

OLA's Commitment Towards Inclusive Librarianship

This living document serves as the Ontario Library Association (OLA)'s commitment to meaningfully address oppression in all its forms within the Association. In this commitment, we affirm our position of inclusive librarianship. The OLA acknowledges that it has been complicit in perpetuating the oppressive systems that form the foundation of Canada and its institutions. Founded and operating on the traditional territories of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis, the OLA recognizes that oppression at all levels – [personal, interpersonal and structural](#) – persists within the Association and the Canadian library sector. Despite this, the OLA is determined that we can build a profession that reflects the principles of libraries as institutions that foster a more equitable society.

The OLA is committed to dismantling harmful practices within our organization and sector that perpetuate racism, white supremacy and colonial attitudes.

Moving forward, the OLA commits to:

- Integrating Reconciliation, anti-oppression, and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) into our strategic planning.
- Approaching this work with an Indigenous lens and holding space for all our relationships, both with each other and with our natural environment.
- Ensuring that this work is informed by the perspectives of marginalized and underrepresented communities.
- Developing and proactively implementing a multi-year anti-racism strategy for the OLA, informed by research, assessment, and sector engagement, including a survey on the state of inclusive librarianship in the Ontario library sector.
- Continue working collaboratively and learning with other organizations prioritizing Reconciliation and EDI.
- Leveraging our position and power as a prominent library association to drive meaningful change across the sector, both provincially and nationally.

Even though library professionals interact with individuals from diverse backgrounds and identities daily, our sector does not reflect the communities we serve. With the support of an EDI Consultant, the OLA is now ready to embark on a new direction in our work towards inclusive librarianship, starting with a focus on anti-racism. Anti-racism, defined as proactively combatting racism in all its forms, is only a first step towards addressing the systemic barriers that have led to a lack of diversity in Canadian librarianship. While we stand by our [2020 statement on anti-racism](#) and the progress made, extensive work still needs to be done.

Building a profession of inclusive librarianship is a significant undertaking, touching on multiple [intersectionalities](#). The OLA acknowledges and honours the role of intersectionality in this work, along with the unique position of Truth and Reconciliation in the context of EDI. This is important to recognize given the colonial history of Canada – a nation built on the ongoing genocide of Indigenous Peoples on their homeland.

This work is necessary and urgent. The OLA commits to owning each step of this endeavour and taking accountability for any errors we will make along the way. We will approach this work holistically by soliciting the input and lived experiences of OLA membership, and ensuring diverse voices are represented in shaping the outcomes. We will be guided by OLA’s Council and Committee members as leaders within the Association.

We call upon our members to also commit to enacting structural change. Dismantling systemic oppressive practices is a collective effort. Together we will work towards creating an equitable, inclusive community of library professionals.

Resources

- [What is an Anti-Oppressive Practice?](#), by Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health
- [Anti-Racism Resources for Libraries](#), by the [OLA Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Committee](#)
- [Indigenous Matters Information Brief](#), by the [OLA Indigenous Advisory Council](#)
- [CFLA-FCAB Truth and Reconciliation Report and Recommendations](#)
- [Anti-Oppressive Framework: A Primer](#), by Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (ETFO)
- [Anti-Racist Resource Guide](#), by Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL)
- [“Theory in practice: Moving from systemic racism to anti-racism in Ontario public libraries”](#), by Amber Matthews for OLA’s [Open Shelf](#) magazine
- [EDI Strategies for Recruitment Toolkit](#), by British Columbia Library Association (BCLA)
- [Collection Diversity Toolkit](#), by Canadian School Libraries (CSL)
- [Trauma-Informed Meeting Guidelines](#), by [The Commons Consulting](#)

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