

Advancing Racial Equity in Public Libraries



Case Studies from the Field

Government Alliance on Race and Equity

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Who are we?

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GARE Libraries - Our Goal

The goal of the GARE Libraries Interest group is to develop the capacity of libraries to make racial equity a priority within our libraries, cities, communities and national associations.

Today's Objectives:

- Gain awareness
- Understand approaches
- See examples of equity efforts
- Be motivated to take action



WE HAVE UNITED

race forward 

Csi & CENTER FOR
SOCIAL INCLUSION

Government Alliance on Race and Equity

A national network of government working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.

- ✓ Launched as a member network in 2016 (12 members)
- ✓ Membership network of 93 members (and growing!)
- ✓ Subject area working groups also include public works, criminal justice and policing, human resources, procurement / purchasing, and many more.



What is Racial Equity?

Racial inequity in the U.S.

From infant mortality to life expectancy, race predicts how well you will do...



Racial equity means:

Closing the gaps so that race does not predict one's success, while **improving outcomes for all**

Achieving racial equity requires us to...

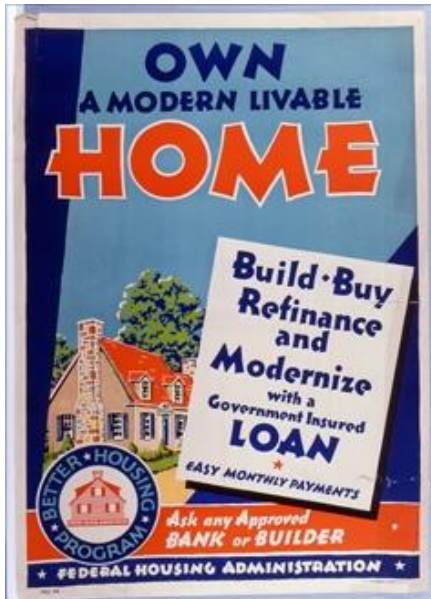
....**Target strategies** to focus improvements for those worse off

....Move beyond service provision to focus on changing **policies, institutions and structures**

What created racial inequity?

History of government and race

Initially explicit



Government explicitly creates and maintains racial inequity.

Became implicit



Discrimination illegal, but “race-neutral” policies and practices perpetuate inequity.

Government for racial equity



Proactive policies, practices and procedures that advance racial equity.

When Leading with Race, we are...

....Race *explicit*, not exclusive always bring an “intersectional” analysis

- Race and gender
- “ “ “ “ disability status....
- “ “ “ “ income inequality

Shift the focus to develop solutions



LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT
ALLIANCE ON
RACE & EQUITY

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Asking Different Questions

FROM:



TO:

Blame

Who's a racist?

Intentions

What did they mean?
What was their attitude?

Prejudice

What beliefs made them do it?

Grievance

How can we fix what just
happened?

Causes

What's causing the
racial inequities?

Effects

What were the actions?
What are the impacts?

Systems

What institutions are responsible?

Solutions

What proactive strategies
and solutions?

Key Concepts

Equity? Equality?

What's the difference?



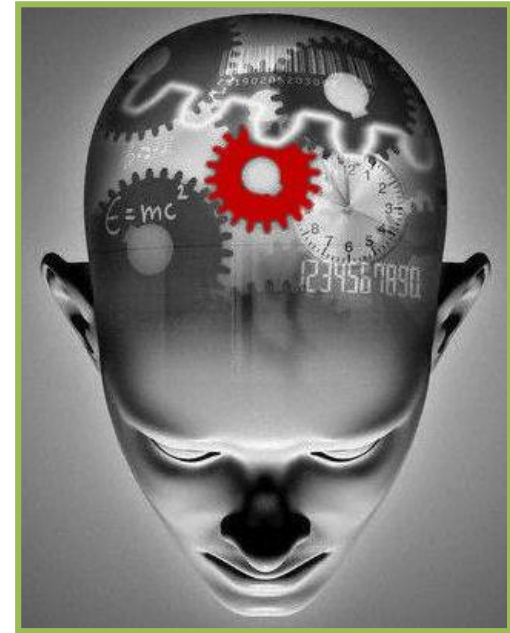
How We Think

Humans need meaning.

- Individual meaning
- Collective meaning

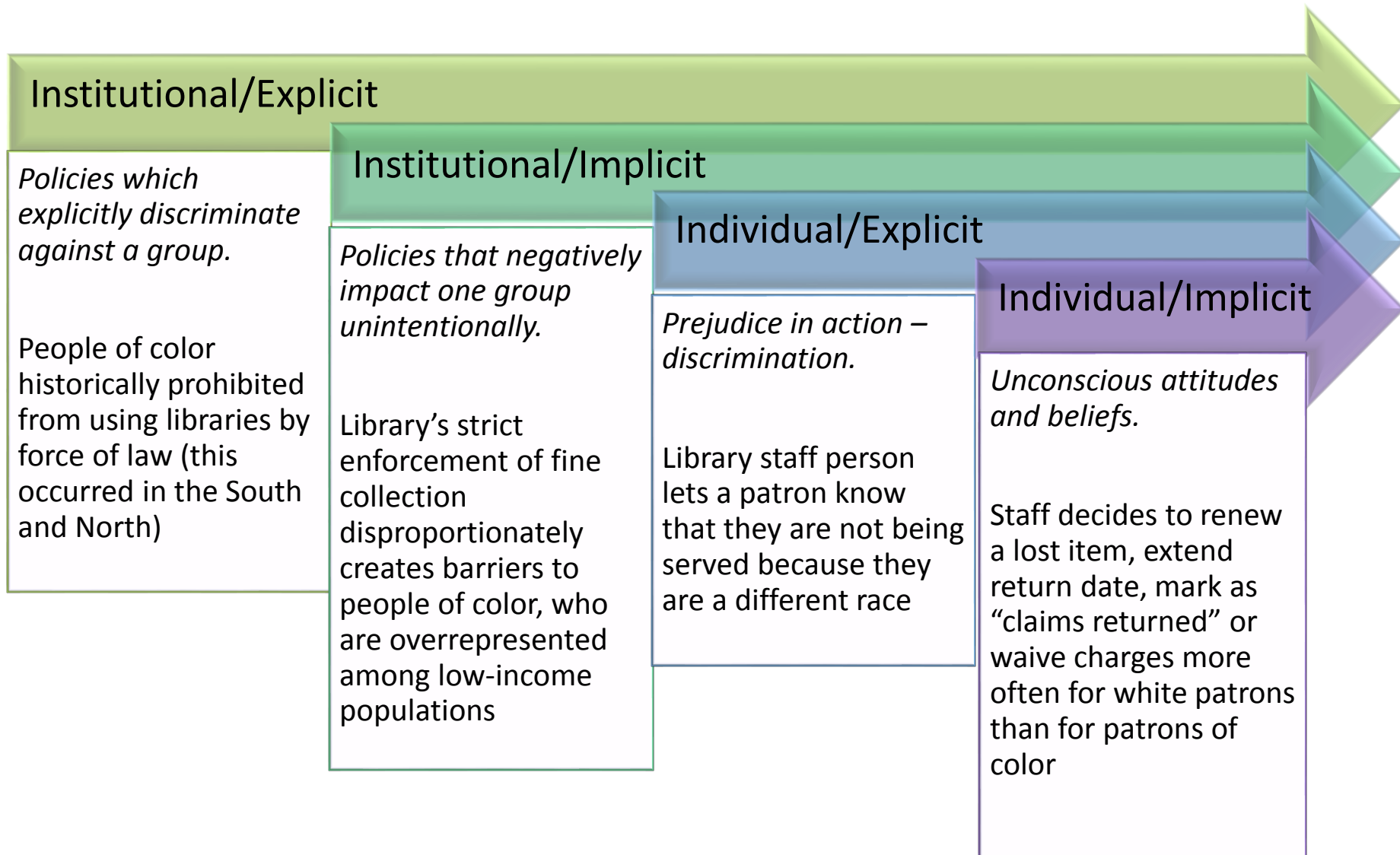
Only **2%** of emotional cognition is available consciously

Racial bias tends to reside in the **unconscious** network



We unconsciously think about race even when we do not explicitly discuss it.

Bias at work



GARE Equity Framework

NORMALIZE

- 1) Cultivate high-level investment
- 2) Establish internal Change Teams

ORGANIZE

- 3) Build capacity among staff and stakeholders
- 4) Partner with other institutions and communities

OPERATIONALIZE

- 5) Use Racial Equity Assessment Tools
- 6) Create a Racial Equity Action Plan

Does your library have a racial equity initiative?

Case Studies

Seattle Public Library



Normalize	Organize	Operationalize
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Re-established Change Team• Executive Support• Set Strategic Direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All-Staff Training• Budget Allocation• Inter-Agency Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adopt and expand application of tools• Design and Implementation• Service Delivery

Seattle Public Library

Operationalizing / Making a Difference

- Website Redesign

- *Applied equity analysis to the new website design process and integrate findings into the website's design and implementation.*

- Staff Communications and Engagement

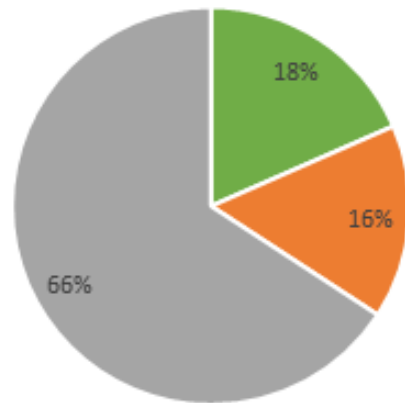
- *Develop internal communications and engagement activities on RSJI and equity-related topics, including All Staff Day trainings*

- Systemwide Program Design and Development

- *Completed an equity analysis of the flagship "one city, one book" Seattle Reads program and redesign programming and engagement strategies accordingly.*

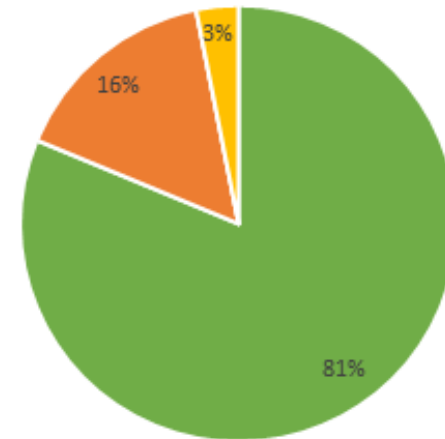
Seattle: Mobile Services Redistribution

Preschools Served by Bookmobile Spring 2017



■ Public: Low-income families ■ Private: Over 25% subsidized ■ Private: Under 25% subsidized

Is Served by Bookmobile Fall 2018



■ Public: Low-income families ■ Private: Over 25% subsidized ■ Public: Students with disabilities

Hennepin County Library



Hennepin: Capital Improvement Plan

DATA POINT	Crime Index 2017	Education- High School or Higher	Hispanic Population & People of Color	Language – English Not Very Well	Poverty	Rental Occupied Housing	Unemployment Rate – 16 & Over
WHAT IS THIS?	Data from ESRI & Applied Geographic Solutions	American Community Survey	American Community Survey	American Community Survey	American Community Survey	ESRI & US Census	American Community Survey
HOW IS IT ORDERED?	Weights communities with a higher than average crime rate.	Weights communities with lower percentage of high school graduates.	Weights communities with higher percentage of Hispanic population and people of color.	Weights communities with higher percent of residents who have primary language other than English and do not speak English well.	Weights communities that have greater percent of residents experiencing poverty.	Weights communities that have higher percent of occupied housing units that are rentals.	Weights communities that have higher percentages of residents who are unemployed.
WHY IS THIS INCLUDED?	Justice	Education, Income	Education, Health, Housing, Income *	Education, Employment, Income	Employment, Income	Housing	Employment, Income
*In Minnesota, people of color are more likely to live in poverty and suffer chronic illness, and less likely to graduate and own their own home. Learn more at Minnesota Compass (www.mncompass.org/disaprities/overview), which is led by Wilder Research.							

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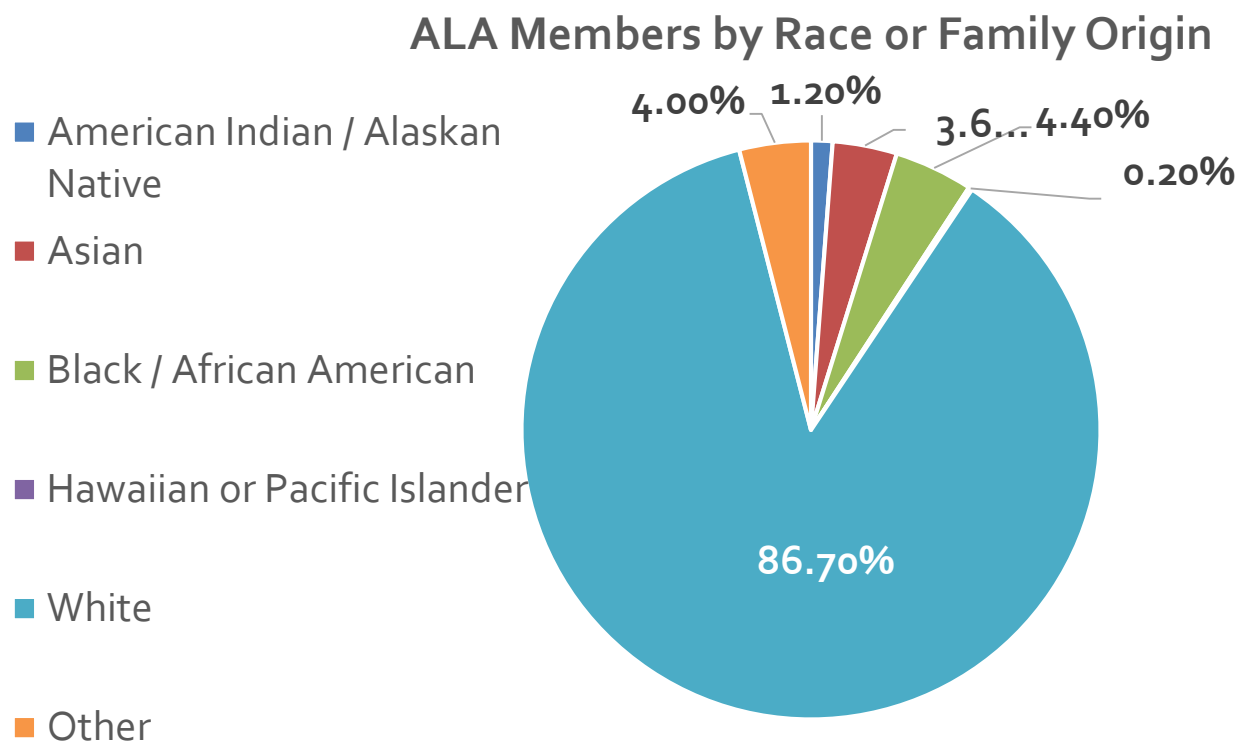


Sarah Lawton
Neighborhood Library Supervisor
Madison Public Library

“For most libraries in the GARE network, addressing barriers to employment and workplace inclusion for staff of color is a critical first step. This includes careful examination of racial bias in recruiting, hiring and workplace culture.”

Librarian demographics

- 87 percent of librarians are white
- 73 percent of library assistants are white
- Nearly three quarters of librarians are white women



What racism are we focusing on?

Individual racism:

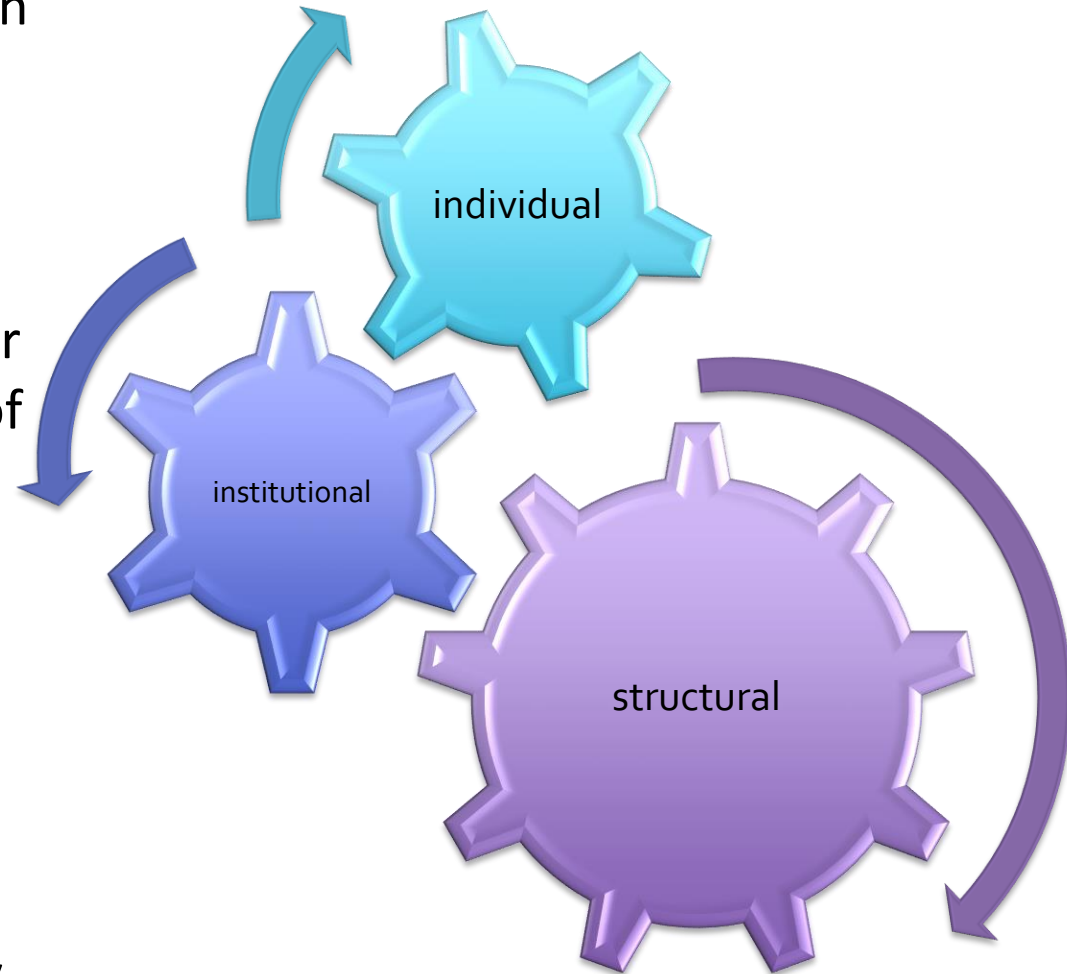
- Bigotry or discrimination by an individual based on race.

Institutional racism:

- Policies, practices and procedures that work better for white people than for people of color, often unintentionally or inadvertently.

Structural racism:

- A history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions, combining to create a system that negatively impacts communities of color.



“We must act with urgency. As institutions committed to values of democracy and intellectual freedom, libraries have an obligation to move beyond diversity initiatives to grapple more actively with the power and responsibility of our position.”

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SOLUTIONS THAT WORK FOR EVERYONE

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