

# CLA Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Statement

The Connecticut Library Association (CLA) and its Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers are committed to recognizing, enhancing and promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion in all forms. CLA is committed to creating an equitable and inclusive environment with equitable treatment for all that not only promotes our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, but counters oppression through modeling and situates CLA as a trusted, leading advocate for equitable access to library services for all. CLA subscribes to the [definitions of equity, diversity, and inclusion](#) adopted by the American Library Association (ALA) Council in 2017.

In order to do this, we will:

- Commit to having all organizational leadership, staff and volunteers embrace the values of mutual respect and dignity for all persons concerning internal practices and policies, specifically in relation to governance, volunteer service, and employment, ensuring equality of opportunity that is free from discrimination and harassment.
- Ensure open, responsive, and respectful communication with every individual, including, but not limited to: staff, members, volunteers, and stakeholders.
- Create a strong collaboration and partnership with the community in any interactions regarding issues of diversity and equity, ensuring that we are reflective and responsive to the needs of the diverse state we serve.
- Continually monitor and evaluate internal and external activities to ensure we are providing an environment that welcomes equity and diversity in all its forms.
- Use a social justice framework to ensure the inclusion of diverse perspectives in our profession and association to best position CLA as a trusted, leading advocate for equitable access to library services for all.

- Identify and work to remove barriers to equity, diversity, and inclusion relative to all members and patrons with a broad spectrum of best practices, tools, and resources.
- Provide access to training, resources, and support for staff, members, volunteers, and CT libraries to enhance awareness, knowledge, reflection, and understanding of the importance of a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Review our systems - programs, practices, collections, marketing, etc. for our commitment to these values, acknowledge gaps and shortcomings, and take action to correct shortfalls.

CLA is committed to expanding equity, diversity, and inclusion across the State, including embracing, encouraging, respecting and welcoming people's multiple group identities relating to race, ethnicity, gender identity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, religion, ability, language, age, size, and more that make-up the Connecticut library community.

## **Equity**

Equity is not the same as formal equality. Formal equality implies sameness. Equity, on the other hand, assumes difference and takes difference into account to ensure a fair process and, ultimately, a fair (or equitable) outcome. Equity recognizes that some groups were (and are) disadvantaged in accessing educational and employment opportunities and are, therefore, underrepresented or marginalized in many organizations and institutions. The effects of that exclusion often linger systemically within organizational policies, practices, and procedures. Equity, therefore, means increasing diversity by ameliorating conditions of disadvantaged groups. (Adapted from [National Association of Social Workers](#))

*Adopted by ALA Council in 2017 per the [recommendation](#) of the ALA Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.*

## **Diversity**

Diversity can be defined as the sum of the ways that people are both alike and different. Visible diversity is generally those attributes or characteristics that are external. However, diversity goes beyond the external to internal characteristics that we choose to define as ‘invisible’ diversity. Invisible diversity includes those characteristics and attributes that are not readily seen. When we recognize, value, and embrace diversity, we are recognizing, valuing, and embracing the uniqueness of each individual. (Adapted from [National Education Association](#))

*Adopted by ALA Council in 2017 per the [recommendation](#) of the ALA Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.*

## **Inclusion**

Inclusion means an environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully; are valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, and perspectives; have equal access to resources and opportunities; and can contribute fully to the organization’s success. (Adapted from [Society for Human Resources Management](#), [Hewlett Packard](#), and [Ferris State University](#))

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