

## Promote Indigenous representation of board members, staff and volunteers.

Promoting Indigenous representation and relations is key for board members, staff and volunteers within our libraries. Better awareness and understanding of community engagement happens when staff, Volunteers and boards reflect the community needs. Libraries benefit from employees who bring cultural experience, creativity, different worldview, and language skills into the library.

Public Library Services Branch (PLSB) recognizes the importance of Indigenous representation on library boards and in our libraries as staff. Therefore, PLSB has incorporated the following guidelines into the latest edition of *Best Practices for Public Libraries in Alberta* (2018):

- Library boards are encouraged to develop and maintain face-to-face relationships with Indigenous community representative organizations within their service areas (for example, First Nations Band Council, Métis Nation of Alberta regional representation, Metis Settlement representation, Larga Ltd. and Friendship centers).
- Library boards develop inclusive hiring practices and create deliberate and targeted strategies to encourage Indigenous applicants in advertised positions. Recruitment and retention strategies are adopted for Indigenous projects, programming, and student employees. Boards may also wish to create an ex-officio position for local Elders, or invite Elders to open meetings.
- Library boards should ensure the percentage of Indigenous persons in these positions be proportionate to the percentage of Indigenous populations in and within service areas. Library boards should make concerted effort to hire local Indigenous people and community members.
- Indigenous employees must be considered for long-term positions instead of short term positions.
- Employees should have access to relevant mental health and cultural resources.
- Employees should have safe access and recourse to grievance or complaint about structural issues around racism and sexism.
- Recognize that we all hold unconscious/implicit biases based on our experiences, socio-economic locations, and our own cultures. There are several common types of these biases:
  - ✓ *Affinity Bias*: tendency to prefer people who are more like us (this includes race and gender).
  - ✓ *Normative Bias*: preferences and assumptions about traditional skills and career pathways.
  - ✓ *Confirmation Bias*: tendency to accept facts that align with our pre-existing opinions and beliefs.
  - ✓ *Perception Bias*: judging the competency of someone based on their appearance or identity, which can be the result of stereotypes.
  - ✓ *Attribution Bias*: what people attribute success to and how they see it can cause some groups of people to be perceived as naturally capable and others not.
  - ✓ *Group Think*: when people try to fit in and end up holding back their own thoughts, and consequently their own identities.
- Ways to get more Indigenous staff members, volunteers, and board members:
  - Use targeted recruitment strategies: for example, when a position becomes available, look at where it is advertised and who is encouraged to apply.
  - When recruiting, demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity by incorporating a diversity statement in recruitment or personnel policies.

- Watch for biased language within the job posting and pre-requisites to make sure that the language is inclusive of Indigenous ways of being and knowing.
- Challenge your own assumptions and decisions, and train all staff to be aware of their own unconscious/implicit bias through communities of practice, resources and training opportunities.
- Remove unconscious bias from the interview process so that all candidates are ensured equitable consideration. (Wondering if you have an unconscious/implicit bias? *Project Implicit* offers an Implicit Association Test <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html> ).
- Create diverse recruitment and job hiring panels during the selection process.
- Consider Indigenous experiences and connections to Indigenous communities as important pre-requisites in the hiring process for library positions.
- Become informed about different ways of knowing and experiential knowledge, and the terms in which the skills can be transferrable. Implement cultural awareness training for the Board and all its employees. Remember: cultural competency is your responsibility, not the responsibility of Indigenous people and communities.
- Promote and nurture mentoring programs for Indigenous staff, volunteers and board members upon recruitment.
- Do your best to challenge structural racism and affirm Indigenous relationships.

## Resources

- Dalton, S., & Villagran, M. (2018). Minimizing and addressing implicit bias in the workplace: Be proactive, part one. *College & Research Libraries News*, 79(9), 478. doi:<https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.79.9.478>
- Government of Alberta. (2017). *Diversity and Inclusion*. Retrieved from: <https://www.chrshare.alberta.ca/DMHRIC/SitePages/Dnl.aspx>
- Government of Alberta. (2008). *Employing a diverse workforce: Making it work*. Retrieved from: <https://www.albertacanada.com/files/albertacanada/employdiverse.pdf>
- Hudson Talent Management. (2016). *4 types of unconscious bias in the workplace*. Retrieved from: <http://au.hudson.com/latest-thinking/infographics/4-types-of-unconscious-bias-in-the-workplace>
- Indigenous Canada Massive Online Open Course Library Toolkit: [http://cfla-fcab.ca/en/indigenous/indigenous\\_canada\\_mooc/](http://cfla-fcab.ca/en/indigenous/indigenous_canada_mooc/)
- Ryerson University. (2016). *Types of unconscious biases and how to counteract*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/equity/documents/Types-of-Unconscious-Biases-and-Ways-to-Counteract.pdf>
- Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, education & society*, 1(1), pp. 1-40.
- Yee, B., & Young, D. (2017). *Diversity and inclusion learning session* [Webinar]. Government of Alberta.