

CHIEF OFFICERS OF STATE LIBRARY AGENCIES

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND
INCLUSION PROJECT

FINAL REPORT
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Presented by NCXT
ncxt.co

**Note on the final revision: The EDI statement on page 11 is the final version approved by the COSLA Board of Directors. For more information, contact info@cosla.org.*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In late summer of 2020, as people throughout the nation were grappling with a global pandemic, economic crisis, and social unrest, Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) initiated the courageous work of creating an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion statement. Rather than drafting a statement devoid of action, accountability, and meaning, COSLA leaders took bold steps to hear the voices of all members, provide a lens to examine organizational activities and strategic plans, and ensure library leaders possess the EDI understanding, tools, and resources to meet the needs of all communities they serve.

These are significant and lofty goals and everyone on the NCXT team has been honored and privileged to be a part of your efforts to reach them. It's our hope that through this work we have provided not only an impactful EDI statement, but also a clear path to your goals and a specific accounting of the immediate and future steps that can take you there.

Your dedication to and engagement in this work has been inspiring. The NCXT team wishes you great success in realizing the highest EDI ideals and ensuring libraries across the nation are safe, welcoming, and meaningful places for everyone.



JEFF AGUY
Co-founder & COO



JONATHAN BANKS
Co-founder & CEO



OVERVIEW:

PROJECT GOALS

A stated purpose of COSLA is to provide leadership on issues of common concern and national interest. Because performing this duty in this moment calls for intentional efforts that strengthen Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) across the membership body, COSLA engaged NCXT to guide that process.

Our goal was to develop an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion program that engaged membership in the creation of an organizational diversity statement.

This statement, the supporting research, maturity model, and change management information provide guidance for COSLA to help ensure people of every racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, economic, educational, geographic, and disability status have equitable access to all library services.



PROJECT DELIVERABLES

- ◆ Organizational diversity statement
- ◆ Maturity model
- ◆ Research summaries
- ◆ Quantitative and qualitative discovery data

OVERVIEW: TIMELINE & ACTIVITIES

Working to make space and time for all voices to be heard, we conducted a variety of activities.

Survey

We learned more about members, how they work, and their sentiments regarding EDI through an in-depth survey.

Knowledge Cafe

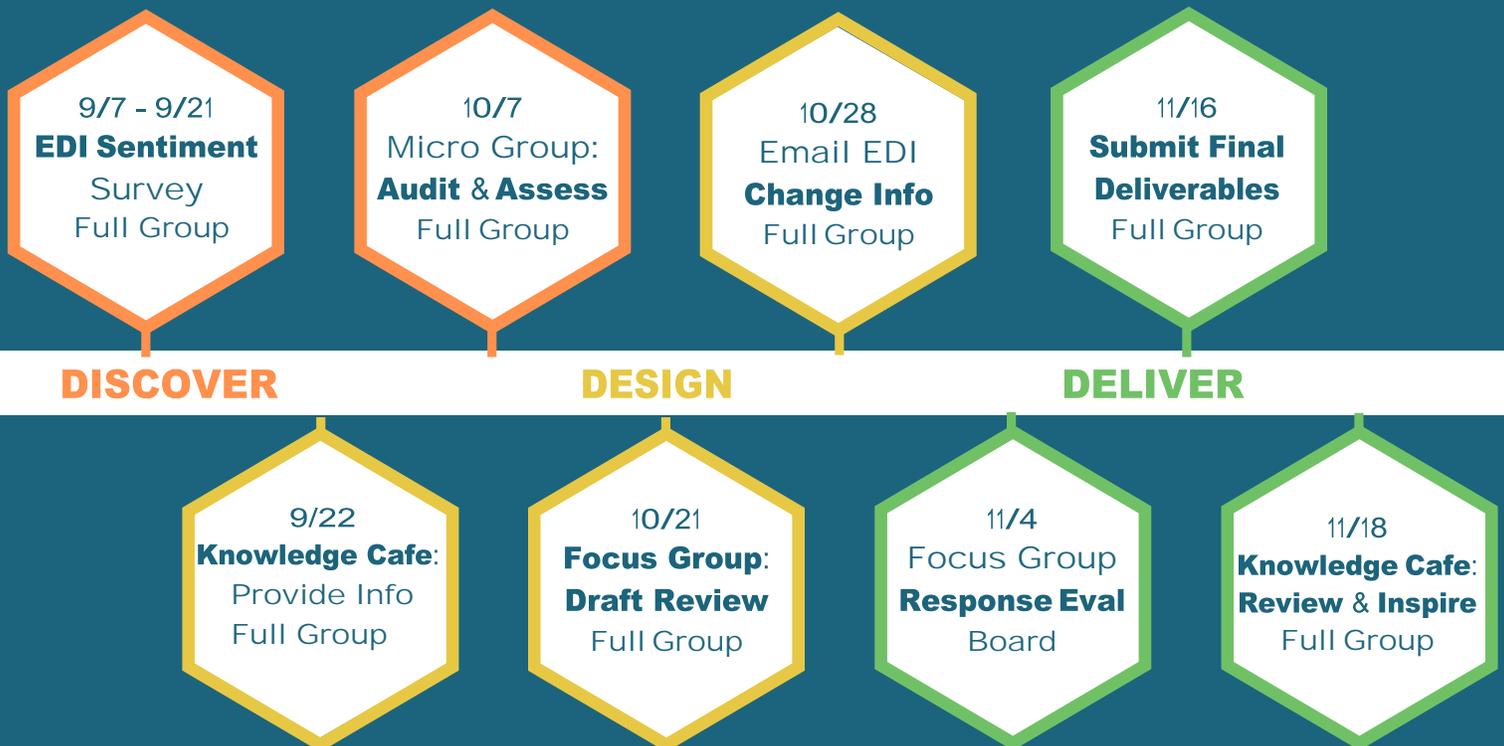
We gathered the full group to share ideas, make connections, and learn from one another.

Micro Group

The full group met to build consensus and assess where COSLA members lie within the maturity model.

Focus Groups

In smaller groups we talked through the specifics of the maturity model and responses to the EDI statement

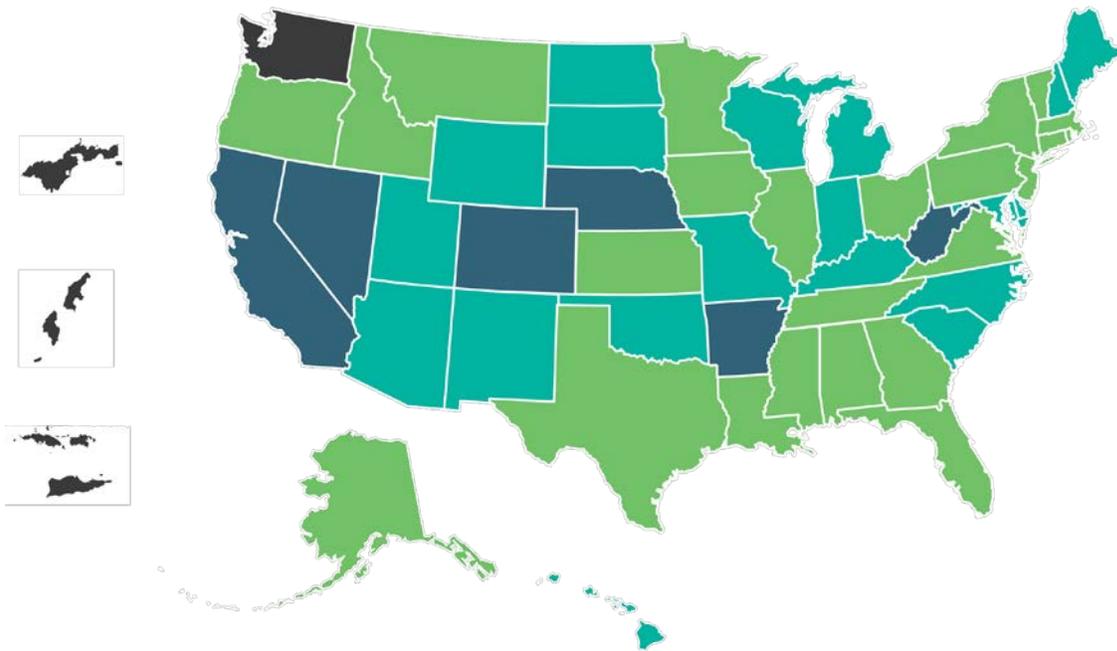


OVERVIEW:

PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT

Nearly half of COSLA members participated in all events related to the development of the EDI statement and maturity model. Only four members chose not to participate at all.

Overall member participation in the initial survey, 9/22 Knowledge Cafe, and micro-groups.



EVENTS ATTENDED:



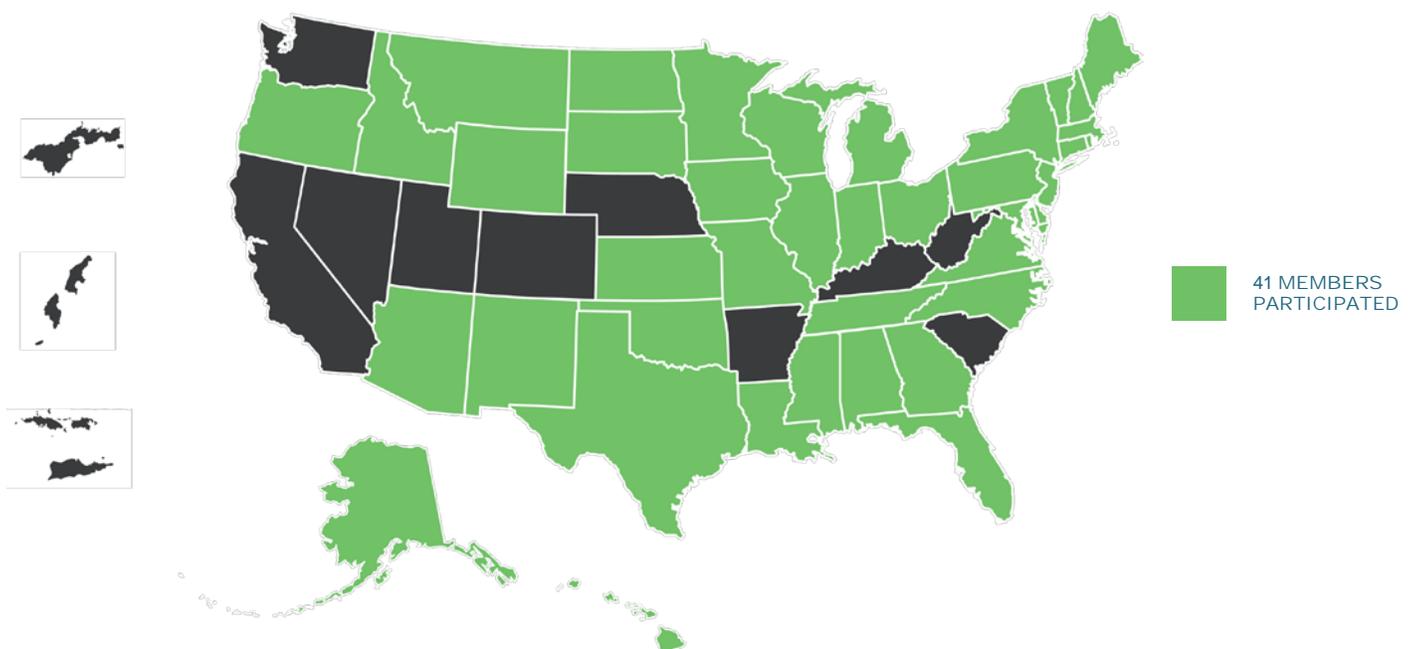
RESEARCH FINDINGS: KNOWLEDGE CAFE

When we gathered in the knowledge cafe, we learned:

- The ability to access library resources is more desirable than technology (urban or rural).
- There is a need to make the library profession desirable for individuals who do not identify as cisgender (when personal identity and gender corresponds with the gender assigned at birth), able-bodied, or white.
- The EDI statement does not currently acknowledge the challenges and barriers that exist within the industry itself.
- Systematic racism exists within the library industry. We heard that "COSLA can be bolder!"
- Public libraries shouldn't be called out specifically as COSLA supports other libraries as well.

KNOWLEDGE CAFE ENGAGEMENT

Member participation in the knowledge cafe



RESEARCH FINDINGS: **FOCUS GROUP**

When we met in the focus groups, we received useful feedback, including the need to:

- **Use consistent language to indicate which groups are indicated more often.**
- **Differentiate when focus is on COSLA (the organization) and COSLA (the members).**
- **Reflect that COSLA currently doesn't have a significant role to impact members on membership and workforce.**
- **More clearly articulate when processes, resources, etc. are developed rather than assume that work is done.**
- **Create more consistency in language and tasks across the commitments.**

FOCUS GROUP ENGAGEMENT

Group 1

Timothy Cherubini, COSLA
Randy Riley, Michigan
Jennie Stapp, Montana

Group 2

James Ritter, Maine
Jennifer Nelson, Minnesota

Group 3

Julie Walker, Georgia
Karen Mellor, Rhode Island
Stacey Aldrich, Hawaii

RESEARCH FINDINGS:

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

In developing the maturity model, it was essential to study how COSLA functions to identify current and future needs in the profession, coordinate with partners to develop actionable solutions, and provide change leadership to libraries throughout the country. Fortunately, a recent case study helped us understand COSLA's capacity: Measures that Matter.

From the [Measures that Matter website](#):

“Organized by the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) with support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the Measures that Matter initiative began in 2016 to help coordinate a field-wide conversation around library data collection with the aim to develop and implement a related action plan. The project's intention is to examine, evaluate, map and develop the landscape of public library data collection in the United States with key library stakeholder groups for a more coordinated approach to the collection of public library data nationally.”

This project is an inspiring example of COSLA's capacity for industry leadership and program development. It provides a meaningful template for how the organization can study an issue affecting all libraries and those they serve.

Efforts included in this work include:

- Conducting a data-driven exploration of library practices throughout the United States.
- Coordinating a broad stakeholder group to provide thought leadership and propose strategic actions.
- Initiating a workgroup to explore, identify, and validate assessment metrics.
- Developing a field-wide implementation group to deeply engage the larger library community.
- Creating a webinar series featuring speakers to bring a common understanding to the broader library field and the public at large.
- Developing a detailed action plan that addresses current and future needs.
- Establishing model practices among libraries through agreements, memoranda or understanding, etc.
- Hosting a summit to provide context and reflect on the action plan.
- Evaluating library activities relating to workforce development.
- Providing library professionals with the opportunity to assess and improve services that are highly responsive to community needs.
- Strengthening education of librarians and addressing gaps in ongoing training.
- Building tools and resources to support library directors, staff, and trustees.

COSLA's demonstrated ability to advise and influence members in these ways illustrates the organization's potential to influence and lead in the diversity, equity, and inclusion sphere.



CHIEF OFFICERS OF STATE LIBRARY AGENCIES (COSLA) EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

(Adopted by the Board of Directors December 3, 2020)

COSLA believes the highest quality of library services should be available and accessible to all people within each state and U.S. territory. We understand that systemic discrimination exists today within the library profession. We acknowledge that past and present inequity exclude many from the wide range of benefits provided by libraries.

Eliminating exclusions to universal, equitable library services demands the recognition, understanding, and prioritization of the history, perspectives, and aspirations of all people. This “all” includes, and is not limited to, people of every racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, economic, educational, geographic, and disability status.

To ensure our values of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are made a reality throughout the library profession, COSLA is committed to taking realistic but impactful steps toward the full incorporation of EDI principles in membership and business practices, industry leadership, program development, organizational culture, assessment, and accountability.

COSLA's mission is to provide leadership on issues of common concern and national interest, to further state library agency relationships with the federal government and national organizations, and to initiate, maintain, and support cooperative action for the improvement of library services. We will only be able to achieve this mission with sincere, coordinated, and intentional actions and accountability to directly challenge and counteract the pervasive inequities which are inherent to American culture, the library profession, and our organization.

MATURITY MODEL

A maturity model is a tool used to determine current organizational effectiveness and map next steps on the path to full maturity.

The COSLA maturity model defines five distinct levels in each of four key areas, known as core commitments. For each core commitment, we've identified where COSLA currently stands and in looking to the next level of maturity, we find a structured guide that identifies the most important skills, processes, and capacity to develop next.

It may be tempting to view level five as impossible for an organization of COSLA's size and current maturity level, but keep in mind that full organizational maturity isn't just about growing the policies and processes to technically perform the benchmarks in each level, although it certainly is that. It's also about developing the capacity, authority, and responsibility required for progression to the next level.

Perhaps full maturity isn't available right now, due to resources, capabilities, or politics. It is still essential to understand what full maturity looks like to see the big picture, prioritize efforts, and create the foundation needed to achieve even greater maturity in the future.

At full maturity, COSLA will have built on its leadership position in the library sphere to become an EDI leader, exemplifying how equity, diversity, and inclusion can be integrated into an institution that reaches across the nation, spans thousands of libraries, and serves millions of people.

COSLA'S MATURITY MODEL

INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP &
PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

ASSESSMENT &
ACCOUNTABILITY

ORGANIZATIONAL
CULTURE

MEMBERSHIP &
BUSINESS PRACTICES



CORE COMMITMENTS

CORE COMMITMENT 1 :

INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP & PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

COSLA uses its unique position of leadership within the wider library sphere to advocate for equity, diversity, and inclusion. Through initiatives, education, and resources, COSLA empowers and inspires libraries throughout the nation to better meet the needs of all communities and individuals.

CORE COMMITMENT 2 :

ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

COSLA develops and nurtures the education, processes, and behaviors that address harms, mitigate risks, and provide opportunities for honest accountability. We ensure the psychological safety of all, especially those who find the courage to address behaviors that harm individuals and the collective culture.

CORE COMMITMENT 3 :

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

COSLA prioritizes equity, diversity, and inclusion and nurtures a culture that values and integrates the voices of people of every racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, economic, educational, geographic, and disability status into programs, processes, and decision making.

CORE COMMITMENT 4:

MEMBERSHIP & BUSINESS PRACTICES

COSLA values and champions diversity among the membership, incorporates EDI principles in its business practices and supports members as they promote libraries in which all people of every racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, economic, educational, geographic, and disability status feel valued and supported.

INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP & PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

COSLA uses its unique position of leadership within the wider library sphere to advocate for equity, diversity, and inclusion. Through initiatives, education, and resources, COSLA empowers and inspires libraries throughout the nation to better meet the needs of all communities and individuals.

Level 1:
Initiating

COSLA Board:

- **Provides non-actionable statements in support of EDI practices throughout the country's libraries.**

COSLA Members:

- Informally offer EDI guidance to libraries based on individual judgement and state political climate.
- May use individual judgement to informally advocate for EDI in programs and funding.

Level 2:
Managing

COSLA Board:

- Provides training in EDI areas like unconscious bias, self evaluation, etc. to **support members in providing equitable leadership to libraries in their state.**

COSLA Members:

- Offer EDI guidance to libraries based on EDI best practices.
- Use EDI best practices to advocate for EDI in programs and funding.

Level 3:
Defining

COSLA Board:

- **Forms an EDI leadership/engagement group of members and stakeholders** from within the country's library system.
- **Provides oversight and ensures implementation of EDI leadership/engagement group output.**

COSLA Leadership/Engagement Group:

- Standardizes and documents EDI guidance in areas like collection **development, book clubs, workshops, guest speakers, etc. for members to share with libraries in their state.**
- **Develops processes, training, and change management strategies to support members as they advocate for EDI in programs and funding to their state leaders.**

COSLA Members:

- **Offer EDI guidance to libraries based on best practices and using available resources.**
- **Use EDI best practices and available resources to advocate for EDI in programs and funding.**

INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP & PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

COSLA uses its unique position of leadership within the wider library sphere to advocate for equity, diversity, and inclusion. Through initiatives, education, and resources, COSLA empowers and inspires libraries throughout the nation to better meet the needs of all communities and individuals.

Level 4: Executing

COSLA Board:

- Provides oversight and ensures implementation of EDI leadership/engagement group output.

COSLA Leadership/Engagement Group:

- Identifies, measures, assesses, and analyzes key EDI metrics in areas like programming, funding, access to library services, and representation of people of every racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, economic, educational, geographic, and disability status in staff and leadership roles.
- Develops an action plan to address current and future EDI needs throughout the library system.
- Creates resources, like webinars, training tools, workshops, etc. for members to provide EDI best practices and programming recommendations to librarians in their states.
- Creates assets like reports, data assessments, change management guides, etc for members to use in advocating for EDI in programs and funding.

COSLA Members:

- Offer EDI guidance to libraries based on best practices and using data-driven resources.
- Use best practices and data-driven resources to advocate for EDI in programs and funding.

INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP & PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

COSLA uses its unique position of leadership within the wider library sphere to advocate for equity, diversity, and inclusion. Through initiatives, education, and resources, COSLA empowers and inspires libraries throughout the nation to better meet the needs of all communities and individuals.

Level 5:
Optimizing

COSLA Board:

- **Provides oversight and ensures implementation of EDI leadership/** engagement group output.

COSLA Leadership/Engagement Group:

- Lead EDI advocacy for programs and funding using data-driven, human-centered strategies.
- **Regularly assess and analyze key metrics to identify strengths, opportunities,** and change management strategies to improve funding for and adoption of EDI resources, process, and data analysis.
- **Provide change management support to address resistance at the national** and state level.

COSLA Members:

- Offer EDI guidance to libraries based on best practices and using data-driven resources.
- Use best practice and data-driven resources to advocate for EDI-related programs and funding.

Current level: 1

CORE COMMITMENT 2 :

ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

COSLA develops and nurtures the education, processes, and behaviors that address harms, mitigate risks, and provide opportunities for honest accountability. We ensure the psychological safety of all, especially those who find the courage to address behaviors that harm individuals and the collective culture.

Level 1: Initiating

COSLA Board:

- **Identifies harmful behaviors and system-wide deficiencies relating to EDI** through individual disclosure.
- Addresses grievances on an ad hoc basis based on individual judgement.

Level 2: Managing

COSLA Board:

- Provides training in EDI areas like unconscious bias, self evaluation, **accountability standards and practices, etc. to increase understanding of EDI** standards.
- **Identifies harmful behaviors and system-wide deficiencies relating to EDI** through individual disclosure.
- **Addresses grievances using a somewhat consistent process based on EDI best** practices.

Level 3: Defining

COSLA Board:

- **Forms an EDI leadership/engagement group of members and/or other** experts in EDI assessment and accountability.
- **Provides oversight and ensures implementation of EDI leadership/** engagement group output.

COSLA Leadership/Engagement Group:

- Standardizes and documents EDI-related grievance filing processes and **restorative practices like dialogue, mediation, agreements, problem-solving,** education, etc for use throughout the organization.
- **Utilizes change management models, like ADKAR, to mitigate resistance** across the organization.

CORE COMMITMENT 2 :

ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

COSLA develops and nurtures the knowledge, processes, and behaviors that address harms, mitigate risks, and provide opportunities for honest accountability. We ensure the psychological safety of all, especially those who find the courage to address behaviors that harm individuals and the collective culture.

Level 4:
Executing

COSLA Board:

- **Provides oversight and ensures implementation of EDI leadership/** engagement group output.

COSLA Leadership/Engagement Group:

- **Develops anonymous and responsive methods for members to disclose** concerns about EDI in organizational culture and initiate restorative processes.
- **Identifies, measures, assesses, and analyzes key EDI metrics in areas like EDI** perceptions of behavioral standards, grievance process use, member satisfaction with restorative practices, etc.

Level 5:
Optimizing

COSLA Board:

- **Provides oversight and ensures implementation of EDI leadership/** engagement group output.

COSLA Leadership/Engagement Group:

- **Regularly collects, assesses, and analyzes data and testimonials to identify strengths and opportunities to improve adoption of behavioral standards,** use of grievance process, and efficacy of restorative practices.
- **Provides transparency into metrics, goals, challenges, and corrective actions** relating to EDI assessment and accountability.

Current level: 1

CORE COMMITMENT 3 :

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

COSLA prioritizes equity, diversity, and inclusion and nurtures a culture that values and integrates the voices of people of every racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, economic, educational, geographic, and disability status into programs, processes, and decision making.

Level 1: Initiating

COSLA Board:

- Provides non-actionable statements in support of EDI.
- Informally includes voices representing people of every racial, ethnic, gender, **sexual orientation, economic, educational, geographic, and disability status** based on the makeup of the organization.

Level 2: Managing

COSLA Board:

- **Facilitates conversations and training in unconscious bias, self evaluation, etc.** to develop a shared understanding of EDI terms, efforts, goals, and impacts.
- Includes voices representing people of every racial, ethnic, gender, sexual **orientation, economic, educational, geographic, and disability status based on** EDI best practices.

Level 3: Defining

COSLA Board:

- **Forms an EDI leadership/engagement group to prioritize equity, diversity, and inclusion** in organizational culture.
- **Provides oversight and ensures implementation of EDI leadership/engagement group output.**

COSLA Leadership/Engagement Group:

- **Develops EDI statement and determines organizational maturity regarding** EDI.
- **Standardizes and documents processes to include voices representing** people of every racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, economic, educational, geographic, and disability status.
- **Provides inclusive language standards, which are used widely in internal and** external communications.
- **Utilizes change management models, like ADKAR, to mitigate resistance** across the organization.

CORE COMMITMENT 3 :

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

COSLA prioritizes equity, diversity, and inclusion and nurtures a culture that values and integrates the voices of people of every racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, economic, educational, geographic, and disability status into programs, processes, and decision making.

Level 4:
Executing

COSLA Board:

- **Provides oversight and ensures implementation of EDI leadership/engagement group output.**

COSLA Leadership/Engagement Group:

- **Creates opportunities, like workshops, speaking events, focus groups, etc. to include voices representing people of every racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, economic, educational, geographic, and disability status.**
- **Identifies, measures, assesses, and analyzes key EDI metrics in areas like EDI perceptions, gaps in understanding, inclusion of voices representing people of every racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, economic, educational, geographic, and disability status.**

Level 5:
Optimizing

COSLA Board:

- **Provides oversight and ensures implementation of EDI leadership/engagement group output.**

COSLA Leadership/Engagement Group:

- **Applies new methods, such as creating new positions, initiating community engagement, etc, to include voices representing people of every racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, economic, educational, geographic, and disability status in strategic planning and organizational design.**
- **Regularly collects, assesses, and analyzes data and testimonials to identify strengths and opportunities to improve EDI in organizational culture.**
- **Provides transparency into metrics, goals, challenges, and corrective actions relating to EDI in organizational culture.**

Current level: 2

CORE COMMITMENT 4:

MEMBERSHIP & BUSINESS PRACTICES

COSLA values and champions diversity among the membership, incorporates EDI principles in its business practices and supports members as they promote libraries in which all people of every racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, economic, educational, geographic, and disability status feel valued and supported.

Level 1:
Initiating

COSLA Board:

- **Advocate for EDI best practices in recruitment, hiring, compensation, and retention** activities to comply with labor policies and regulations.

COSLA Members:

- May use individual judgement to informally advocate for EDI in the selection of SLAA workforce.

Level 2:
Managing

COSLA Board:

- Complete training in areas such as unconscious bias, self evaluation, etc.
- Engage in somewhat consistent EDI best practices in recruiting, hiring, **compensation, contracting, and retention based on EDI best practices and to comply with labor policies and regulations.**

COSLA Members:

- **Complete training in areas such as unconscious bias, self evaluation, etc.**
- Use EDI best practices to advocate for EDI in the selection of SLAA workforce.

Level 3:
Defining

COSLA Board:

- Standardize, document, and consistently use EDI best practices in **recruitment from diverse talent pools, compensation, contracting, and retention** for consistent use throughout the organization.
- **Develop programs and policies to encourage professional growth and create leadership opportunities** for people of every racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, economic, educational, geographic, and disability status.
- Develop resources to support members as they advocate for EDI in the selection of SLAA workforce.

COSLA Members:

- Use EDI best practices and available resources to advocate for EDI in the selection of SLAA workforce.

CORE COMMITMENT 4:

MEMBERSHIP & BUSINESS PRACTICES

COSLA values and champions diversity among the membership, incorporates EDI principles in its business practices and supports members as they promote libraries in which all people of every racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, economic, educational, geographic, and disability status feel valued and supported.

Level 4:
Executing

COSLA Board:

- **Identify, measure, assess, and analyze key EDI metrics in areas like applicant pool, hiring, retention, compensation, and membership.**
- **Created data-driven resources for members to use to advocate for EDI in the selection of SLAA workforce.**

COSLA Members:

- **Use training and data-driven resources to advocate for EDI in the selection of SLAA workforce.**

Level 5:
Optimizing

COSLA Board:

- **Initiate relationships with diverse professional groups to find and recruit people of every racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, economic, educational, geographic, and disability status.**
- **Provide transparency into metrics, goals, challenges, and improvement efforts concerning EDI in hiring, recruitment, compensation, contracting, retention, and leadership strategies.**
- **Regularly collect, assess, and analyze data to identify strengths and opportunities to improve parity in recruitment, hiring, compensation, contracting, retention, and SLAA workforce selection.**
- **Apply new methods such as removing academic barriers, creating new positions, and developing scholarships and programs geared for cultural leaders to address data-informed pipeline and talent pool issues.**

COSLA Members:

- **Use EDI best practices and data-driven resources to advocate for EDI in the selection of SLAA workforce.**

Current level: 1

STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

As COSLA continues on a path leading to real and lasting changes to improve equity, diversity, and inclusion, it's helpful to consider the challenges people often face while making significant changes.

Using the ADKAR model for change management, we can better understand the five components that are necessary to achieve meaningful change--and how to respond to signs of resistance in reaching any of those goals.

ADKAR LEVEL	MITIGATION STRATEGY
Awareness of the need for change	Review communication strategies, find and address gaps in building awareness about why the change is needed.
Desire to support the change	Examine, analyze, and communicate incentives or consequences that create motivation to change.
Knowledge to make the change	Evaluate education programs currently available and consider updating the content, delivery model, and frequency.
Ability to implement change	Consider offering personal assistance, coaching, and group support systems to build competency.
Reinforcement to sustain change	Explore and fill gaps in the systems, values, and rewards available to reinforce the change.

“There is not going to be any change unless we can begin to talk about any little fear, any little hatred, any little bias that we might have and to admit that all human beings have them.”

- Rita Dove

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