
RAILS Report – Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Committee

Each quarter, RAILS will share a mix of what is happening at RAILS, ILA, and other relevant organizations as it relates to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility. If you know of an upcoming learning opportunity, networking group, or resource that we should highlight in our next RAILS Report to the committee, please feel to share with RAILS Associate Executive Director Joe Filapek.

This report is intended as both an opportunity to be aware of the wide variety of activities around EDI that RAILS is involved with, as well as an opportunity for EDI Committee members to receive additional training around EDI principles and best practice.

[New Digital Accessibility in Libraries Pulse Page \(May 2024\)](#)

To keep libraries informed and compliant with details related to digital accessibility, RAILS has released a new [Digital Accessibility in Libraries Pulse Page](#). This page will be updated frequently with more information on digital accessibility issues, federal laws and guidance, resources for libraries, CE events, and more.

[Guidance from Ancel Glink Regarding Discrimination Complaints](#)

RAILS requested that Ancel Glink address the recent digital access discrimination complaints against libraries. This relates to an original complaint that alleges an Illinois library failed to afford persons with disabilities an opportunity to participate and benefit from the services, programs, and activities through the library website that is equal to the opportunities afforded to others.

[In a memorandum, Ancel Glink](#) outlines the complaint process for the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education (“OCR”), OCR investigations, and OCR resolutions of complaints including settlements and mediation, and more. This is intended to be a general support for this process, and you are encouraged to work with your own legal counsel should you receive a similar complaint.

[EDI Training for RAILS Staff](#)

RAILS has offered two opportunities for all staff to continue their EDI learning with a two-hour training session led by RAILS’ EDI Consultant, Elisabeth ‘Biz’ Lindsay-Ryan. These sessions were held on May 9 and May 16, offered a review of previous training led by Biz as well as taking staff through the next step of considering what actions they need to take in their roles at RAILS. In addition, all RAILS supervisors will take part in managerial training led by Biz on May 29 that will help them consider their role as leaders and what part they play in operationalizing EDI at RAILS.

[Recent CE Events](#)

- **“EDI Trustee Training: Navigating Difference in Library Boards”**
April 26 - RAILS EDI Consultant Biz Lindsay-Ryan gave a general overview of current trends and

research about handling diversity topics like race, gender, ability, and family structure to library board members. [Link to recording](#)

- **“Race, Human Development, and the Anatomy of an Apology”**
May 23 & May 30 - Join DEI Director Tony Bradburn as he leads us through an interactive, two-session experience that will help us explore race, human development, the psychology of race consciousness, and how organizations can address racism. [Link to recording](#)
- **“Working in the ‘Gray Area’: Boundaries for Library Staff”**
June 11 - Beth Wahler of Beth Wahler Consulting will lead a discussion on common boundary-related challenges for library staff. Participants will leave understanding how to resolve situations that don't have a clear right or wrong outcome.
- **“The Modern eAccessibility Landscape”**
June 12 - Sonya Schryer Norris will provide information on processes and outcomes for eAccessibility complaints made through the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, and how to make their libraries less vulnerable to eAccessibility complaints.

RAILS Climate Team

The RAILS Climate Team continues to work on issues of RAILS internal culture with a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion for all RAILS staff. Emphasis is placed on teamwork, a supportive learning environment, sharing of resources, and opportunities for deep discussions. The Climate Team has also been focused on staff engagement in a hybrid organization over multiple locations. The team works directly with EDI consultant Biz Lindsay-Ryan. In the year ahead, the Climate Team will be working with Biz to transition to a staff-led team without the regular facilitation of an outside consultant.

Projects included:

- Member Training Cohort (including evaluation)
- Connections Program for New Hires
- Staff Relationships/Staff Engagement Initiative
- National Library Week initiative recently added
- Internal projects – information only
- Internal HR Practices
- Board Recruitment/Nomination Process
- Presenter/Consultant EDI Directory for Members

The RAILS Climate Team meets monthly. The next meeting is TBD.

RAILS Continuing Education and Training

- **Freedom Lifted**
As part of RAILS' ongoing commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) we continue to promote the online course to RAILS members: [Social Justice in Public Libraries from Freedom Lifted](#).

- **June 24, 2-3 pm, “Create a Culture Where Everyone Matters with Simon Sinek’s The Optimism Company”**
Zach Mercurio from Simon Sinek's The Optimism Company will present on creating a culture where everyone matters. This class is great for libraries looking to cultivate a new sense of community and care at work. [Registration is required](#)
- **July 11, 2024, 10:30-12:00 pm, “Digital Equity Grant Co-Design for Libraries”**
Library staff with experience facilitating or participating in community programs that serve vulnerable residents are invited to contribute to the Illinois Office of Broadband’s Digital Equity Grant Program. Illinois will receive over \$30 million to fund technology programs like device distribution, digital skill building, digital navigation, digital equity coalition building, and more! [Registration is required.](#)
- **July 24, 10-11 am, “Making Your Website More Accessible”**
In this one-hour introductory webinar, Laura Solomon will briefly discuss the legal landscape, then break down some concrete actions and changes you can make to your website’s content now to make it more accessible. [Registration is required.](#)

Additional 2024 Learning Opportunities

- **July 26, 12:00 pm-3:45 pm, Inclusive Classroom Libraries.**
This free workshop at Naperville Public Library is for educators and librarians who work with preschoolers – 8th grade and will focus on diversity in youth literature, book lists with culturally relevant texts, and resources for locating diverse literature. CPDUs through DuPage ROE. [Registration is required](#)

Additional Initiatives

- **National Survey for Libraries Leadership Development**
iLead is an IMLS funded planning grant focused on developing free online LIS leadership training with an equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) lens. iLead designed a survey to help identify what the diverse members of the field feel are the most important core competencies required of the future leaders in our field. [The survey](#) on leadership development for library staff can be completed in 10 minutes.

RAILS Networking Groups

- BIPOC Library Workers
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in Metadata Networking Group
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Team in Youth Services