



Diversity at the San Diego County Library

Overview

At SDCL, we view diversity as the recognition, appreciation and utilization of the unique talents and contributions of all individuals. We have a vision for our library as a multicultural organization that reflects the community we serve. This organization will be free from discrimination, respect the richness of diversity, and serve all with integrity and appreciation for the uniqueness of each individual.

Our diversity mission: The San Diego County Library provides active leadership to create an environment that values the uniqueness of individuals and encourages respect for ideas in all levels of library operations, including the composition of its workforce, programs, policies, collections, and access to library resources.

Our Plan

The Plan is fourteen pages long and spells out specific goals along with responsible parties, deadlines, budgets, action items, and indicators of success. Following is a synopsis of the goal areas, goals, and some of the objectives.

Collections

Goal: The materials collection at SDCL will reflect the diversity of the people and the community and will provide convenient materials access to customers within the limitations of space and budget.

Some of our objectives:

- Actively seek out materials that accommodate physical impairments
- Monitor Interlibrary Loan items, request patterns, and customers to proactively supply what people are asking.
- Communicate/educate the staff about their role in developing the collection in a flexible and dynamic environment, and encourage staff feedback based on their relationships with the changing San Diego County community

Information Technology

Goal: SDCL will leverage technology to ensure accessibility and to reflect the cultures of the community.

Some of our objectives:

- Make SDCL technology accessible to those with physical challenges
- Make SDCL technology accessible to non-English speaking customers
- Use SDCL technology to welcome customers with diverse backgrounds

Training

Goal: San Diego County Library will sponsor training that enhances the synergy that arises from differences and embraces the value of those differences.

Some of our objectives:

- Make the library a more diverse place through the understanding of other languages
- Emphasize importance of diversity through incorporation in other training programs
- Support other departments in their own diversity endeavors through training and coaching

Marketing and Programming

Goal: To develop a marketing and programming plan for internal as well as external customers that includes appropriate programs and activities to ensure the success of the vision and mission of SDCL's Diversity Plan.

Some of our objectives:

- Engage community groups as identified in the SDCL Work Plan as potential audiences for SDCL programs and services
- Enlighten SDCL internal community about diversity that already exists
- Promote diversity in merchandising displays throughout district

Facilities/Access

Goal: San Diego County Library will make its facilities accessible and useful to a wide scope of individuals by considering the needs of our diverse staff and community.

Some of our objectives:

- Provide increased physical access to facilities and services
- Increase bilingual signage throughout the district
- Enhance lighting throughout the district where needed

Human Resources / Staffing

Goal: The San Diego County Library Human Resources Office will design procedures and systems that reflect, respect, and further the diversity of its employees, applicants, and patrons.

Some of our objectives:

- Recruitment & Demographics: Develop a workforce that reflects the overall demographics of the community served.
- Policies and Procedures: Ensure that SDCL personnel policies and procedures positively impact the diversity interests of SDCL
- Review and modify SDCL's systems and process for their compliance with the diversity goals of SDCL including the following:
 - Recruitment and selection process
 - Committee assignment process
 - Recognition process

Steps Taken

The Plan has given rise to many ideas and goals, some of which have already been set in motion. There are also other programs and initiatives that were already running, or started independently of the Plan. Here are some selected endeavors:

- **Bilingual Storytime** – a greatly expanded bilingual storytime program has developed including over 20 branches with over 50 sessions a month.
- **Increased funds for non-English language materials**
- **Spanish Language Book Discussion groups.**
- **Enhanced display and more convenient and prominent shelving for non-English materials**
- **“Noche de Familias” Family Night** – an 8 week programming event attracting Spanish speaking families with educational and life skills talks, crafts, music and community building activities.
- **Translation Teams**
- **Bilingual Language Staff Assessment** – on order to identify and use the many skilled staff members and their language capabilities
- **English as a Second language classes and conversation groups**
- **“The Gateway/Al-Bawaba” Arabic computer classes** – groundbreaking grant funded effort with a strong appeal to the local Arabic Kurdish and Chaldean communities
- **“Survival Spanish” classes for staff**
- **Low-Vision technology installed**
- **Farsi story times and celebrations**
- **ADA easy-open doors standard on all new construction**
- **Lighting assessment and improvement**
- **“Heritage Month” celebrations**