

Dear Public Library Directors,

As members and advisors to Oregon Library Association, the EDI and Antiracism Special Committee have identified a need to facilitate work around equity, diversity, inclusion, and antiracism through the creation of an EDI and Antiracism toolkit to be distributed to Oregon public libraries in March 2021.

The OLA EDI Antiracism committee are going a step further by including antiracism and its value through continuing education and training opportunities for library workers. As public-facing institutions, libraries are responsible for programming and outreach to all types of populations. The intersectionality of this work requires continuing education in EDI and Antiracism practices to further the work and efforts of libraries in Oregon — for that we are requesting the support of the Public Library Division members.

The EDI Antiracism toolkit for libraries is a pioneer initiative that will generate personal and professional growth for you and your library staff — your enthusiasm and collaboration will impact the acceptance and receptivity of this project.

It is important for us to hear what you and your staff have to say, not only when it is time collect the data associated with the toolkit, but also while this project is unfolding.

On October 6<sup>th</sup> 2020 the EDI Antiracism Special Committee sent via Libs-Or an educational statement to all Oregon librarians and despite the positive feedback we have received by the Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) activists, we received only one comment from a librarian currently employed by Public Library.

I reached out to this person by phone to thank her for her words of support and I shared with her she was the only public librarian to comment on the statement, she was not shocked or surprised, and she mentioned many public librarians feel they will be targeted if they comment on a bold statement like that.

I am sharing this story with you as a reflection point to ask you... will you be a leader that encourages your staff to embrace their beliefs when it comes to equity, diversity, inclusion and antiracism? Are you a leader who gets excited to see one of your staff members display some information or opinion on Libs-Or, or does the thought of it makes you uncomfortable?

EDI and antiracism initiatives will only generate significant change if we, as library leaders and library workers, dedicate some of our time to talk about these issues and encourage our colleagues to do the same.

Please help us make the changes we wish to see in OLA — please hold discussions with your staff and support the work of the EDI and Antiracism Special Committee. We need your allyship and support now more than ever.

Sincerely,

OLA EDI Antiracism Committee