

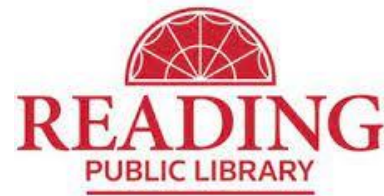


Office of Equity and Social Justice

Reading Public Library

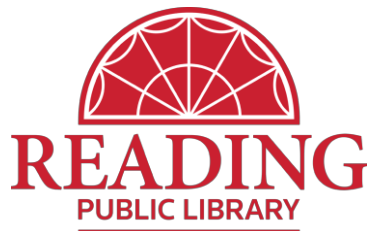
Select Board Presentation

Dec 6, 2022.



Today's Presentation

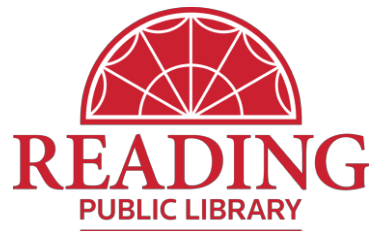
1. Office of Equity and Social Justice (OESJ): mission, approach, best practices
2. Areas of focus: events, advising, partnerships, networking
3. How does OESJ function?
4. Some community ideas/suggestions
5. OESJ Goals for 2023
6. Partners and Allies for Inclusive Reading (PAIR): an introduction
7. PAIR's working groups: Education, Communication, Resources/Partnerships
8. How does PAIR function?
9. PAIR Goals for 2023
10. Some engagement ideas for Select Board



OESJ Mission

The Office of Equity and Social Justice is a town-wide shared service which will provide education, support and resources aimed at making Reading an inclusive, diverse and accessible town for all.

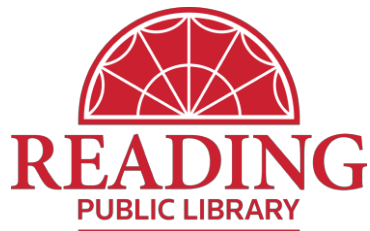
- **Diversity-Embrace and celebrate all the ways we differ-** that includes but is not limited to age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, and any other identifiers that make one individual or group different from another.
- **Equity-All having the opportunity to fully participate-** fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time trying to identify and eliminate barriers that have historically prevented the full participation of some individuals or groups.
- **Inclusion/Belonging-All feel welcomed and valued-** creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, represented, supported, and valued to fully participate.
- **Access-Of any and all abilities-** creating spaces and practices so everyone feels included regardless of physical, intellectual, linguistic abilities.



DEIA Approach in Reading

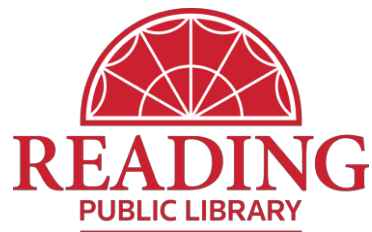
An advisory and supporting role to facilitate community education and best practices across the municipality

- DESJ is point person for information and advising on best practices and resources
- Not enforcing, but encouraging awareness and education around DEIA
- Supporting other departments, boards, staff and leaders
- Community resource to learn and engage through respectful dialogue and behavior



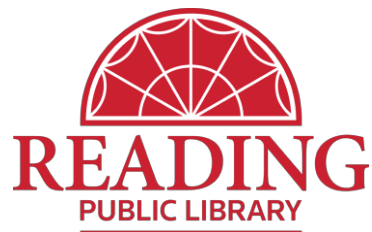
OESJ Best Practices

- Process based on facts/data
- DEIA is broadly defined and issues are strategically prioritized based on community needs, and to avoid duplication
- Collaborative and cooperative approach with other town stakeholders
- Aimed at building inclusive processes and organizational climate
- Responsive and open to feedback



Areas of Focus

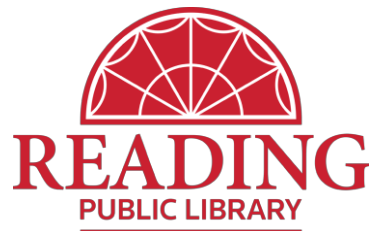
- Educational Events and Programs
- Resources and Advising
- Partnerships and Relationship building
- Networking and Professional Development



Educational Events and Programs




Offer events and programs that humanize and celebrate one another and encourage civil dialogue and education around issues of diversity, equity and inclusion

- **Four annual townwide events-2022/2023-** Juneteenth, Native American Heritage Month, MLK Day, Autism Acceptance Month
- **Provide supplemental support to other DEI themed/community events** in and around town- Reading Pride, RPL Rainbow Run, Fall Street Fair, New Resident Open House
- **Design a model for community education-** Reading Reflect
- **Provide programming design and support** to other departments and stakeholders- Parent university with RMHS; allyship and diversity training with UUCR



Resources and Advising

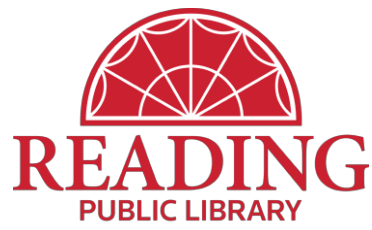
Strategies	Reading Public Library	Reading Town Departments	Reading Public Schools
Workforce and Staff Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross cultural dialogue training • Equitable hiring practices • Advising on communication • Allyship training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • Equitable hiring practices • Staff retention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District-wide training • Student focus groups • Equitable hiring practices • Staff retention
Program design and process review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multilingual Storytime • Bill Russell Documentary Screening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Resident Open House 2022 • Affordable Housing Production Plan • RECALC Survey feedback • Sports day/Open House with Reading Rec 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RMHS Parent workshops on difficult conversations
Expanding community outreach and input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community office hours • Reading Rhythm newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEI Community Compact Needs Assessment 2023 • Consultation on expanding community outreach initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive communication with multilingual families • Partner networks for adaptive programs/rec • Community initiatives for families from Boston

	Preliminary Conversations
	In Progress
	Completed

Partnerships and Relationship building

Build bridges to connect all voices in meaningful and civil dialog, while also strategically amplifying voices from traditionally marginalized communities

- **Create and activate a community-wide advisory/working group-** Partners and Allies for Inclusive Reading (PAIR)
- **Open dialog with key stakeholders and future collaborators-** town departments; community organizations; residents and students, parent networks, sports community
- **Create connection spaces-** PAIR socials, women's leadership lunches for town employees
- **Connect PAIR** and other volunteers **to existing town resources:** Reading Cares, Food Pantry, Burbank-YMCA, Rotary and Lion's Clubs, sports organizations



Partnerships and Relationship building

OESJ/PAIR Active Collaborators

Town Departments

Public Services
Pleasant Street Center
Reading Rec
Planning Division
Reading Public Schools
Reading Police Department
Reading Public Library

Community Networks and Organizations

Special Education Parent Network (SEPAC)
Reading Cares
Reading Clergy Association
Student Clubs at RMHS- GSA, SOCA, Disabled Students Union
Coalition of US (CATO)
The Flourish Collective
Understanding Disabilities (UD)

Public Boards and Committees

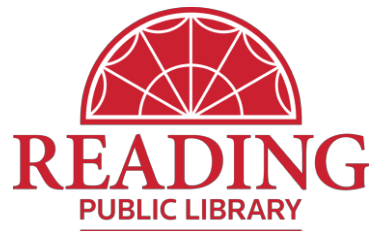
School Committee
Select Board
Board of Health



Networking and Professional Development

Explore outside perspectives and acknowledge that discrimination and bias do not have borders

- **Connect with neighborhood towns and municipalities** -Winchester Social Justice Network, Wakefield and Stoneham Human Rights Commissions, North Reading Human Rights and Disability Commissions
- **Connect Reading to state resources** and best practices through peer networks- Mass Human Rights Coalition, Mass DEI Coalition, MAPC
- **Connect the Office of Equity and Social Justice to national professional DEI organizations**-American Association of Access, Equity and Diversity



Community needs/suggestions

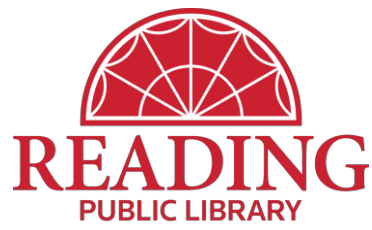
Ideas from the community include, but are not limited to:

Support for residents- seniors, low-income, disabled persons, non-English speaking families

- Inclusive and adaptive recreational opportunities for those with disabilities
- Socialization and networking for seniors
- Intergenerational/fun meet-ups
- Provide language access for non-English speaking families

Ideas for Schools

- Resources for parents to have equity/social justice conversations with kids
- LGBTQ+ inclusive education
- Fostering sense of belonging for racial/ethnic minority students
- Diverse health education- including physical and intellectual disabilities



Community needs/suggestions

Ideas from the community include, but are not limited to:

Community Education

- Help with skills to start tough dialogues
- More and better publicized adult education on DEIA issues
- Community education series for overlooked historical figures from marginalized backgrounds- in and outside Reading.

Community building and addressing political divide

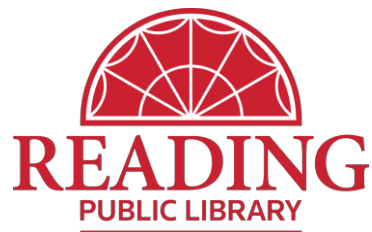
- Speakers and artists and fun activities that are a catalyst for interactions and relationship building
- Restore civil dialogue and culture
- Collecting peoples' stories “lived experiences” and sharing opportunities
- Go to events together as a group



Emerging Process

Continuous improvement cycle with incremental, measurable change

- Document concerns/feedback/ideas as data
- Identify existing Stakeholders
- Examine feasibility for undertaking and/or interest in collaboration
- Identify short-term and long-term outcomes, share DEIA best practices
- Collaboratively develop plans and programs
- Implement
- Gather feedback and review
- Repeat process with results to reinforce successes and create change



Coming Up: OESJ 2023

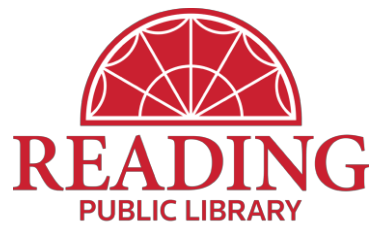
- Events Pipeline: MLK Day, Autism/Neurodiversity Acceptance Month
- Community Compact Grant
- PAIR Holiday Party! Everyone is welcome 😊
RSVPs required



Partners and Allies for Inclusive Reading (PAIR)

Cross-community alliance for Reading for All

- Non partisan/non advocacy space: creating opportunities for friendships to grow through collaborative learning!
- Setting the foundation of empathetic listening, mutual trust and learning, and humanizing one another
- Invite new members, town and board liaisons to join to conversation!
- Identify short-term and long-term outcomes and opportunities for partnership with the larger community



PAIR Working Groups

EDUCATION

Assess educational needs of the group and the wider community

Develop/provide educational resources and program ideas

RESOURCES & PARTNERSHIPS

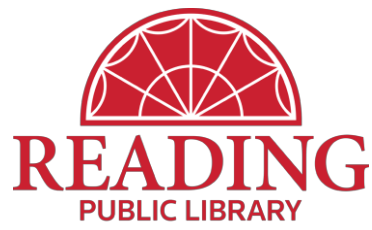
Identifying stakeholders and potential partnerships

Resources/Grants

COMMUNICATION

Develop PAIR's communication and community outreach strategies

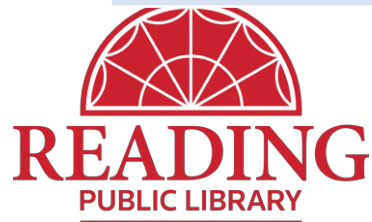
Events
Programs
Behavioral/Policy shifts



Area of Focus: Events

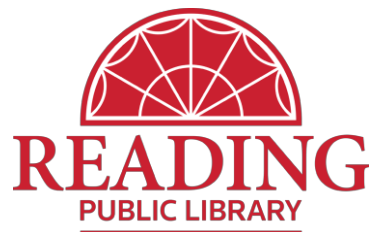
Autism/Neurodiversity Acceptance Month, Pride, Juneteenth

Education Working Group (EWG)	Communications Working Group (CWG)	Resources Working Group (RWG)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are some learning goals for PAIR?• What are some creative models of public engagement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is PAIR's communication strategy for events- advertise and review?• How can we disperse information through targeted outreach?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is our target audience and attendees?• Who should we be partnering with? How?



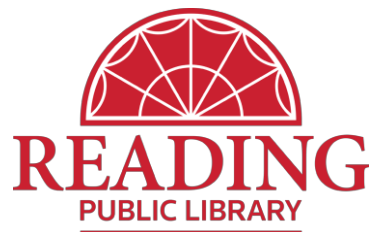
Case 1: EWG for Neurodiversity Acceptance Month

Objective 1	Learning Goals	Objective 2	Public engagement ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are some learning goals you want to identify?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ What are some aspects and facets of neurodiversity➤ What are some challenges for neurodiverse persons in society➤ What support/resources are available to parents/adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are some creative models of public engagement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Temple Grandin's work followed by discussion➤ Jordyn Zimmerman movie➤ Invite public to submit what they would be interested in via Reading Rhythm



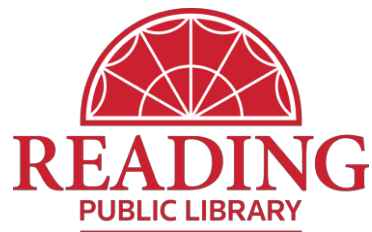
Case 2: RWG for Pride Month

Objective 1	Target Audience for Pride	Objective 2	Potential partners for Pride
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is our target audience and attendees? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Everyone is welcome! 😊 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who should we be partnering with? How? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ RMHS GSA ➤ Town Manager-RPD-Reading Coalition-CRO-RPL-Reading Rec ➤ Trevor Project ➤ Mass Equality ➤ UUCR ➤ Boston Alliance of Gay Sports



Case 3: CWG for Juneteenth

Objective 1	Communication Strategy for Juneteenth	Objective 2	Information channels for Juneteenth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is PAIR's communication strategy for events- advertise and review? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hard + Online copies ➤ Personal stories/interviews ➤ Highlight informational background in Reading Rhythm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we disperse information through targeted outreach? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Newsletters ➤ Flyers ➤ Facebook ➤ Patch



PAIR 2023

Overarching Goal: Partnership/Allyship

- What does it mean to be allies? How can we be allies?
- How can community partners and organizations be partners/allies?
- Partnership opportunities for town liaisons and departments?
- How do we respond to community concerns as allies?

Thematic Goals (include but not limited to)

- How to be allies to BIPOC
- How to be allies to socio-economically marginalized populations
- How to be allies to the LGBTQ+ community
- How to be allies to seniors
- How to be allies to persons with disabilities

