

**Virtual Meeting**  
**RAILS Board Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting**

August 31, 2022 | 10:00 am

**MINUTES**

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Hollister, EDI chairperson, greeted members and called the meeting to order at 10:01 am.

2. Roll Call of Members

Palmisano called the roll of the RAILS Board EDI Committee. Present: Victoria Blackmer, Rosie Camargo, Nate Gass, Dianne Hollister, Michelle Mistalski, Vanessa Villarreal, Leah White  
Absent: Cristina Bueno, Amber Hayes, Andrea Robinson, Sarah Steiger, Anna Wassenaar

3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements

Hollister read the following: In accordance with the Governor's Disaster Proclamation, the RAILS Board of Directors finds an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent and believes it is in the best interest of RAILS to hold a virtual meeting to perform essential business.

Guests in Burr Ridge: Deirdre Brennan, Monica Harris, Stacy Palmisano (designated notetaker)

Guests in attendance via Zoom: Joe Filapek, Diana Rusch

4. Public Comments

There were no public comments

5. Adoption of the Consent Agenda

5.1. Adoption of the Agenda

5.2. Approval of the RAILS Board Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Minutes of May 10, 2022  
Victoria Blackmer moved to approve the consent agenda. Leah White seconded and a roll call was taken; Ayes: Victoria Blackmer, Rosie Camargo, Nate Gass, Dianne Hollister, Michelle Mistalski, Vanessa Villarreal, Leah White. Nays: none.

6. Welcome New Committee Member

Brennan welcomed Vanessa Villarreal, RAILS Board member as a new member to the EDI Committee.

7. Reports

7.1. RAILS Report

Harris highlighted that the report includes numerous EDI training opportunities for members to participate in. In particular on October 4, the [Public Library Association \(PLA\)](#) will host a free webinar to review the results of the 2021 annual survey on [Public Library Staff and Diversity](#).

7.2. BIPOC Library Workers Networking Group Report

Mistalski gave a report on the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People Of Color) Library Workers Networking Group to the committee. The networking group meets virtually every other month and has established a community agreement for all EDI discussions that is stated at the beginning of each meeting. Affinity groups have been created, such as the mental health affinity group led by RAILS Board member, Vanessa Villarreal. A mentorship program is in the

process of being created to allow members to connect with one another and provide mentorship to those who are new to the field or have similar interests. Meetings include sharing of resources such as job opportunities, scholarships, grants and professional development. Recruitment for the networking group is mostly by word of mouth. Interested individuals should send an email to [BIPOC-join@list.railslibraries.info](mailto:BIPOC-join@list.railslibraries.info). Lastly, Mistalski mentioned that the group is interested in expanding their membership to include BIPOC staff at academic and school libraries, as well as to students in library school.

Following the report, a discussion was led by Brennan on Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) for staff to go to for EDI related issues. Villarreal said that the mental health affinity group within the BIPOC Library Workers Networking Group was created to help with resources for mental health issues related to EDI.

#### 8. Committee Members Sharing of EDI Initiatives

Brennan began by stating that this agenda item will be added to all future meetings as an opportunity for committee members to share EDI initiatives. Hollister shared several ongoing and new initiatives from Bloomington Public Library, including adding pronouns to staff name badges and the creation of an equity statement and a labor statement. A variety of books from their EDI e-newsletter will be highlighted to celebrate National Diversity Day (1st Friday of October) and for National Inclusion Day (Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>). White shared that the Cooperative Computer Service (CCS) consortium released a collections auditing tool that will add localized subject headings for staff to tailor their materials weeding list. The tool will also be used for booklists, displays and as a behind the scenes tool. White also reported that staff at Wilmette Public Library had Gender 101 training presented by Lurie Children's Hospital and that the library's EDI committee was re-named to IDEA Committee, which stands for inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility. Mistalski reported that Northbrook Public Library is currently undergoing an EDI organizational assessment from consultants at Blackberry Collection. Also, the library's EDI committee was broken into affinity group sessions for staff, pronouns are listed on staff badges, and gender identity and antisemitism training were held at their staff development day. Villarreal shared that Vernon Area Public Library District (VAPL) staff have language buttons to wear to allow patrons to know what languages staff members speak. Due to a director change at VAPL, the library's EDI initiative has been paused.

The subject of finding qualified EDI trainers for staff was discussed by the group. Suggestions were to refer to the American Library Association's (ALA) DEI facilitators list, network with libraries that have had successful staff EDI training, and also refer to the RAILS continuing education page on the RAILS website for EDI webinars. Library conferences also have great EDI presenters that libraries can reach out to for more information. RAILS is developing a directory that will include EDI facilitators. The committee will be informed of the progress on the directory at upcoming meetings. Villarreal suggested that RAILS hold a webinar or a series of webinars on ways for a library to get started or to continue to move forward with an EDI initiative at their library. Goss agreed and added that a webinar should be considered for staff members that want to move forward with an EDI initiative, but systemic changes are unlikely within their library. Camargo would like to see support for BIPOC library workers to help navigate EDI issues. White suggested the BIPOC Library Workers Networking group for BIPOC staff to discuss issues, to get resources, for mentorship opportunities and to join one of the affinity groups. Lastly, Villarreal, suggested an EDI mentorship program for library directors.

#### 9. Unfinished Business

##### 9.1. Cohort EDI Training Update – Joe Filapek (discussion only)

Filapek updated the committee that the Cohort EDI Training accepted applications through July

2022. The applicants have been notified and the training will start in October. There are 40 participants in the cohort representing suburban, non-suburban, small and mid-sized libraries with a majority of participants from public libraries. There are a couple school and academic librarians also attending. Less than 20% of the participants are in leadership roles with a good array of job functions and departments represented in the participants. As for ethnicity, 25-30% of participants are non-white. The cohort training will be offered annually. Filapek will report on the progress of the training and invites input from the committee on what the approach should be for year two of the cohort.

10. New Business

10.1. RAILS Strategic Plan Goal #2: *RAILS models best practices in equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion*

Harris discussed the 2022-2025 RAILS strategic plan and how it is the focus of RAILS' work. All of RAILS' reporting is arranged by the four strategic goals. A comprehensive report on progress related to the strategic planning goals can be found in the RAILS Board monthly meeting packets. Goal #2, within the strategic plan, focuses on equity, diversity, accessibility and inclusion and has three objectives. These three objectives will be the focus of this committee's work. White complimented the usability of the plan with the objectives not being too specific to allow for progress over the three years of the plan.

11. Meeting Recap and Agenda Building for the Next RAILS Board EDI Committee Meeting

Palmisano will write up the list of shared EDI initiatives and forward to the committee. The committee discussed to review the strategic plan objectives to integrate them into the committee's work. Added to the agenda will be more discussions on how to motivate directors to do EDI work, review the committee charge, and to create a vision and an end goal to keep the committee in a good direction.

The next EDI Committee meeting will be on November 2, 2022 from 10:00-11:30 am.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:20.