DEI Q&A

Why put out the RFP?
Fayetteville Public Library staff were involved in the first cohort of TrueNWA diversity training from the Arkansas Community Foundation, Walmart Foundation, and Walton Foundation. It was a 9-month program, and the library emerged with a new DEI implementation plan. The top three goals were: developing the Board of Trustees (so the library leadership understands and values DEI and represents a diverse audience), tweaking library practices and HR practices (ensuring we’re recruiting and providing an organization that is welcoming and supportive of everyone), and the stakeholders of the library (everyone that the library serves and are partners with, so that FPL truly represents everyone in the community). Additionally, the Fayetteville Public Library would like help reviewing library policies (with staff and the library organization itself, as well as the policies that pertain to the patrons that use the library). Despite best efforts to the contrary, there are no doubt some blind spots in our practices. Achieving FPL’s goals includes training for everyone who works with the library, including the Board of Trustees, managers and leadership, and staff. Efforts to evaluate if the training was successful are important to us as well. There are 105 staff members and seven Trustees, which is a big milestone for us. We are open to the consultant’s ideas, recommendations, and processes as well.

Q: What does success look like as far as DEI is concerned?
A: An overall awareness with staff and stakeholders, recognition that DEI is a value, and a shared perception of what diversity, equity, and inclusion means. Success means that the library truly has become more welcoming. It would become a better place to work, but also a better place for the community to visit and spend time.

Q: How diverse are your cardholders?
A: We try to collect as little personal information about our patrons as possible. As a result, we have a hard time accurately measuring the
demographics. This is an area where the DEI consultant could help the library improve, and recommend how to get this information.

Q: How would you like to approach the four half-day training sessions? What sort of training opportunities do you want for the general staff?
A: All Fayetteville Public Library staff had basic self-paced DEI training (primarily in unconscious bias, microaggressions, anti-harassment, and diversity in the workplace) in September 2020 through an online company called Traliant. The half-day training sessions could provide some options to build on that training. We are open to the consultant’s processes, but the end result is that we want is for staff to feel included, respected, and have their voices heard.

Q: Who will be the main Fayetteville Public Library contact for the DEI consultant?
A: There will be two main contacts: Willow Fitzgibbon and Ramonica Duarte. They are the Director of Library Services and the HR Director, respectively.

Q: What other processes have you done to establish the three goals mentioned above?
A: The goals were self-selected after the DEI 9-month TrueNWA training and additional online training through Traliant. Staff surveys and manager surveys were sent out afterward. Based on this feedback, and the takeaways from the TrueNWA training, the three goals were noted as needing growth within the library and its policies.

Q: How would DEI help the library further its extend its mission, purpose, and value?
A: The DEI work can help make FPL’s mission stronger (to strengthen our community and empower our citizens through free and public access to knowledge), in that we would be more welcoming, open, accessible, and better able to serve the community.
Q: Are there any metrics tied to donor funding?
A: That would be an interesting path to follow! In terms of donor funding, we have sought financing for specific initiatives, such as a current multicultural engagement initiative (funded by Tyson Foods). Anything to strengthen our DEI initiative would be of interest.

Q: Regarding the 9-month training with TrueNWA – was there anything not covered in the three main goals that the Fayetteville Public Library identified as important that might be a metric?
A: Yes. A metric for programming an event, as well as diversifying collections, circulation data for circulating items, and community partners that we work with.

Q: Would you be able to provide a list of stakeholders, constituents, or other staff that you want the DEI consultant to speak with in order to get their point of view?
A: Yes. The chosen consultant will be connected with all of the above for feedback.

Q: How did you reach the number of 4 sessions for the DEI training?
A: We are very open to your recommendations for how many sessions are needed. Multiple sessions were settled upon in hopes that the training and learning would be more long-lasting and build on each other. We are looking for coaching and support as opposed to a one-session training.

Q: Will a virtual presentation be required at the time that the RFP is submitted?
A: FPL only needs the submitted proposal submitted to Arienne Taylor (ataylor@faylib.org). The library will be in contact with all applicants by April 1st, 2021.