

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

(EDI) Working Group

Report & Recommendations



Outline

- Workgroup Purpose & Reflections
 - Purpose of report
 - Word cloud of extracted talking points
 - Brief overview of workgroup member experience
- Focus of Our Work
 - Our goals, outcomes & influence for 2022
 - MHLS staff goals, outcomes & influences for 2022
 - Our influence on member libraries
- The Future of EDI in the work of the MHLS Board
 - Pivot issues – Focus and Knowledge
 - Process guidelines
 - Looking at the journey forward
- The Journey Forward

Purpose of this Report

To thank you for the opportunity these past two years...

- **To** join together
- **To** share our orientations twice a year
- **To** present our process
- **To** present our ‘findings’
- **To** explore our future focus

Working Group Purpose Statement

To review Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) policies, procedures and practices in the areas of governance, human resources and system service design and recommend new approaches

In a way that promotes equity, diversity and inclusion as a core value of the institution

So that MHLS is authentically improving its commitment to racial and social equity and serving as a model for our member libraries.

We experienced many dimensions for transformation



[Working Group Member Impact Statements \(link\)](#)

Brief Overview:

Working Group Members' Experience

- We created a **safe space**
- We communicated with **honesty and integrity**
- We created an agenda and **context for conversations**
- We **affirmed the value of EDI**
- We committed to **continual analysis assessment and evaluation**
- We focused on **ethical policies**
- We **reflected on ourselves** before discussing issues
- We **sought transformational opportunities**
- We **embedded learning** in our board work
- We **spoke with empathy, patience and humility**
- We confirmed EDI as a **process not destination**
- We allowed for **messy conversations**

Goals, Outcomes & Influences

identified during our 1-year anniversary retreat in July 2021

To continue:

- to convene committee chairs to discuss strategic goals including EDI
- our work to provide an orientation on EDI for the MHLS Board
- to engage in review of our policies using the analysis framework

To tell our story and highlight aspects of our work that are replicable for members.

To learn about and feature the work of member libraries on EDI

To provide a mini-conference on EDI focusing on our experience and local libraries' work

To act on the results of the 2021 EDI Assessment administered with the board and staff

Staff Activities for 2022

- New MHLS Outreach & Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Specialist position created
- Team-Based, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Justice Conversations. 100% staff participation.
- Accessibility Statement & ReciteMe Accessibility Toolbar added to midhudson.org
- OverDrive Carousels
- Authority Control work in the online catalog
- Fine Free Libraries (51/66)
- New EDI Series created; first offerings included:
 - From Diversity to Inclusion: How to Audit Your Collection and Why
 - Introduction to the Talking Book & Braille Library
 - A Review of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Justice at Work Cohort
- Safe Zone Training
- Board Diversity Working Group
- EDI Mini-Conference Produced



MHLS Directors' Association

- [Public-facing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement](#) approved for addition to the online catalog at the recommendation of MHLS Staff
- [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement](#) adopted by the Directors Association:
 - *“...This professional statement ...is provided as a framework to acknowledge our goal to be an association that values differences and creates a welcoming environment that is comfortable, inclusive, and empowering while opening the door for innovation, increased participation and an elevated sense of community and belonging for all...”*

The Future of EDI in the Work of the MHLS Board

- Pivot Issues
 - What more we need to study regarding EDI
 - How do we expand our focus
 - How we recognize emerging issues and challenges
- Process guidelines – our guideposts for authentic work
- Looking at the journey forward:
 - Expand participation
 - Integrate and infuse EDI in MHLS Board work
 - Knowing how to continue the work of EDI

“Pivot Issues”

Issues for further exploration and discussion

- Life-style Issues
- Gender Identity
- Aging & Senior Engagement
- Climate Change Impacts & Climate Justice
- Economic Influences and Challenges
- Digital Divide & Access
- Censorship & Truth; Myth & Misinformation
- Literacy
- Emerging Issues

Board Work

- Creating a memory-documentation process
- Creating empowerment in Board work
- Creating higher visibility and mentoring in MHLS
- Celebrating the work of member libraries commitment to EDI
- Establishing and evaluating annual working goals with EDI
- Talking with others of different opinions

Process Guidelines

- ✓ Be self reflective & be group reflective
- ✓ Allow mistakes
- ✓ Be non-judgmental
- ✓ Continue orientation for the MHLS Board
- ✓ Make the work transparent, clear and understandable throughout our sphere of influence
- ✓ Continue to expand the definition of EDI
- ✓ Take time: thoughtful deliberation before action
- ✓ Create a meeting space which is flexible (in person, online and hybrid)

The Journey Forward

- **Expand participation**
 - Include more board members in the journey
 - Reach out to member library board members
 - Update and offer resource list for member library board members
- **Integrate and infuse EDI in MHLS Board work**
 - Deepen understanding and reflection on issues of equity, diversity and inclusion as pertains to library environments and system trustees
 - Document our processes
 - Reach out and partner with other library system trustees and continue to share
- **Know how to engage**
 - Continue to model good practices for examining issues of EDI
 - Continue to update policy changes in accordance with emerging EDI issues
 - Examine multiple points of view within our trustee community
 - Understand local patron needs

The Journey Forward: **Issues to Keep in Mind**

- What process(es) best serve the MHLS board and system to continue to include EDI in our work?
- How do we ensure EDI is a core value in MHLS Board work?
- What role do the Board committees have in the work of EDI?
- “This is not a destination....it is a journey”

Feedback?

Today & Everyday