

# Challenges and Innovations in Small and Rural Libraries: EDISJ Work in Rural Communities

*OLA 2021 presentation*

*Featuring: Christina Fuller-Gregory, PLA EDISJ Committee; Amy Hutchinson, Lake County Public Library; Kathy Street, Oregon Trail Library District; Kristin Williams, Athena Public Library*

A selection of resources presenters have found helpful:

Racial Equity Tools, <https://www.racialequitytools.org/>

*"Racial Equity Tools is designed to support individuals and groups working to achieve racial equity. It offers tools, research, tips, curricula, and ideas for people who want to increase their understanding and to help those working for racial justice at every level – in systems, organizations, communities, and the culture at large. We curate resources that use language and analysis reflecting an understanding of systemic racism, power, and privilege and are accessible on-line and free to users."*

- Glossary: There's a long list of terms that people new to racial equity work – or people like library managers working on leading training at their libraries – will find extremely helpful. Each term has a concise definition, and sources are attributed. <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>
- Core Concepts: Lots of great learning here, divided into a variety of topics under the racial equity umbrella, and offered in a variety of formats (documents, videos, etc.). <https://www.racialequitytools.org/resources/fundamentals/core-concepts>
- Tip Sheets: Short documents for a variety of 'how' questions. <https://www.racialequitytools.org/resources/fundamentals/resource-list/tip-sheets>
- Resource List: There are a lot of online resources here, helpfully organized by topic or theme. <https://www.racialequitytools.org/resources/fundamentals/resource-list/resource-lists>

The resources available through the Public Library Association at <http://www.ala.org/pla/initiatives/edi>, including:

- Webinars, <http://www.ala.org/pla/education/onlinelearning/webinars/ondemand/understanding>
- The Leadership Lab, <http://www.ala.org/pla/education/onlinelearning/leadershiplab>

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Resources to help shape discussion:

- *Our country has become increasingly divided along partisan lines, with significantly different and opposed positions on race and ethnicity, discrimination, immigration, gender, and sexual orientation, according to Pew Research Center. Sometimes these differences between Democratic and Republican values simply do not agree whether there is a pressing problem to be solved.*
  - Pew Research Center 2017 report, "The Partisan Divide on Political Values Grows Even Wider"
    - "Among Republicans and Republican leaners, 63% say the bigger problem in the country is people seeing discrimination where there actually is none. ... Views among Democrats and Democratic leaners are the reverse: 79% say that the bigger problem in the country is people not seeing discrimination where it really does exist." (Doherty, Carrol, et al. "The Partisan Divide on Political Values Grows Even Wider." Pew Research Center. Published October 5, 2017, accessed 01/22/21.  
<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2017/10/05/the-partisan-divide-on-political-values-grows-even-wider/>)  
Jump to the right page:  
<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2017/10/05/4-race-immigration-and-discrimination/>)
- *The prevailing values of Democratic communities could make them more predisposed to accept and applaud EDI work for its own sake than would be anticipated for Republican communities. Depending on the issue, Republican or conservative values are sometimes even actively in opposition to Democratic or liberal values. For example:*
  - Center for American Progress, a liberal/progressive think tank: "Specifically, President-elect Biden should immediately issue an executive order that directs all federal agencies to review and update relevant regulations, guidance, and policies to reflect that SOGI (sexual orientation gender identity) discrimination is an illegal form of sex discrimination under the law."  
  
Medina, Caroline, et al. "Improving the Lives and Rights of LGBTQ People in America: A Road Map for the Biden Administration." Center for American Progress. Published January 12, 2021, accessed 01/22/21.  
<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbtq-rights/reports/2021/01/12/494500/improving-lives-rights-lgbtq-people-america/>
  - The Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank: "In 2017, the Supreme Court redefined marriage in Obergefell v. Hodges by ruling that same-sex couples have a fundamental right to marriage protected by the United States

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Constitution. Since then there has been a coordinated attack on both individuals and organizations who believe that marriage is between a man and a woman, and furthermore that sex is a biological fact, not a matter of self-perception."

"Civil Society: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Politics." *Solutions 2020*. The Heritage Foundation. No publication date listed, accessed 01/22/2021. <https://www.heritage.org/solutions/#SOGI>

- Articulating a fundamental difference between liberal and conservative perspectives:
  - Meegan, Dan. "Conservatives Have a Different Definition of 'Fair.'" *The Atlantic*. Published April 30, 2019, accessed 01/22/2021. <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/04/why-conservatives-hate-warrens-loan-debt-relief-plan/588322/>
    - Liberals tend to focus on need and getting needs met, especially for the most needy, and not to focus on whether the mechanism for meeting the need is objectively fair to all members of society as a whole. It feels fundamentally unfair that in the richest nation in the world, there would be people who cannot afford to eat.
    - Conservatives tend to value overall fairness or proportionality (that what you pay should be commensurate with what you receive) regardless of need. It feels fundamentally unfair that a student loan forgiveness program would forgive someone who made choices that resulted in them having a large debt for many years and not reward someone who made choices (and potentially sacrifices) to pay their debt off within 10 years.