturally inclusive books and materials.

8. *Continue supporting culture-specific engagement specialists. (Ongoing)*

- Recruited and hired bi-lingual Supervising Librarian who is leading the diverse team at Robert Crown Branch Library. Hired staff for two new Family Engagement positions serving our Black and Latinx families.

9. *Shift the focus of communications from the multitude of programs and services to engagement. (Ongoing)*

- Continued to work with the Racial Equity Task Force, and piloted new ways to communicate with Black and LatinX residents.
- Recorded episodes of The Checkout podcast, featuring the diverse spectrum of Evanston people living and/or working in Evanston and thereby giving voice to the community.
- Through a competitive grant and working with the Racial Equity Task Force, EPL is creating a series of videos to promote library materials and services to our Black and LatinX community.

10. *Embed EDI into the Library's ongoing communication strategy. (Ongoing)*

- Work of the Engagement team, marketing, and Executive Director focus upon deeper engagement with all Evanston residents especially the Black and Latinx community members.
- Continue to work with the Racial Equity Task Force and seek new ways to communicate with Black and LatinX residents.
- Strategic messaging revised to focus on and promote equitable access to literacy and other resources and equity in who, where and how we serve the community.
- In partnership with EvanSTEM and District 65, we focus marketing to and participation in STEM programs to BIPOC and female students.
- External communications extend broadly through the variety of channels available in Evanston, including those intended for and/or reaching Black and Latinx residents.
- Increased communications in Spanish, including a new Spanish-language newsletter with increased Spanish programming and content to feature and produce.