



Oregon Library Association Statement in Response to Executive Order 13950

Adopted October 30, 2020

In response to [Executive Order 13950](#) signed by President Trump on September 22, 2020, the Oregon Library Association (OLA) resolutely upholds its support of equity, diversity, inclusion, and antiracism by providing continuing education opportunities and career training to develop, hone, and expand cultural competence in the profession of librarianship. Oregon libraries have an obligation to understand and meet the needs of the populations they serve, and library workers must build cultural awareness and understanding through continuing education and professional training. As such, the Oregon Library Association includes equity, diversity, inclusion, and antiracism as focus areas in its [Strategic Plan](#) and as a category in its recently updated [Public Library Standards](#), affirming its commitment to developing and providing this important training to all library workers.

Continuing education and workplace training are required to build a foundational understanding of equity, diversity, inclusion, and antiracism praxis in the 21st century, especially in the field of library and information services. While the Trump administration seeks to ban trainings about race and gender, OLA recognizes and adheres to the value of cultural competency as a fundamental core of librarianship; further, the association acknowledges and endorses the ability of professionals to understand the needs of diverse populations, respect cultural differences, and address issues of disparity among diverse populations (Overall, 2009).

Cultural competence includes “the notion that culture defines every aspect of human life including how humans think and create knowledge, and that knowledge is viewed as a dynamic process, which is socially constructed” (Overall, 2009). In short, diversity is the recognition of difference, inclusion is the effort to respect and value that difference, and equity is the acknowledgment that people from different backgrounds face different barriers to full participation, such that efforts are required to break down those barriers. OLA takes these definitions further to embrace antiracism in the following ways:

- **EQUITY** means that we uplift and empower those who historically have been and currently are oppressed by mainstream, dominating culture. We go beyond homogenization of culture – recognizing that treating everyone “the same” is a weak and false statement, especially while human beings from different races, classes, genders, and disabilities are not seen, heard, served, protected, or respected in today’s society.
- **DIVERSITY** is the rejection of racist and xenophobic ideas. OLA is comfortable being part of uncomfortable conversations; listening and discussing racism without being

defensive; and, advocating for causes that elevate marginalized populations, ultimately challenging our personal position to benefit those who are oppressed.

- **INCLUSION** is more than consideration — it is our library association’s responsibility to evaluate and recognize when laws, processes, terms, and conditions erase, silence, and harm the populations we serve. To be inclusive is to be willing to audit, adjust, adapt, and sometimes completely change our practice to benefit people who are disadvantaged (OLA EDI Task Force, 2020).

While Executive Order 13950 deems these concepts “destructive ideology,” OLA contends this notion is racist doublespeak and firmly rejects the ban on antiracism trainings in the workplace. Adapting to changing needs, and bringing opportunity, literacy, and connectivity to diverse patrons ensures our libraries remain relevant in this century and well into the next.

References

Oregon Library Associations EDI Task Force Recommendations. Retrieved from:

https://ola.memberclicks.net/assets/BoardMeetings/2019-20/2020_04/OLA%20Equity%2C%20Diversity%2C%20and%20Inclusion%20Task%20Force%20Recommendations%20%281%29.pdf

Overall, P. (2009). Cultural Competence: A Conceptual Framework for Library and Information Science Professionals. *The Library Quarterly (Chicago)*, 79(2), 175–204.

<https://doi.org/10.1086/597080>