

Racial Equity Team Update

Presentation to the **Library Advisory Commission**

Monday, July 25th, 2022





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Welcome!

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Today's Presenters:

- **Stephanie Singleton**
Librarian, 81st Ave. Branch
 - **Yohan Smith**
Library Aide, Rockridge Branch
 - **Celia Davis**
Branch Manager, Martin L. King,
Jr. Branch
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OPL Racial Equity Case Statement



Racial inequities exist across all institutions in our society, and those in power, including the government, are responsible. We can understand how communities of color are impacted by this locally when we look at data from Oakland's Equity Indicators Report (2018), that shows us:

- African Americans are at least three times more likely than Whites to be living at or below the federal poverty level
- Latino and African American students are at least five times more likely than White students to score "Standard Not Met" on 3rd grade reading proficiency tests
- African American youth are at least 110 times more likely to be arrested on felony charges than White juveniles

Another study by Race Counts tells us that, in our community, Indigenous youth are least likely to graduate from high school, and Pacific Islander students are most likely to be homeless. Overall, Alameda County is the 4th most racially disparate county in California.

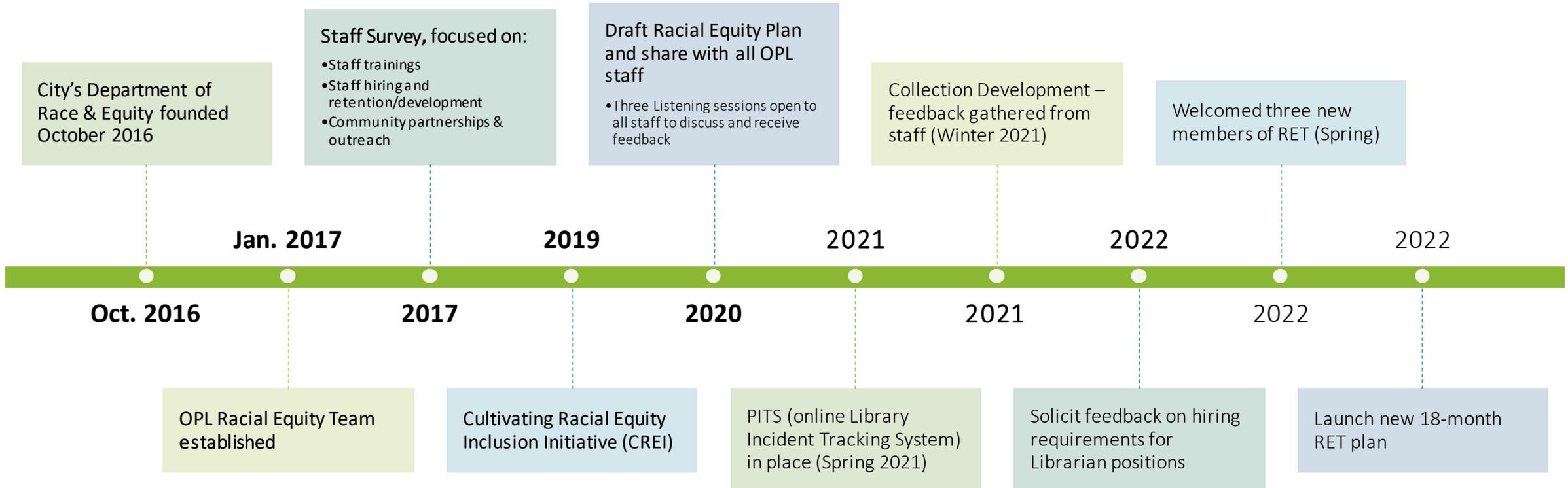
If the library remains neutral while these staggering disparities exist, we uphold the status quo -- which is inequitable, unacceptable, and out of alignment with OPL's stated mission to empower ALL people to explore, connect, and grow.

We can instead choose to uphold Oakland's rich legacy of racial justice. As library workers, we hold a shared vision for our community to be strong and informed -- and we have the power to shape this together. To realize our vision, we must hold ourselves accountable in our commitment to and work towards racial equity, inclusion, and justice.

Five years after the Oakland Equity Indicators report was released, in June 2022 the Oakland City Council voted to declare racism a public health crisis in the city, acknowledging that:

- Structural racism has led to a public health crisis
 - White residents in an affluent neighborhood in Oakland can live an average of 15 years longer than residents of historically Black and Latinx neighborhoods in West Oakland and the East Oakland flatlands
 - There are disparities in Covid infections, hospitalization rates and death
- Adds more resources to Oakland's Department of Race and Equity

“Racial equity is realized when race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes, and outcomes for all groups are improved.”



Goal I: *OPL operationalizes racial equity*

Main themes:

- Changes in structure, culture and transparency at OPL
- Ongoing training and learning opportunities
- Strategies for addressing racial incidents
- Engagement with the community



Goal I Update

- Completed –
 - Caucuses: Anti-racist white caucus met for six months. Interviews with BIPOC staff. Determined to start caucuses within Racial Equity Team
 - Met with FOPL and LAC
 - Begin monthly Racial Equity Team corner in staff CheckOut, update resources.
- 2022-23 18-month plan
 - Launch Racial Equity plan on website.
 - Require all staff attendance at Advancing Racial Equity Academy (AREA)
 - Provide Racial Equity Tools training to all staff
 - Use equity-based criteria to determine budgeting priorities.



Action items:

- Systemized incident report collection
- Update OPL Guidelines of Behavior
- Invest in staff education and training
- Reform security guard model
- Partner with community organizations involved in restorative justice



Goal II:
Patrons feel respected and are treated with dignity

Goal II Update

- Completed
 - Implemented incident reporting software, analyzed past incident data.
- 2022-23 18-month plan
 - Analyze and compare annual incident report data. Make recommendations for improvement in incident reporting and tracking.



Goal III:

OPL is an equitable employer and staff at all levels represent the full diversity of the Oakland community

Improved Workplace Culture for BIPOC staff

Enhanced Recruitment Strategies
Representing Oakland's Diversity

Transparent Career Process
Understanding Civil Service Positions

Updating Library Job Class Specifications

Goal III Update

- Completed
 - Survey and listening sessions around revision of requirements for Librarian classifications
- 2022-23 18-month plan
 - All staff Performance Plans will include Racial Equity
 - OPL mentoring activities occurring and active career advancement interest group.
 - Formal training for new supervisors on mentoring, managing people, and coaching.
 - Revise requirements for Librarian classifications
 - Wellness support plan developed



Goal IV: *Programming will serve needs & interests of BIPOC communities*

- Racial Equity Lens applied to ***all*** programming decisions
 - Enhanced community engagement
 - Increased opportunities for BIPOC community members & organizations
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Goal IV Update

- Completed
 - Meeting rooms more accessible to community groups
- 2022-23 18-month plan
 - Develop OPL programming standards
 - Train staff who plan programming on how to use racial equity tools

NEW Goal V:

Collections offered by OPL will be developed, managed, and assessed using a racial equity lens



Goal V Update

- 2022-23 18-month plan
 - Implement use of 'unleveling' in early reader section of all locations to provide patrons with a consistent, easy-to understand way to find books.
 - Increase outreach efforts to caregivers and families of children not enrolled in traditional preschool
 - Data analysis, policy updates, procedural updates of collection using a racial equity lens
 - Share the Love collection plan created and shared with staff



LAC & the Racial Equity Plan

(From Goal 1)

Support FOPL and the Library Advisory Commission in developing racial equity approach

- Staff will communicate its racial equity vision with FOPL and Library Advisory Commission and will offer support as needed to help align their racial equity goals with those of OPL

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Questions & Discussion:

How does 18-month plan match with your core goals for this year?

How does racial equity fit in with your priority areas?

Have any of you taken the City's Advancing Racial Equity Academy (AREA) or have you had Darlene Flynn come speak to LAC?

Resources

- City of Oakland's Department of Race & Equity:
<https://www.oaklandca.gov/departments/race-and-equity>
- Oakland Public Library's "A Letter to Oakland":
<https://oaklandlibrary.org/news/2020/06/letter-oakland>
- Oakland Equity Indicators Report:
<https://www.oaklandca.gov/documents/2018-oakland-equity-indicators-report>
- Government Alliance on Race and Equity's Racial Equity Toolkit:
<https://www.racialequityalliance.org/resources/racial-equity-toolkit-opportunity-operationalize-equity/>

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