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## B.3 Diversity (Old Number 60)

The American Library Association (ALA) promotes equal access to information for all persons and recognizes the ongoing need to increase awareness of and responsiveness to the diversity of the communities we serve. ALA recognizes the critical need for access to library and information resources, services, and technologies by all people, especially those who may experience language or literacy-related barriers; economic distress; cultural or social isolation; physical or attitudinal barriers; racism; discrimination on the basis of appearance, ethnicity, immigrant status, religious background, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression; or barriers to equal education, employment, and housing.

Libraries can and should play a crucial role in empowering diverse populations for full participation in a democratic society. In order to accomplish this, however, libraries must utilize multivariate resources and strategies. In the library workforce, concrete programs of recruitment, training, development, advancement and promotion are needed in order to increase and retain diverse library personnel who are reflective of the society we serve. Within the American Library Association and in the services and operations of libraries, efforts to include diversity in programs, activities, services, professional literature, products and continuing education must be ongoing and encouraged.

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### B.3.1 Policy Objectives (Old Number 60.1)

The American Library Association will implement these objectives by:

1. Promoting the removal of all barriers to library and information services.
2. Promoting the publication, development, and purchase of materials, resources and exhibits that present positive role models from diverse populations.
3. Promoting full funding for existing legislative programs in support of equal education and employment, and exploring alternative funding sources for scholarships, fellowships, and

- assistantships in order to attract individuals from diverse backgrounds into librarianship.
4. Promoting training opportunities for library personnel that will give them the skills needed to both provide effective services to diverse populations and to raise funds to enhance library services for diverse communities.
  5. Promoting the incorporation of programs and services designed for diverse populations into the budgets of all types of libraries, rather than supporting these activities solely from “soft monies” such as private grants or federal monies.
  6. Promoting adequate funding of library personnel, resources, facilities and equipment for the provision of equitable library services to diverse populations.
  7. Promoting supplemental support for library resources for diverse communities by urging local, state, and federal government, and the private sector, to provide adequate funding.
  8. Promoting public awareness of the importance of library resources and services among all segments of society, especially in diverse communities.
  9. Promoting the creation of output measures through the encouragement of community needs assessment.
  10. Promoting the career advancement of diverse personnel by providing increased professional and leadership development opportunities.

(See 1.3-A and “Policy Reference File”: *Equity at Issue*

(<http://www.ala.org/aboutala/files/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/ocrpdfofprm/60-1diversity.pdf>) [1985-1986 CD #30] adopted by Council June 1986

(<http://www.ala.org/aboutala/files/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/ocrpdfofprm/60-1diversity.pdf>). - PDF, 7 pgs)

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### **B.3.1.1 Definitions of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

American Library Association believes that everyone deserves equitable rights and opportunities. The goal is to create a just and equitable Association, profession, and society where everyone has access to social power, resources, and physical and psychological safety. ALA has chosen to define “diversity” in all its complexity in order to recognize and honor the uniqueness of each ALA member, all members of our profession, and our very diverse communities. ALA believes that, to be inclusive, our association, profession, and society must recognize the inherent worth and dignity of every member of the community; involve and empower all members to participate and contribute; promote and sustain a sense of belonging; and value and practice respect for the talents, beliefs, backgrounds, and ways of living of all members.

Through its Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services, ALA will maintain a glossary of terms. This glossary is not intended to be an exhaustive list of every word and term used in our conversations about equity, diversity, and inclusion. The intent is to provide guidance and open discussion in the spirit of creating a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive society. Language can both contribute to oppression and be a tool of liberation. In recognition of the way language works, especially around these concepts, many of the words and terms will continue to evolve.

Adopted, June 2017. (See Policy Reference File: 2016-2017 ALA CD#44.1\_62517\_ACT (<http://hdl.handle.net/11213/9405>))

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### **B.3.2 Combating Racism (Old Number 60.2)**

Since 1936, the American Library Association has been actively engaged in combating any and all attitudes, behavior, services or programs which amount to the exclusion or restriction of a targeted group of people based on a designation of race, skin color, ethnic origin or descent.

ALA also recognizes that institutionalized inequities based on race are embedded into our society and are reinforced through social institutions and further perpetuated by policies, practices, behaviors, traditions, and structures. And, since libraries are a microcosm of the larger society and play an important and unique role in the communities they serve, they must seek to provide an environment free of racism, where all are treated with respect and dignity.

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### **B.3.3 Combating Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Discrimination (Old Number 60.3)**

The American Library Association actively commits its programs and resources to those efforts that combat prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination against individuals and groups in the library profession and in library user populations on the basis of race, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, creed, color, religious background, national origin, language of origin or disability. Nothing in the Resolution on Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Discrimination authorizes censoring, expurgation, or restrictive labeling of materials. Actions and programs to raise the awareness of library users to any problem or condition would not be in conflict with the Library Bill of Rights when they are free of any element of advocacy. Both documents respect the rights of all who use libraries to do so freely and without being subjected to pressure or censorship from within the institution.

Furthermore, ALA believes that the struggle against racism, prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination is a continuous effort and must extend throughout its membership.

Specifically, the American Library Association and libraries will:

1. Seek to facilitate equitable participation of all people within decision-making processes in the Association and will strive to create an environment where all are welcome and where diversity is a collective goal.
2. Encourage its membership, libraries, vendors and stakeholders to implement anti-racism policies that outline the organization's expectations of its participants, staff and members.
3. Support anti-racism work within the broader society by monitoring, evaluating and advocating for human rights and equity legislation, regulations, policy and practice.

Thus, the American Library Association will endeavor to ensure full representation of all racial groups and have this reflected in its policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in its relations with staff, members, stakeholders, and the community at large, thereby reaffirming its commitment to diversity, inclusiveness, and mutual respect for all human beings.

(See "Policy Reference File" for full Resolution on Prejudice, Stereotyping, and Discrimination, a revision of the Resolution on Racism and Sexism Awareness.)

(/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/governance/policymanual/Links/Policy%20Manual%2060.3.pdf  
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### **B.3.4 Native American Themes (Old Number 59.3)**

ALA and its divisions are encouraged to consult with the American Indian Library Association before using or creating Native American themed illustrations, graphics, programs, or publicity.

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### **B.3.5 Goals for Inclusive and Culturally Competent Library and Information Services (Old Number 60.4)**

Cultural competency is defined as the acceptance and respect for diversity, continuing self-assessment regarding culture, and the ongoing development of knowledge, resources, and service models that work towards effectively meeting the needs of diverse populations. Cultural competence is critical to the equitable provision of library and information services; therefore, the American Library Association urges library personnel to commit themselves to the following guidelines.

1. To ensure equitable services to every community member or group, training and ongoing education that promote awareness of and sensitivity to diversity must be stressed for all library personnel.
2. Care must be taken to acquire and provide materials that meet the educational, informational, and recreational needs of diverse communities.
3. Efforts to identify and eliminate cultural, economic, literacy-related, linguistic, physical, technological, or perceptual barriers that limit access to library and information resources must be prioritized and ongoing.
4. The creation of library services and delivery operations, which will ensure rapid access to information in a manner reflective of the communities they serve.
5. A diverse workforce is essential to the provision of competent library services. A concerted effort must be undertaken to recruit and retain diverse personnel at every level of the library workforce. Opportunities for career advancement must also be available to these individuals.
6. To ensure the development and enhancement of library services to diverse populations, library personnel from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds must be encouraged to take active roles in the American Library Association and other professional library organizations.

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### **B.3.6 Library and Information Studies Education to Meet the Needs of a Diverse Society (Old Number 60.5)**

The American Library Association, through the Committee on Accreditation, will encourage graduate programs in library and information studies seeking accreditation or re-accreditation to ensure that their student bodies, faculties, and curricular effect the diverse histories and information needs of all people in the United States. Collaboration between these programs and local libraries and community-based organizations serving diverse populations is to be particularly encouraged.

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### **B.3.7 Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Personnel (Old Number 60.6)**

In order to ensure that libraries are both reflective of and relevant to the communities they serve, the American Library Association encourages and supports recruitment and continuing education initiatives that facilitate the hiring and promotion of a diverse workforce in libraries of all types and at all organizational levels.

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### **B.3.8 Leadership Development and Advancement (Old Number 60.7)**

The American Library Association encourages libraries and library professional organizations to develop internal and collaborative initiatives that will assist library personnel from diverse backgrounds in identifying and preparing for career advancement and management opportunities. Such continuing education programs and learning modules may promote the development of skills necessary for leadership in 21st century information environments.

1. Libraries will be encouraged to provide information, training, and skill development activities to enhance leadership capabilities for diverse populations in the library profession.
2. ALA will assist in identifying proven leaders willing to participate as mentors to provide feedback, encouragement, and advice regarding continuing education, professional development, and career advancement opportunities for interested members.
3. Opportunities for learning and strengthening leadership skills will be available as workshops and conference programs in all sectors of the Association. Program developers will acknowledge the concerns of diverse populations and take this into consideration when developing these programs, by involving the appropriate representation in program planning and advertising.
4. Diversity initiatives will include leadership development components to prepare the leaders of tomorrow.

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