Closing the Gap: Supporting Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Plans in the Modern Public Library

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ABSTRACT

Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) plans and initiatives are at the forefront of many libraries' strategic planning (Mallon, 2019). Efforts, big or small, such as mandatory all-staff EDI training sessions (Downers Grove Public Library, 2021), EDI focused patron programming, or simply promoting the local library as a place of opportunity for all (ALA, 2019), demonstrate the American Library Association (ALA)'s Core Values in practice (ALA, 2006). In fact, Diversity is one of eight key action areas that are used as guiding principles for investment of energies and resources (ALA, 2007). These key action areas represent priorities and clear focuses within the ALA's own strategic plan (ALA, 2017), which serves to outline the organization's long-term goals and high-level outcomes (Hirsh, 2022). The ALA has historically promoted themselves as supporters, allies, and anti-racists, playing an important role in many libraries' strategic plans and philosophies. But, despite libraries being regarded as the 'most inclusive' institutions in the United States (Jaeger, 2018), there appears to be internal and external gaps in truly achieving these EDI goals. It is necessary to further explore where these gaps are and propose solutions to ensure clearer action is being taken to support and highlight these strategies.

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ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

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