

Racial Equity Change Team Recommendations to Library Board and Library Management

Rev. 7/27/2020 RECT

Every City of Madison department is required to have a Racial Equity Change Team and there are specific actions required to support and conduct such as racial equity analyses and creating equitable hiring tools. The MPL Racial Equity Team was formed about a year ago and began meeting in June 2019. The team has a structural approach to racial equity and social justice in the library, connected to the City's RESJI and to library-centered efforts within local, regional and national levels to advance equity, diversity and inclusion.

In early June, 2020, amidst the protests happening in Madison and across the nation, the Library and Library Board issued two statements committing to racial equity. Shortly after the statements went out, the Library Board asked Greg Mickels about how our racial equity statements will be followed up with action items. The MPL Racial Equity Change Team was tasked to make recommendations to Greg and the Library Board. The following recommendations are based on five equity discussions hosted by the team in mid-June and then organized by a subgroup.

Police and Madison Public Library

It is time to reevaluate processes, procedures, and policies related to calling MPD on MPL patrons. We must commit to equipping our staff with essential skills to de-escalate situations and provide patrons with appropriate support.

- Clarify practices and policy on when staff should call police
- Create a system of accountability for calling 911 such as a 911 call log.
- Come up with an alternative backup plan to calling the police (see also the CAHOOTS idea, below)
- Hire (or otherwise partner with) culturally competent social worker on-site at (select) library branch locations to reduce police interactions
- Create a workgroup or task an existing one to research alternatives to and best practices related to using police in public libraries, and provide recommendations to library leadership. Commit to piloting alternative(s) at two library branch locations
- Hire a liaison to help build community partnerships at neighborhood branches
- Support MPL Community Engagement Team in developing community partnerships at the neighborhood level by ...
- Provide frequent/regularly scheduled de-escalation training for all staff. Mandatory staff attendance every other year
- Provide frequent/regularly scheduled unconscious bias training for all staff. Mandatory staff attendance every other year

Policy, Communication & Accountability

Communicate clearly and explicitly the work we are doing and the work we are not doing as an organization. Communicate directly to staff and the community what our goals are and provide a plan for the next steps.

- Assign 1-3 staff members to a research and writing project “to examine how implicit bias and systemic racism has shaped our services” as was mentioned in the public statement
- Coordinate a comprehensive strategic plan with lots of community input and engagement from the community to discover community needs and wants
 - Create community outreach opportunities for patrons to come in and discuss what they want to see at their libraries
 - Build a plan around equity
- Develop and implement a racial bias incident tracking system (for staff and patrons to report incidents)
- Release findings of CMT diversity audits and explain how deficiencies will be addressed
- Operationalize mechanisms/systems that foster/gather community feedback on a regular basis
- Create for equitably funding mechanisms for neighborhood libraries. Is having a separate, independent Friends group for each location the best method?
- Publicly commit to ending fines with a clear timeline
- End use of collections agency
- Best practice for library publicity: all promotional materials (such as fliers) that include pictures of people must include non-white people
- Consider what it might look like to reorganize MPL. Conduct an organizational analysis to examine how we are organized to support staff and the community
- Operationalize systems of support for staff of color
- Develop a budget for MPL’s Racial Equity Change Team
- Create affinity group(s) for staff of color
- Develop a racial equity statement/commitment that is signed by new staff
- Increase staffing at SMB (librarian(s) and/or security monitor)
- Public messaging and programming related to racial equity and social justice work need to have RECT representation and/or consultation.
- Identify programs that already appeal to different communities and hold crossover events

Training

We must commit to equipping our staff with essential skills to better meet the needs of the community we serve. Address the expectations of front-line staff and management related to training and development.

- Retrain staff on MPL’s Customer Service Framework
 - Develop the “Foster Community” pillar with a racial equity lens
- Identify trainings for staff that improve engagement and focus on organizational culture/environment

- Identify/develop training on how to recognize and address microaggressions
 - Regularly scheduled unconscious and implicit bias trainings
- Identify strategies and develop a sustainable training program for staff around racial equity work
- Continue RECT equity discussion series
 - Allocate staff time to attend and lead discussions
- Operationalize mandatory involvement diversity, equity, and inclusion training annually
- Create a learning environment and provide staff opportunities to practice trainings in a safe environment
- Offer specific training for staff to work better with teens and tweens, to decrease the conflicts and bans that disproportionately affect Black youth
- More training for more staff members on voter registration, including assisting people to register online and empowering staff to use library technology in the service of voter registration--for example, using an iPad to take a photo of an ID or using a staff fax machine to send documents to the City Clerk

Madison Public Library Board of Directors

- Ensure that Library Board members represent a broad cross-section of Madison -- no district should be represented more than once, and we should always have a balanced panel (similar to interview processes).
- All Library Board members should answer a questionnaire regarding their understanding of and personal commitment to principles of racial equity and social justice.
- All Library Board members should have to attend mandatory training on racial equity and social justice.

Collections

- Funding for Racial Equity materials and resources for adults and youth in Collections budget
- Rename street lit collection
 - Engage users of this collection for their input
 - Possibly renamed to Urban Lit.
 - Make the collection have a real shelving location at each library that has it.
 - Highlight African-American literature that is not Street Lit at all locations (for example, works by Toni Morrison)
- Sticker project: add stickers (like for biographies and short stories) to help patrons find Black literature (and Native literature, Latinx literature, AAPI literature)
- Best practice for book/AV displays: every display topic must include contributions by non-white creators. Create meaningful collections at every location of creators of color
- Create a language collection equity plan that includes community engagement and consider a) hiring culturally competent materials selectors and catalogers who speak our community's most-spoken languages; b) increase intentional funding for materials in languages other than English and fund *language-learning materials for English speakers*

separately from *materials in languages other than English*; c) implement a Spanish-language discovery layer and Spanish-language subject headings in LINKcat (in progress)

SCLS

- Change policy so people without a permanent address can get a limited use card
- Find a way to excuse minors (or minors at the time) from lost charges (not just fines)

City of Madison

- Urge Mayor and City Council to ban MPD use of tear gas
- Advocate for redirecting some of MPD's budget into a non-police emergency response agency, along the lines of CAHOOTS in Eugene, OR

State of Wisconsin

- Create a workgroup or Friends group to lobby to change law against allowing municipalities to offer internet as a public utility