

NSLS Diversity Plan

12 April 2006

Diversity has always been of interest to the library world, but has historically been defined to concern only people of different races or nationalities. Recently, the definition has expanded to include other differences, such as age, economic status, lifestyle, sexual orientation, physical abilities, etc. NSLS agrees that diversity, as newly defined, is an issue deserving illumination and effort in the library community. As such, we commit to the following activities in the ILSDO-specified areas listed below.

Modeling

NSLS commits to making an effort to integrate diversity into what we do, including communications to members, Professional Development offerings, and being mindful of the issues in our day-to-day interactions with others. Many of the activities listed below could also serve as models for our membership.

People learn by different methods, and as such, NSLS is currently planning to sponsor two viewings of the movie *Crash* at the Northbrook Public Library Theater followed by a discussion on diversity facilitated by Vandella Brown of ISL. The first will be an in-service event for NSLS staff and the second will be open to all members.

NSLS will conduct market research by surveying library decision makers on which new staff skill sets, such as knowledge of another culture or language, are needed by their libraries.

We are also investigating the possibility of hiring an intern of a diverse background.

Telling

We are integrating a three-program Diversity Track into our Professional Development plan, including a presentation on “Diversity of the Future” with Tracie Hall; sensitivity training which will address intergenerational issues; and a discussion about global libraries.

Based on the popularity of LTLS’s “I am an American” programs, NSLS commits to hosting a program onsite and offering it as a “workshop-in-a-box” for our membership to copy. We will be enlisting the help of our Adult Programming community.

Giving

Storytelling is such an effective means of getting a point across that we will ask our members to encourage people of diverse backgrounds to share stories that illustrate diverse library users’ experiences. These will be gathered and available on our website. Our working title is “Promoting Diversity Through Storytelling.” As an incentive, we will be offering a drawing for a gift card.

We have agreed to host a Spanish language website containing resources of value to the Spanish-speaking community that some of our libraries are assembling.

We sincerely wish to help libraries develop ways to serve their increasingly more diverse clientele. We will be helping to:

- Identify tools that help libraries become aware of and assess the diverse needs of their patrons.
- Find ways to assist libraries to develop the skills of current staff and to recruit a more diverse workforce.
- Find ways to help libraries share translators to create distinct marketing pieces.
- Explore issues associated with cataloging non-English language materials.

NSLS would also like to ask ISL for a small grant for each system to help fund some incentives for willing libraries to hire diverse staff members.

Talking

NSLS has committed to publishing various facts about diversity in our weekly e-newsletter. We also commit to featuring diversity in other various means of communication such as blogs, podcasts, Sarah's columns, and *What's New in Libraries?* Some first thoughts are to interview library staff and library users on *WNIL* and podcasts.

As we have booked Tracie Hall in August, we have declared August as "Diversity Month." In addition to our regular efforts listed above, diversity will become our theme of the month on our website. We will have articles from guest authors and feature facts about diversity.

Empowering

We will encourage our membership to participate in the ILA Diversity Fair that ILSDO is planning.

To encourage our members and model best practices further, we will collect diversity success stories in our new diversity section of the NSLS website. Members can add their own stories and gather ideas from others' submissions.

NSLS also currently hosts a World Languages Networking Group which allows those working to serve immigrant and non-English speaking (or ESL) populations a forum to discuss issues and collectively work to develop solutions. Their next meeting will be focusing on PolyTalk with a presentation from Randi Weiss. In conjunction with this in-person group, NSLS also hosts a World Languages Community of Practice and a maillist so members can keep in touch between meetings to discuss issues of immediate interest or to share best practices and information.