

Resolution on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

On June 2, 2020, the Governor of Ohio, Mike DeWine stated, “There is racism in Ohio. There is inequality in Ohio. There are both economic and health disparities in Ohio. I am seeking dialogue to solve these problems. We should all be outraged that in the year 2020 in Ohio and across our Nation, there is still inequality of opportunity and racism.”

The American Library Association defines Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for libraries... “Equity” takes difference into account to ensure a fair process and ultimately, a fair outcome. Equity recognizes that some groups were (and are) disadvantaged in accessing educational and employment opportunities and are, therefore, underrepresented or marginalized in many organizations and [communities]. Equity, therefore, means increasing diversity by ameliorating conditions of disadvantaged groups.

“Diversity” can be defined as the sum of ways that people are both alike and different. When we recognize, value, and embrace diversity, we are recognizing, valuing, and embracing the uniqueness of each individual.

“Inclusion” means an environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully; are valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, and perspectives; have equal access to resources and opportunities; and can contribute fully to the [community’s] success.”

The State Library of Ohio guides Ohio public libraries further...

“The State Library of Ohio believes the highest quality of library services should be available and accessible to all people in the state. We acknowledge that past and present inequity and systemic discrimination have excluded many from the wide range of benefits provided by libraries. Eliminating exclusions to universal, equitable library services demands the recognition, understanding and prioritizations of the history, perspectives, and aspirations of all people. The “all” includes, and is not limited to, people of every racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, economic, educational, geographic, and disability status. Library service will be improved when the community we serve is represented in our work.”

Based on this guidance from the leaders of the Ohio library world, the Public Library of Steubenville and Jefferson County Board of Trustees reaffirms the library’s commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion with the following resolution:

WHEREAS Public libraries are a trusted and welcoming place and have a rich history of combating censorship, reflecting our communities, and striving toward greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in our collections, resources, buildings, and staff.

WHEREAS Public libraries provide equitable access to information for ALL people regardless of race, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, educational background, or disability status.

WHEREAS, The Public Library of Steubenville and Jefferson County has created strong partnerships with numerous community organizations representing diverse individuals and groups and continues to seek out new partnerships.

WHEREAS The Public Library of Steubenville and Jefferson County provides lifelong learning programming for all ages to enrich and enhance our understanding of our world.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the Public Library of Steubenville and Jefferson County reaffirms our commitment as an institution which values not merely freedom of speech but a commitment to the truth, democracy, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Adopted this 16th day of August 2022.