



iCount

Removing Barriers to Equity at Your Library





Dear Library Staff,

In 2016, *iCount* was just a concept, but over the course of 3 years, with your support and participation, it has become a part of our organizational culture. Through systematic training, we learned to identify and address equity issues specific to our communities – that’s no small feat and I applaud your hard work and dedication. *iCount* has been instrumental in the creation of Reading Machine, The Source homeless outreach, Smarty Pants Storytime, Barbershop Books, Mental Health Clinicians, MBK Peer Advocates, Triple P Librarians, Microsoft Digi Camps, public computer refresh, Wi-Fi broadband upgrade, Book Kiosks, and many more projects designed to purposefully serve a specific community.



Our efforts and success have been noticed by our industry peers. In the past year, we have received many accolades including the 2018 LJ Marketer of the Year award, which focused on our rebranding efforts and the marketing awareness campaign – the Marketing team’s LEAP; the 2019 LJ Librarian of the Year award, affirmed our leadership and innovative approach in bringing equity of services to libraries; and for the 2nd year in a row, we are named a 2019 Finalist for the National Medal for Museum and Library Services which also emphasizes our efforts to increase access and break down barriers through *iCount*. In addition, we have also been invited to speak at many industry events to share our *iCount* experience. These recognitions confirm that we are on the right path.

Collectively, we have taken a leap forward to making the Library a welcoming space and bringing meaningful services to all of our customers. Your hard work has not gone unnoticed, and you never cease to amaze me with what you are able to accomplish. Thank you again for your hard work, and I look forward to another successful year.

Skye Patrick
Library Director



Training Timeline

June 2019

- Training 1: Reviewing your 2018 Library Equity Action Plan (LEAP)

July 2019

- Training 2: Discussing Cultural Competency

August 2019

- Training 3: Brainstorming your 2019 Library Equity Action Plan (LEAP)

September 2019

- Formalize your 2019 Library Equity Action Plan (LEAP)
- Submit your LEAP online by September 30, 2019. The online submission form is available through the iCount resource center on the staff blog.

October 2019 – March 2020

- Implement 2019 Library Equity Action Plan (LEAP)

April 2020

- Submit final report on outcomes of the 2019 Library Equity Action Plan (LEAP) online by April 30, 2020.



Purpose of Training

This training was developed by LA County Library to ensure that all people feel welcome in the library and that the Library provides equitable services. It is designed to help supervisors and managers educate staff on equity, explore equity issues, develop and implement equity plans, and create opportunities for continuation of equity discussion.



iCount is an initiative introduced by LA County Library that embodies equity of service to library customers. iCount ensures the Library makes a conscious effort in designing services and programs that address the needs of the diverse community it serves, which includes customers of different age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, physical ability, nationality, legal status, and more.

Equity extends beyond equality—fairness and universal access—to deliberate and intentional efforts to create service delivery models that will ensure community members have access to the resources they need. Often these needs are different not only as a result of race and ethnicity, but also owing to religious belief, sexual orientation, gender identification, socioeconomic status, or physical ability.

iCount Training Module

Training 1

Estimated time: 20-30 minutes

Reviewing your 2018 Library Equity Action Plan

Over the past year, we have been implementing a Library Equity Action Plan (LEAP). Today, we will be evaluating our LEAP. We will consider how it addressed our chosen equity issue and whether we achieved our desired results.

Questions for Staff:

- How well did our LEAP address the equity issue identified in our library/division?
- How did the implementation go overall? What were some of our successes and our challenges? Is there something we could do differently in the next round?
- What impact did our LEAP have on the community? Did we meet our anticipated outcomes?
Note: An outcome is the impact a program or service has on our customers.
- What will the long-term impact of our LEAP be?

Next Step:

Encourage staff to consider cultural illiteracies that pertain to your community and how they influence interactions with others.

Before the next training, invite staff to watch **Cultural (il)literacy: What modern America needs to know** by Dr. Reginald Chhen Stewart, Iowa State University's Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion. This 7-minute TEDx talk from the University of Nevada can be found online at tinyurl.com/y5k2gcyp.



Case Study

Serving Incarcerated Youth and Juvenile Hall Staff

Los Padrinos Library

Los Padrinos Library's 2017 LEAP focused on providing intergenerational programming to incarcerated youth who are parents, giving them opportunities to interact with their young children and learn essential parenting skills. In addition, their plan also provided programming and outreach to the incarcerated youths' parents. This year, the Library builds on these efforts as they continue to provide resources and support for these families while also expanding their outreach to Juvenile Hall staff.

The Library hosted an open house celebrating their 2-year anniversary, including a drive to sign up for library cards, digital resources demonstration, and student art gallery. Getting buy-in from Juvenile Hall staff on the importance of the Library—both within juvenile hall and on the outside—helps to create awareness among probation youth and their families and encourages them to utilize Library services once they are released, to further their education and achieve their goals.

iCount Training Module

Training 2

Estimated training time: 30-45 minutes

Note: If staff were unable to watch the TEDx talk from Dr. Stewart on Cultural (il)lteracy, you may show it to the group at the beginning of this training. The video is approximately 7 minutes long.

Discussing Cultural Competency

Today we will be discussing Cultural Competency and what that means to us here in our library. Hopefully everyone has watched the TEDx video about cultural illiteracy so we have an idea of what it means.

Questions for Staff:

- What is culture to you? Is it race? Religion? Community norms?
- What cultures and sub-cultures exist in our community?
- What can we do to help ourselves recognize our own cultural competencies and incompetencies?
- What steps can we take as library staff to be more culturally competent?

Next Step:

Think about how cultural competency relates to our 2018 LEAP and consider how our 2019 LEAP can address cultural competency in the library.

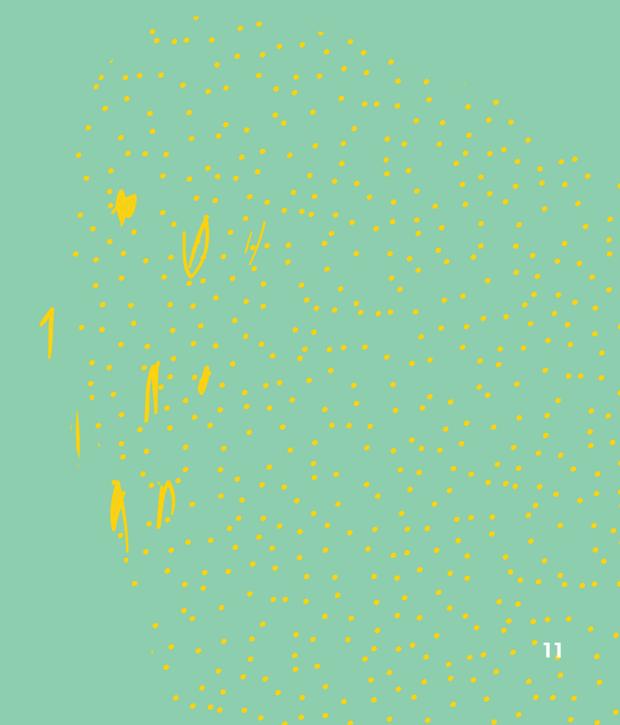


Case Study

Connecting with Older Adults

Claremont Library

In an effort to build connections with older adults, Claremont Library's second largest service demographic following children and families, Library staff reached out to local organizations for insight into developing relevant programs and services. Inspired by Library Director Skye Patrick's Visioning Sessions from 2016, Claremont Library is partnering with local clubs and service groups to conduct listening sessions to receive feedback on what types of programs and services Claremont's older adult community needs. By connecting with these community organizations in such a purposeful manner, Claremont Library hopes to establish lasting relationships with the organizations, and offer them relevant and focused programming with more robust outcomes.



iCount Training Module

Training 3

Estimated training time: 30-45 minutes

Library Equity Action Plan

Considering our discussions over the past 2 months, we will now create a Library Equity Action Plan (LEAP) that describes the efforts we can make in our library to support equity. Our LEAP can be an enhanced version of our 2018 LEAP or address a different barrier to equity in the library. Consider any changes or new observations we've made about the community in the past year.

The LEAP should include:

1. Equity issue being addressed.
2. Action plan and implementation timeline.
3. Anticipated outcomes and how they will be measured.

Questions for Staff:

- What steps do we need to take to put our plan into action?
- What will we do in the next 3 months and then in the next 6 months?
- What kinds of administrative support and/or resources do we need to accomplish this?
- How will we know we have been successful?



Case Study

Job Resources for People Experiencing Homelessness

A C Bilbrew Library

In 2017, A C Bilbrew Library recognized a need in their community for services for people experiencing homelessness, so they focused their first LEAP on developing resources and partnerships to address it. In 2018, staff decided to build on the efforts of their first LEAP and expand their services to this population to include classes on computer basics and job searching.

The Library also planned a Job Readiness Day featuring a series of workshops and activities such as resume-building, job search strategies, making a good impression, and mock interviews. Organizing this event required A C Bilbrew Library to form new community partnerships, as well as building upon existing ones. These stronger community partnerships also allow the Library to better serve this population going forward.

Cultural Competency

Cultural competency is the ability to effectively interact, work, and develop meaningful relationships with people of various cultural backgrounds. Cultural background can include the beliefs, customs, and behaviors of people from various groups.

Gaining cultural competency is a lifelong process of increasing self-awareness, developing social skills and behaviors around diversity, and gaining the ability to advocate for others. It goes beyond tolerance, which implies that one is simply willing to overlook differences. Instead, it includes recognizing and respecting diversity through our words and actions in all contexts.

Knowledge about cultures can be helpful, but the best way to know and understand another person is to maintain a state of openness, nonjudgment, and curiosity.

3 steps to improving cultural competency:

Self-Reflection: Reflecting critically on our own biases and prejudices helps us develop the skills necessary to effectively interact and engage with individuals whose cultural background differs from our own. Realizing that everyone has biases is an important step for building cultural competency. Our biases may stem from our backgrounds, experiences, or personal demographics, and these biases exist whether or not we are aware of them.

Active Listening: Actively listening to an individual allows us to learn about that person's culture and experiences. We should listen for total meaning by focusing on the content that is being given and concentrating on what is being said.

Demonstrating Empathy: Empathy is the art of seeing and feeling the situation of another person, walking in another person's shoes, or seeing the world as that person sees it. Empathy involves understanding someone else's perceptions and the conclusions that person draws about their life experiences. It does not mean we have to agree with that person's perceptions and conclusions, but at the very least, we are able to see the other person's position.

Adapted from Nebraska Extension's Cultural Competence:
An Important Skill Set for the 21st Century



Cultural competency is an ongoing process and requires continual self-reflection and practice. Practice cultural competency during circulation and reference interactions. Let cultural competency inform program planning, scheduling, and facilitating. Use cultural competency to strengthen interactions with staff throughout LA County Library.

Further information:

7 Ways to Improve 'Cultural Competence'—Current Psychiatry, 2003
tinyurl.com/y56yo7t9

Building Cultural Competence—Montgomery County Public Schools
tinyurl.com/y49lb6dh

Group Activities for Cultural Competence—Association of Science-Technology Centers
tinyurl.com/yy99phf5

How to Start Training Your Staff to Be More Culturally Competent—Public Library Association 2018 Conference presentation
tinyurl.com/y335uojt

Social Work for Librarians: Cultural Humility—Whole Person Librarianship
tinyurl.com/y27nuhbn

TED Talk: Color Blind or Color Brave?—Mellody Hobson
tinyurl.com/yywfjldc

TEDx Talk: A Tale of Two Teachers—Melissa Crum
tinyurl.com/y3ye7sn5

More Case Studies

Enhancing Services to Latinx Populations

San Gabriel Library

During the course of developing their LEAP, San Gabriel Library discovered that while 26% of the city's population is Latinx, the demographics of the Library's actual users do not reflect this statistic. To address the discrepancy, the Library's 2018 LEAP aims to increase library usage by the local Latinx population by enhancing library services aimed at this underserved group—like hosting a local Latinx author program and adding Spanish language newspapers to the collection—and improving promotional efforts—by partnering with local schools and social service agencies to create awareness and promote library resources, and creating flyers in Spanish.

Programs and Services for Older Adults

Wiseburn Library

While Wiseburn Library is viewed in their community as a dedicated place for children's and family services, the Library wanted to expand their reputation as a provider of excellent resources for older adults, as well. Library staff developed a multi-faceted approach to improving services and programs for this population.

First, the Library recognized that without a designated adult area, older adults would not feel comfortable utilizing the Library space. Despite the limited square footage, staff reimagined the existing space to create a new adult area with comfortable furniture, improved lighting, a more accessible and robust Large Print collection, and more relevant magazine selections. The Library then expanded and enhanced programming aimed at adults and older adults on a variety of relevant and interesting topics.



Barbershop Books

Connecting Boys and Men of Color to Books and Reading

According to the US Department of Education, 3 out of 4 black boys in California are not reading at grade level. This data validates the Library's goal of expanding literacy programs and services outside of the traditional library space.

This year, LA County Library partnered with the nonprofit organization Barbershop Books to create child-friendly reading spaces inside 10 barbershops in Compton and South Los Angeles.

These reading spaces are designed to help black boys ages 4 – 8 identify as readers by connecting books and reading to a male-centered space, and by involving men in boys' early reading experiences. Barbers from the 10 shops received an Early Literacy Barbers Training facilitated by Barbershop Books founder Alvin Irby, where they learned how to speak with young boys about reading and ways to encourage them to use the Barbershop Books space.

At the conclusion of the training, each shop received small bookshelves filled with a selection of award-winning books, curated by recommendations from young people. The Library's Community Liaison visits the shops monthly to check in with the owner, provide replacement materials, and issue Student Cards to children at the shop.

Library Equity Action Plan (LEAP)



LIBRARY NAME:
COST CODE:

Equity Issue

What issues, barriers, or underserved groups will you be serving with this plan?

Equity Action Plan

What will your library/division do to address the equity issue?

Implementation Timeline

What are the steps you will take to put the plan into action?

Anticipated Outcomes

What impact will your plan have and how will it be measured?

Other Notes

What background information, resources, or other considerations are needed for the development and implementation of your plan?

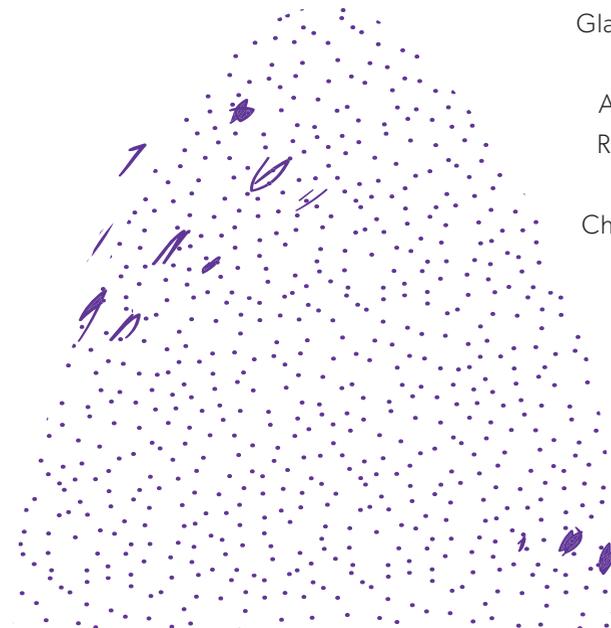


iCount Leadership Committee

The committee was formed in 2015 and was originally named the My Brother’s Keeper (MBK) Committee. The initial goal was to support programming and services for young men of color in support of the countywide MBK initiative. In 2017, the committee changed its name to the iCount Leadership Committee to support Library Director, Skye Patrick’s vision of addressing a broader array of equity issues and challenges. The committee is voluntary and comprised of the following staff:

Debbie Anderson, Chair
Kristi Samuelson, Co-Chair
Katherine Adams
Christian Brown
Gladstone Bucknor
Hilda Casas
Alex Echevarria
Robert Gardner
Matt Gill
Christina Labrador

Geraldine Lin
Marten Malelu
Carlos Ortiz
José Parra
Vickie Raymundi
Alejandro Rubio
Margo Tannenbaum
Biz Tanner
Lyda Truick
Grace Yang





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