**Project Executive Summary Report:** *The Strategic Roadmap for the 'EDI Framework for NJ Libraries'*
June 30, 2025

**Introduction:**

The primary purpose of the project is to provide a roadmap and framework for establishing a sustainable environment for the EDI efforts of NJ libraries and library organizations, aligning them with the *EDI Framework for NJ Libraries*, which embodies a commitment to action towards building a library community that fully reflects the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). Since its launch in 2024, the project has made steady progress toward creating a unified, statewide approach to EDI in New Jersey libraries, working to achieve collaborative and measurable impact in the following goals:

1. **Build Capacity for EDI:** Increase the knowledge, skills, and abilities of library staff across New Jersey in understanding and implementing EDI principles.
2. **Foster Inclusive Library Environments:** Create welcoming, inclusive, and safe library environments for diverse populations, promoting equity and respect for all.
3. **Strengthen Diverse Staff Power in Library Workspace across New Jersey** to Serve the Diverse Communities More Effectively.
4. **Enhance Library Services and Accessibility:** Improve the accessibility and inclusivity of library services for all customers, especially underserved and marginalized communities within New Jersey.

**What We've Done And What We're Doing:**

For **Goal 1: Building Capacity for EDI**, we have completed an EDI Collective Impact Assessment with 15 responses from library organizations across New Jersey. The analyzed data has been compiled into a report with actionable recommendations, which has been shared with participating organizations. Alongside this, we have formally invited them to join **EDI-NJ**, a collaborative group dedicated to advancing strategic EDI initiatives in New Jersey libraries. Our vision is to start convening this group in 2025 so that we can co-create a plan for collectively supporting and sustaining EDI efforts across New Jersey libraries. While several connections remain pending, we are actively building this statewide network and welcome additional support in our efforts.

To support the development of a DEIA Toolkit for Directors, we conducted an EDI training needs assessment, gathering 118 fully completed responses. The EDI consultant's summary report outlines critical actionable recommendations for the toolkit, and the project group is currently recruiting participants to ensure diverse representation and expand the group's capacity. With insights drawn from the assessment, the foundation for the toolkit has been laid. We have formed a committee within NJLA's Diversity & Outreach (D&O) Section to guide the development and implementation of this subproject, ensuring it reflects the diverse realities of New Jersey libraries.

Additionally, the insights from this assessment have informed priority training topics and speaker recruitment, which will contribute to the creation of a performers and speakers database. This database, along with other

resources, will be included in the forthcoming EDI resource hub. Early planning has also begun for a statewide in-person program in Spring 2026, with discussions focusing on sharing collected data and developed resources and creating space for strategic visioning and action planning.

Under **Goal 2: Fostering Inclusive Library Environments**, we announced the EDI-NJ Institutional EDI Assessment launch for New Jersey libraries in May 2025. This comprehensive tool is designed to support your library's journey toward creating a more equitable, inclusive, and community-centered institution. We also introduced the Learning Module Series that accompanies the tool. This series is designed to guide libraries through each step of the process, helping them reflect on their library's current state, understand community needs, and identify actionable areas for growth. Key Resources also include Scoring Guide, a clear framework to help libraries calculate their assessment results, and Debrief Guide, a resource to help facilitate team discussions after completing the assessment, so libraries can identify patterns, gaps, and prioritize areas for growth. These resources are designed to provide clarity, structure, and actionable insights to help libraries deepen its commitment to equity and inclusion and to support them in creating and sustaining intentional strategic change.

We have completed a draft of the individual EDI assessment, which will undergo review by the EDI-NJ group. Once finalized, the EDI consultant will develop accompanying modules to support its use and implementation.

For **Goal 3: Strengthening Diverse Staff Power**, we successfully achieved our objective of organizing two special *Culture Connection* events by the end of June 2025, by hosting the following:

- Asian and Pacific Islander (API) Culture Event: On March 22, 2024, the New Jersey library community gathered at the Piscataway Public Library to celebrate the rich tapestry of API cultures. This gathering marked the launch of *Culture Connection*, a new statewide EDI project. Aimed at connecting library staff from diverse backgrounds, *Culture Connection* offers a platform for cultural exchange, education, and celebration, aligning with the EDI Framework for NJ Libraries. The event was funded by the Hasbrouck Heights Public Library, Hoboken Public Library, and LibraryLinkNJ, and co-sponsored by NJLA and MentorNJ. The event served as a powerful reminder of diversity's value and inclusion's importance in creating vibrant, supportive library communities across New Jersey.
- African American Culture Event: Building on the success of the API Culture Event, MentorNJ's African American Meet-up Group hosted an African American Culture Event on March 14, 2025 at Monroe Township Library, bringing together library staff from diverse backgrounds to honor and celebrate African American history and culture in New Jersey and beyond. Co-sponsored by LibraryLinkNJ and NJLA, the event featured insightful hybrid presentations from keynote speakers Denitra Letrice Ross and Earl Givens, Jr., who spoke about building cultural competence and developing inclusive leadership.

Finally, for **Goal 4: Enhancing Library Services and Accessibility**, we are in the early stages of developing a statewide assessment to identify gaps in accessibility and inclusivity. This assessment will be distributed to libraries across the state, with responses analyzed and compiled into a comprehensive report. The report will

highlight trends, identify areas of opportunity, and assess collective impact. The goal is for this tool to serve as a benchmark for measuring progress at both the individual library level and statewide, supporting ongoing progress and accountability.

The group has also been active beyond its core roadmap scope, and the following are the **EDI-NJ Group's activities** to date:

- **Building an Inclusive Organizational Culture and Expanding Connection in Libraries through the Adaptation of Denver Public Library (DPL) Models for an IMLS Grant:** LLNJ was invited and submitted a proposal to the IMLS for a one-year, $100,000 Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program (LB21) Grant under the Community-Centered Implementation Grants category. The proposal aimed to ensure that the EDI-NJ Group could continue its efforts beyond the Strategic Roadmap Project. Notifications for grant recipients were originally expected in July 2025 but were delayed due to organizational uncertainties at IMLS.
- **EDI-NJ's Participation in Denver Public Library (DPL)'s EDI Cohort Meetings:** Initiated through the IMLS grant application mentioned above, Selwa Shamy, EDI-NJ Group Leader, and Ralph Bingham, LLNJ Executive Director, attended the DPL's cohort meeting on November 15, 2024. We will try to continue participating in these meetings to build partnerships and strengthen our EDI projects.
- **NJLA Conference 2025 Program:** We have presented a conference program  to share the EDI-NJ Group's progress, statewide assessment results, and future plans to strategically and collectively enhance Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in New Jersey libraries and organizations. This program was co-sponsored by the NJLA Diversity & Outreach Section (D&O) and the Library Workers of Color Section (LWOC).

**Looking Ahead**
As we move into Phase 3 (FY2026) of the project , momentum continues to build across our goals, with important progress and new opportunities for engagement:

- Develop and Implement institutional EDI Assessment Cohort with ten selected multitype libraries, using the Institutional EDI assessment and audit modules.
- Host an in-person program at the NJLA/NJASL Joint Conference.
- Host an in-person program to share project progress with the NJ library workers and foster an environment for statewide collaborations in Spring 2026, possibly at a nationwide library conference.
- Develop the Individual EDI Assessment and Audit Module for library staff by December 2025, supporting self-reflection on personal practices and growth.
- Design and develop DEIA Toolkit for Directors by the end of March 2026.
- Establish an EDI resource hub for ongoing learning and support accessible to all library staff, including training modules, by the end of March 2026.
    - Incorporate diverse voices in library programming by creating a performers & speakers database

We remain deeply committed to creating a sustainable and equity-centered future for New Jersey libraries and we will continue to invite members of the NJ library community to get involved in this collaborative effort.

For more information about the project updates, please visit the project page at:
https://librarylinknj.org/EDI/strategic-roadmap

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**Attachment:**

- Phase 3 High Level Timeline

**Strategic Roadmap for the 'EDI Framework for NJ Libraries' Project Plan**

**Phase 3 High Level Timeline**

**- Phase 3: 7/1/2025 - 6/30/2026**

| Phase | Task ID | Task Name | Start Date | End Date |
|-------|---------|-----------|------------|----------|
| 3 | 3.1 | Produce the statewide assessment survey results | May 21, 2025 | June 5, 2026 |
| 3 | 3.2 | Develop and Implement the library EDI Institutional Assessment Cohort with ten selected multitype libraries, using the EDI assessment and audit modules | September 22, 2025 | June 19, 2026 |
| 3 | 3.3 | Plan and host an in-person showcase (ALA Conference & PLA CE 2026) | September 1, 2025 | July 2, 2026 |
| 3 | 3.4 | Develop Individual EDI Assessment & Module | September 30, 2024 | December 1, 2025 |
| 3 | 3.5 | Produce a Status Report | December 1, 2025 | December 15, 2025 |
| 3 | 3.6 | Develop EDI Training Plan | September 22, 2025 | February 27, 2026 |
| 3 | 3.7 | Develop DEIA Toolkits & EDI Resource Hub | September 22, 2025 | March 30, 2026 |
| 3 | 3.8 | Produce Status Report | March 23, 2026 | April 8, 2026 |
| 3 | 3.9 | Produce Phase 3 Report | June 8, 2026 | June 29, 2026 |

Timeline header: 2025 (Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec) | 2026 (Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun) — Phase 3