



Saskatchewan Library Association Diversity Policy and Plan

To promote diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Policy Statement:

Statement of Values: The Saskatchewan Library Association (SLA) will demonstrate and promote diversity, inclusivity and equity throughout the organization and its programs and services.

In order to reflect the changing diversity of the population in Saskatchewan, and provide services and programs that are relevant to the interests and needs of the province, through our membership, we will address diversity in the organization, in libraries, and in the communities that libraries serve. SLA will endeavour to:

1. incorporate the diversity plan into our strategic and operational plans;
2. demonstrate its diversity goals in our governance documents;
3. provide programs and services that implement the diversity plan;
4. focus on initiatives that will support inclusivity and accessibility to SLA programs and services for newcomers and Aboriginal peoples.

Definition:

- **Diversity:** refers to all the characteristics that make individuals different from each other. These differences can include factors such as race, ethnicity, place of origin, gender, age or having a disability. The plan will provide an opportunity to focus on the appreciation and understanding for people with different backgrounds and cultures, and to support library communities in supports for diversity.
- **Equity:** is a principle and process that promote fair conditions for all persons to fully participate in society. It recognizes that while all people have the right to be treated equally, not all people experience equal access to resources, opportunities or benefits. Achieving equality does not necessarily mean treating individuals or groups in the same way, but may require the use of specific measures to ensure fairness.
- **Inclusivity:** describes the intention or policy of how people from all backgrounds are involved in an organization, how their perspectives are valued, and their needs are understood.

References:

Saskatchewan Writers' Guild Equity and Diversity Policy

American Library Association Office of Diversity Definitions

(<http://www.ala.org/advocacy/diversity/workplace/diversityplanning>)

Vision for SLA Diversity Plan:

SLA believes that many perspectives and common values create a library community that is multi-dimensional and inclusive using awareness, empathy, collaboration, and communication to work, serve, and include all personnel and patrons without barriers.

Development and implementation of the policy and the plan for diversity can be viewed through the lens of **SLA's Vision and Mission**.

VISION

The vision of the Saskatchewan Library Association is to build and engage a library and information community that is an active force in Saskatchewan's social, economic and cultural development.

STATEMENT OF BELIEFS AND PRINCIPLES

1. The Saskatchewan Library Association is a province-wide, volunteer, non-profit organization designed to further the development of library service.
2. The Saskatchewan Library Association is a general rather than an exclusively professional organization that includes as members: individuals, institutions, and organizations who share a common interest in library service.
3. The Saskatchewan Library Association believes that:
 - a) Library staff recognize the diversity of viewpoints in society; they encourage the free exchange of ideas and knowledge and as such they must operate in an environment of intellectual freedom;
 - b) Library staff nurture an informed democracy and a compassionate pluralism;
 - c) Library staff are committed to literacy and life-long learning;
 - d) Library staff possess both general and specific knowledge and are skilled in its application in an information environment;
 - e) Library staff are key to accessing library resources and information and to fostering new experiences and discoveries;
 - f) Libraries are better supported by the unified efforts of an umbrella organization which can bring together key constituents - members, government funding agencies, other organizations, and library users;
 - g) Libraries of all kinds are fundamental to the cultural, educational, recreational, economic, and political well-being of the people of Saskatchewan;
 - h) Libraries are valuable assets to the community by adding to and reflecting the quality of life in the community;
 - i) Libraries are an essential part of a community, providing many forms of information and participating actively in community life;
 - j) Library resources must be accessible to all.

MISSION STATEMENT*

The mission of Saskatchewan Library Association is to be the recognized voice of and support to Saskatchewan's library communities.

ROLES OF THE ASSOCIATION*

The Association achieves this mission by fulfilling the following roles:

- a) Encouraging communication and fellowship among members, library staff, and others;
- b) Fostering continuing education for library staff;
- c) Identifying and respond to issues and situations that affect library staff and libraries;
- d) Supporting the principles, standards, and practices that are essential to the provision of excellent library service;
- e) Promoting cooperation among libraries;
- f) Promoting the awareness of libraries as integral parts of their communities;
- g) Partnering with other cultural organizations in promoting the cultural development of the province;
- h) Partnering with other library associations to achieve common objectives.

Assessment and Background Information

In a scan of the organization SLA work was viewed through the lens of the governance structure, programs and services for members, and the understandings and contexts in which members work.

Board and Staff: The intention is that the Board represents all library sectors despite their work location and that committees also consider all sectors in their work. There has not been a policy statement or explicit directive to bring in board members of Aboriginal status or representing newcomer populations.

Governance Documents: **There** needs to be an examination of organizational structure and documents that address barriers to accessibility and inclusiveness.

Members Input: Member feedback is required to determine changes to the strategic plan in response to new priorities, to offer relevant programming, and to ensure member voices are being heard. At present there is no data on the diversity of library workers and specific program needs to ensure their needs are met to create equitable work conditions nor on the needs of existing populations of workers to understand their needs related to diversity.

Representation of Library Stakeholders: SLA has ties with several organizations including:

- Saskatchewan Library Trustees Association
- Saskatchewan Writers' Guild
- Saskatchewan Book Awards
- SaskCulture

- Multitype Library Board
- University of Regina Senate
- Saskatchewan Young Readers' Choice Award - The Willow Awards
- Saskatchewan Polytechnic Library and Information Technology Program

Library Services for Aboriginal People, Saskatchewan School Library Association,, and Saskatchewan Association of Library Technicians are currently under-represented but we are extending opportunities to share information and find ways to work together. While there are no clear connections with multicultural or newcomer associations, relationships are being built with the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan and through the Provincial Library and Literacy Office's Multilingual Library Services Committee. Recent presentations by SaskCulture at the Regina Open Door Society has resulted in a couple of volunteers from that community.

Member Programs and Services: Grant programs for special projects and for continuing education will support member efforts in providing for diverse populations and to ensure that they have the skills to relate to these populations. A program review will ensure that the diversity plan has many channels in which to be actualized. Current offerings focus on different sectors and appeal to different needs within the membership and include:

- annual conference
- continuing education grants
- program grants (Freedom to Read Week grants, Summer Reading Club/Performer Tours, Culture Days, and Saskatchewan Library Week.

Strengths and Limitations in Current Organizations

Strengths: Board members represent many library sectors and communities across the province and these voices are brought to the organization. The theme for our annual conference that will be held in Regina in May 2015 is titled *Saskatchewan Libraries: Open to All*. There will be several sessions on diversity related issues.

Limitations: There is currently no clear definition of diversity for SLA and a way to communicate this to members. There has been no process to evaluate programs and services in recent years. There are limited relationships with Aboriginal stakeholders and newcomer organizations.

Section One: Priority Overview

1. Governance / Strategic Plan/ Diverse Representation in Organization

- Clarify definitions of diversity, inclusivity, and equality for SLA and incorporate throughout the governance documents and process
- Promote organizational inclusion and diversity to make board, committees, and participation to be representative of the needs of diverse populations
- Develop a Strategic Plan that incorporates diversity goals and strategies

The anticipated change will be equitable access and inclusivity to SLA by library communities across Saskatchewan.

2. Communication

- Provide a forum for various library sectors and interest groups to share information and ideas
- Reach non-members in the library community and attempt to engage them and represent their interests
- Use communication tools to promote diversity and information sharing

The anticipated change will be increased awareness of the diversity policy, plan, and SLA definition of diversity; its implementation; and available resources.

3. Connections/ Programs

- Commit to involve related organizations and diverse populations
- Build services and resources directed toward Saskatchewan's changing demographics
- Inclusive ongoing relations with libraries serving diverse populations

The anticipated change will infuse current and future programs with diverse content to make them more relevant and ensure that programs will be more responsive to the needs of their communities and patrons.

4. Relationships (Influence)

- Become a hub for various library sectors, library workers, and library stakeholders
- Bridge to other organizations, and strive to find common goals to support each other
- Continue to find ways to give voice to library issues and exert influence to promote them

The anticipated change will position SLA to better give voice to needs and expectations of members, to build stronger relationships with newcomer and Aboriginal organizations, and influence members, partners, and other stakeholders to address diversity on all levels.

5. Continuing Education

- Promote the creation and use of continuing education activities that equip members to serve and engage diverse populations

The anticipated change will better equip members to serve and engage diverse populations by offering grants and conference sessions, and provide a demonstrated model and supports for libraries and library organizations regarding diversity.