

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy

Approved by: Library Board of Control, Date: Jan 2021

Introduction

Bossier Parish Libraries are committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Human capital is the most valuable library asset. A significant part of the library's culture is the collective sum of individual differences, life experiences, knowledge, creativity, innovation, self-expression, unique capabilities, and talent.

At Bossier Parish Libraries, we are committed to:

- A workplace that is free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying
- Treating employees fairly and with mutual respect
- A workplace culture that is inclusive and embraces individual differences
- Equal employment opportunities based on ability, performance, and potential
- Making all staff aware of their rights and responsibilities with regards to fairness, equity, and respect for all aspects of diversity
- Attraction, retention, and development of a diverse range of talented, energetic, and committed people

Diversity

Diversity includes how people differ, encompassing the different characteristics that make one individual or group different. While race, ethnicity, and gender often define diversity, the library's broad definition of diversity includes age, national origin, experience, religion, disability, sexual orientation, education, marital status, language(s) spoken, and physical appearance. To promote a greater understanding and respect for diversity, contributions from employer and employee are a must to the communities served.

Equity

Equity is the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some individuals or groups. The library is committed to the ongoing development of a work environment built on the premise of gender and diversity equity that encourages and enforces:

- Respectful communication and cooperation between all employees
- Teamwork and employee participation, permitting the representation of all groups and employee perspectives
- Employee encouragement to develop and progress their careers through opportunities that build on their skills, experience, and potential

Inclusion

Inclusive environments are places where any individual or group feels welcomed, respected, supported, valued, and able to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming culture embraces differences, offers respect in words and actions for all people, and fosters a diversity of thought, ideas, perspectives, and values. All employees of Bossier Parish Libraries have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect at all times. Employees are also expected to exhibit conduct that reflects inclusion during work, at work functions on or off-site, and at all library-sponsored events.

Employee Expectations

Employees should adhere to the library's core values of honesty, integrity, pride, transparency, and mutual respect. They are also required to complete diversity and anti-discrimination/harassment/bullying training on an annual basis. This training raises awareness and encourages behavior that supports a work environment free from discrimination and harassment.

An employee who exhibits any inappropriate conduct or behavior against others may be subject to corrective action. Employees who believe they have experienced any kind of discrimination that conflicts with this policy should seek assistance from a manager or Administration.