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## **OLA Statement: Libraries and Anti-Racism – We Have Work to Do**

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### **The Ontario Library Association stands in solidarity with the Black Community against systemic racism and police violence experienced every day in North America.**

OLA and the library sector owe it to our Black staff, members, volunteers, authors, and library patrons to demand change and accountability. We must acknowledge that we have work to do within our sector and we must work to do better.

Libraries inform, educate and engage. Libraries serve our communities. At the same time, we recognize that North American libraries are rooted in a history of colonialism, anti-Black racism, and white supremacy. In Canada, we are a profession lacking in cultural diversity.

OLA has worked to increase representation at our educational events, our Education Institute, our Super Conference, and our Forest of Reading program — but there is still more to be done. We have barely scratched the surface of what is possible.

As an association, our mission is to empower our members in the library and information services sector to build informed, participatory, and inclusive communities, and as part of our [Strategic Plan](#), we have worked with underrepresented communities, such as remote, northern, Indigenous and priority communities. We would like to hear from you on how we can affect change to be strong allies and embed awareness and education about anti-racism in our communities not just as a short-term response, but as a long-term commitment.

#### **What we can commit to today:**

- We can do what libraries do best: share resources. Please take a look below for some resources on anti-Black racism, addressing racism in public libraries, and some #BlackLivesMatter booklists. In the coming weeks and months, we will share more resources with our members, board, volunteers and staff.
- We will formalize ways to solicit proposals from underrepresented library staff for all of our educational events.
- We will move to voluntary self-identification for all members and for all applications for council positions, volunteer positions, and proposals for the Education Institute and Super Conference.



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### What our long-term commitments and priorities are:

- Prioritize anti-racism work in our upcoming Strategic Plan.
- Formalize an inclusive and equitable hiring policy for our staff.
- [Seek increased participation](#) from members who are underrepresented in the library community for our Board, division councils, and committees.
- Continue our review of the selection process and submission criteria for the Forest of Reading Awards with our volunteer committees to ensure inclusivity and diversity on future lists.

### Here's a few resources that members have created or recommended, as well as resources other organizations have created and shared:

- Read "[Theory in practice: Moving from systemic racism to anti-racism in Ontario public libraries](#)" on OLA's online magazine Open Shelf, as well as their column [Cultural diversity and inclusion in the workplace](#).
- OLA's [Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Task Force](#) has put together a bibliography, including research resources and blogs: [OLA Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Resources](#) (last updated November 2018).
- [Toronto Public Library](#) and [Goodreads](#) have curated #BlackLivesMatter booklists.
- CBC has gathered resources on [Hear More Black Voices](#), such as podcasts, interviews, TEDx Talks, books, educational documentaries and films.
- The Festival of Literary Diversity (FOLD) shared [Four Critical Titles that Tackle Anti-Black Racism in Canada](#) on Twitter.
- Review [Statements from Libraries and Library Organizations re: Racism and Increased Violence](#) on InfoDocket.
- Read [Anti-Racism Resources for White People and Parents](#), compiled by Sarah Sophie Flicker and Alyssa Klein in May 2020.