Summary Report: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Training Needs for NJ Library Leaders

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Executive Summary

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) training needs for library leaders based on a survey of 193 library professionals, including Library Directors, Librarians, Education Librarians, and Library Assistants. Of these, 118 fully completed responses were included in the analysis.

The survey explored respondents' previous EDI training history, perceived training needs, and barriers to engagement, considering several key factors: library role, leadership level, years of experience, library type, and the diversity of the communities they serve.

Key findings indicate that while many respondents have participated in some form of EDI training, there is still a strong demand for more targeted, role-specific programs. Training preferences vary significantly based on leadership role and experience, with more experienced leaders seeking advanced, scenario-based learning. Respondents favored interactive, ongoing learning experiences over one-time sessions, with webinars and in-person workshops being the preferred formats. However, barriers such as time constraints, limited funding, and lack of institutional support remain significant challenges to engaging in EDI training.

The report offers actionable recommendations to address these findings, including the development of tailored training pathways based on leadership roles and experience, the need to overcome institutional barriers, and the importance of increasing support for EDI initiatives within libraries. By implementing these strategies, including designing modular and flexible training options and fostering leadership buy-in, libraries can cultivate leaders equipped to champion equity, diversity, and inclusion in their organizations and build stronger, more inclusive organizational cultures that support equity and diversity at every level.

Demographics and Roles

Role Distribution:
Participants were asked to identify their specific roles; however, a breakdown by role is not included now. This analysis focuses on leadership responsibility rather than job titles, which will allow training resources to be tailored based on responsibility levels rather than specific roles. This approach ensures relevance across various positions, such as a library director, adult literacy librarian, IT specialist, library student, or HR professional. Additionally, several respondents selected "Other" for roles that did not align with the provided classifications, requiring recoding for more accurate analysis.

Leadership Levels:
The survey results indicate that leadership is fairly distributed among respondents, with 27.97% identifying as Executive Leaders (extensive decision-making and ultimate accountability) and Mid-Level Leaders (moderate decision-making authority and significant accountability). 18.64% are Senior Leaders (high decision-making authority and accountability), 16.95% are Emerging Leaders (some input in decision-making and occasional supervisory duties), and 8.47% report having No Leadership Responsibilities. One respondent selected "other" and indicated they were a "community leader." This participant also selected "Education Librarian" for their professional role. Given that this survey focuses on organizational leadership, this response was reclassified as Mid-Level Leader to better reflect their likely role within their professional context.

Years of Responsibility:
The survey results show that respondents have varying levels of tenure in their current leadership roles. The largest group, 27.1%, has held their current level of responsibility for 1-3 years, while 24.6% have been in their role for more than 10 years. 20.3% of respondents have held their current role for 7-10 years, and 16.1% for 4-6 years. A smaller group, 11.9%, have been in their role for less than 1 year. This indicates a wide range of experience levels among respondents, with a significant number having long-term leadership experience.

Library Type:
The majority of respondents, 79.7%, work in public libraries, with 14.4% working in academic libraries. A smaller portion, 5.1%, work in school libraries, and no respondents identified as working in special libraries. One respondent (0.9%) selected "Other" and clarified that they are retired but active in NJASL and NJLTA. This distribution reflects a strong representation of public libraries, with some input from academic and school library professionals.

Community Diversity:
The survey results indicate that most respondents describe their library's community as highly diverse (many different races, ethnicities, and languages), accounting for 41.5% of responses. 39.8% of respondents report serving a moderately diverse community, while 17% describe their community as slightly diverse (limited diversity). A small portion, 1.7%, report their community as not diverse (homogeneous in terms of race, ethnicity, and language). This reflects that most respondents serve communities with a notable level of diversity, though there is variation in the degree of diversity across respondents.

EDI Training History and Effectiveness

Completion of Recent EDI Training:

A significant portion (66.1%) of respondents have completed EDI training in the past three years, while 33.9% have not. A breakdown of leadership levels, years of experience, library type, and community diversity follows.

Key Insights by Leadership Level:
The survey reveals that 75.8% of Executive Leaders have completed EDI training in the past three years, followed by 68.2% of Senior Leaders. 60.6% of Mid-Level Leaders and 60% of Emerging Leaders and those with No Leadership Responsibilities have also completed training. These results indicate that EDI training completion is relatively high across all leadership levels, with the highest rates among those in executive positions and a notable portion of non-leadership roles also having undergone training.

Key Insights by Years of Responsibility:
The survey results show a notable variation in EDI training completion based on years of leadership roles. Respondents with 10+ years of leadership experience had the highest completion rate, with 72% reporting they had undergone training. Similarly, 68% of those with 1-3 years in leadership and 67% with 7-10 years of experience also reported completing EDI training. Respondents with 4-6 years of leadership experience followed closely, with 63% having completed training. In contrast, those with less than 1 year in a leadership role had the lowest rate of EDI training completion at 50%. This suggests that individuals with more years in leadership roles are more likely to have engaged in EDI training.

Key Insights by Library Type:
The survey shows variation in EDI training completion across different library types. 63.8% of respondents from public libraries have completed EDI training in the past three years, while 94.1% of those in academic libraries report doing so. In contrast, only 33.3% of respondents from school libraries have completed EDI training. There were no respondents from special libraries. These results highlight that academic library staff have the highest rate of EDI training, while school library staff report the lowest completion rates.

Key Insights by Community Diversity:
The data shows that respondents from more diverse communities are more likely to have completed EDI training. Among those serving highly diverse communities, 69.4% have completed training, and 70.2% of those in moderately diverse communities have done the same. In slightly diverse communities, the completion rate drops to 55%, while none of the respondents from non-diverse communities have completed EDI training. This trend suggests that greater community diversity may correlate with a higher likelihood of EDI training completion.

Barriers to Completion:

Reasons for not completing training include a lack of formal opportunities, perceived irrelevance, reliance on informal or self-directed learning, barriers like time and cost, limited availability in smaller or conservative communities, and resistance within institutions.

Current Training Formats:

Based on the survey data, the report highlights the current landscape of EDI training resources available in libraries. Key findings include the prevalence of webinars (78.81%), external workshops (54.24%), and conferences (50.85%), with webinars being the most available training resource. The data also reveals a significant preference for online courses (50.85%) and professional organization resources (46.61%). Although in 39.83% of libraries, in-house training programs are less frequently available compared to external resources. Among the 12 respondents who selected "Other" training resources, their responses reflect diverse offerings and challenges in providing EDI-related training. These included specific program-based offerings such as ESL, GED, Citizenship Review, counseling services, and curated collections of children's books and annotated bibliographies focused on diversity. Several respondents mentioned relying on institution-wide or HR-managed initiatives. In contrast, others described ad-hoc efforts, such as staff finding their own training resources or participating in mandatory annual online training that includes diversity modules. This mix of formalized approaches and ad-hoc efforts highlights the varying levels of structure and integration of EDI training across libraries.

Diversity within libraries also plays a role in the availability of training resources. Highly diverse libraries showed a substantial prevalence of webinars (83.67%) and external workshops (59.18%). In contrast, slightly diverse libraries lean more towards self-study materials (55.00%) and conferences (35.00%). The survey further breaks down responses by the type of library (public, academic, school, and special), revealing that public libraries rely heavily on webinars (85.11%). In comparison, academic libraries show a balanced use of in-house programs (52.94%) and professional organizations (35.29%).

These insights suggest that while there is a wide array of EDI training resources available, the format and adoption of these resources vary significantly based on the diversity and type of library, as well as the availability of formalized training structures, indicating the need for more tailored and consistent EDI training approaches across the sector.

Current Training Topics:

The survey shows that the top five most accessed EDI training topics were implicit bias (62.71%), microaggressions (55.93%), LGBTQ+ awareness and advocacy (38.98%), serving patrons who are unhoused (38.98%), and neurodiversity (38.14%). These areas indicate a strong focus on addressing interpersonal behaviors and creating inclusive environments for marginalized communities. In contrast, the bottom five topics were religious diversity (5.08%), cultural humility (10.17%), serving patrons who are incarcerated (8.47%), equity in service delivery (17.80%), and structural inequality (21.19%). These findings indicate a gap in EDI training related to structural issues, service equity, and specific underserved populations, which may warrant further attention in future training efforts.

Key Insights by Leadership Level:
- **Executive Leaders:** The most accessed topics include implicit bias (69.7%), microaggressions (66.76%), and cultural competency (51.52%). The least accessed areas include equity in service delivery (9.09%), religious diversity (9.09%), and serving patrons who are incarcerated (12.12%). Notably, executive leaders indicated significantly higher access to training on anti-racism strategies (39.39%) and EDI and collection development (42.42%) than all other groups.
- **Senior Leaders:** The most accessed topics include implicit bias (77.27%), microaggressions (63.64%), and neurodiversity (45.45%). The least accessed areas include religious diversity (0%), serving patrons who are incarcerated (4.55%), and cultural humility (4.55%). Notably, senior leaders indicated significantly higher access to training on equity in service delivery (40.91%) than all other groups.
- **Mid-Level Leaders:** The most accessed topics include implicit bias (58.58%), microaggressions (51.52%), and LGBTQ awareness (51.52%). The least accessed areas include cultural humility (6.06%), serving patrons who are incarcerated (6.06%), religious diversity (9.09%), and supporting people with trauma (9.09%). Notably, mid-level leaders indicated significantly higher access to training on LGBTQ awareness than all other groups.
- **Emerging Leaders:** The most accessed topics include implicit bias (60%), serving patrons who are unhoused (55%), and microaggressions (50%). The least accessed areas include religious diversity (0%) and serving patrons who are incarcerated (10%). Notably, emerging leaders indicated significantly higher access to training on serving patrons who are unhoused and structural inequality (40%) than all other groups.
- **No Leadership Responsibilities:** The most accessed topics include inclusive library spaces and serving patrons who are unhoused (both at 40%), and implicit bias, microaggressions, and neurodiversity (each at 30%). The least accessed areas include cultural competency, cultural humility, religious diversity, and supporting people with trauma (each at 0%).

Key Insights by Years of Responsibility:
- **Less than 1 year:** The most accessed topics include neurodiversity (64.29%), serving patrons who are unhoused (42.86%), implicit bias (35.71%), and inclusive library services (35.71%). The least accessed areas include religious diversity (0%), equity in service delivery (0%), antiracism strategies (7.14%), services to immigrants and

refugees (7.14), and serving patrons who are incarcerated (7.14%). Notably, this group indicated significantly higher access to training on neurodiversity than all other groups.

- **1-3 years:** The most accessed topics include implicit bias (59.38%), microaggressions (53.13%), and serving patrons who are unhoused (50%). The least accessed areas include religious diversity (6.25%), serving older adults (9.38%), and cultural humility (12.5%).
- **4-6 years:** The most accessed topics include implicit bias (63.16%), microaggressions (63.16%), cultural competence (36.84%), neurodiversity (36.84%,) and accessible library services (36.84%). The least accessed areas include religious diversity (0%), serving patrons who are incarcerated (0%), structural inequality (5.26%) and cultural humility (5.26%),
- **7-10 years:** The most accessed topics include implicit bias (66.67%), microaggressions (50%), and inclusive library services (45.83%). The least accessed areas include cultural humility, religious diversity, and serving patrons who are incarcerated (each at 8.33%). Notably, this group indicated significantly higher access to training on antiracism strategies (41.67%) than all other groups.
- **More than 10 years:** The most accessed topics include implicit bias (75.86%), microaggressions (72.41%), and LGBTQ awareness (48.28%). The least accessed areas include religious diversity (6.9%), serving patrons who are incarcerated (6.9%), and cultural humility (10.34%). Notably, this group indicated significantly higher access to training on serving immigrants and refugees (34.48%) than all other groups.

Key Insights by Library Type:
- **Public:** The most accessed topics include implicit bias (59.57%), microaggressions (56.38%), and serving patrons who are unhoused (45.74%). The least accessed include cultural humility (10.64%), religious diversity (4.26%), and serving patrons who are incarcerated (8.51%).
- **Academic:** The most accessed topics include implicit bias (82.35%), microaggressions (58.82%), and LGBTQ awareness and advocacy (47.06)%). The least accessed include cultural humility, religious diversity, serving patrons who are incarcerated, serving immigrants & refugees, and supporting people with trauma (each at 11.76%).
- **School:** The most accessed topics include implicit bias, anti-racism strategies, LGBTQ awareness & advocacy, and neurodiversity (each at 50%). The least accessed include cultural humility, inclusive leadership, religious diversity, serving patrons who are incarcerated, serving older adults, serving immigrants and refugees, accessible library services, and building diverse teams (each at 0%)

Key Insights by Community Diversity:
- **Highly Diverse Communities:** For highly diverse communities, top training topics include implicit bias (65.31%), microaggressions (55.10%), and cultural competency (51.02%).
- **Moderately Diverse Communities:** In moderately diverse communities, implicit bias (68.09%), microaggressions (61.70%), and serving patrons who are unhoused (53.19%) are the most accessed.
- **Slightly Diverse or Non-Diverse Communities:** Slightly diverse communities prioritize implicit bias (50%), microaggressions (50%), and neurodiversity (45%).

- Respondents from non-diverse communities did not select formal training options, offering written responses like "none" or "I have not, and this is my answer."

Training Preferences and Needs

Most Requested EDI Skill Areas:

Communication (59.32%), **Community Engagement** (49.15%), and **Self-Awareness and Reflection** (40.68%) emerged as the most critical EDI skill areas. These areas are consistently prioritized across all roles, indicating that these are critical for advancing EDI initiatives in libraries. In contrast, **Data & Evaluation, Facilitation, and Advocacy** appear to be lower priorities across most leadership levels, with minimal responses indicating a need for training in these areas. Additional comments reveal diverse perspectives, with some respondents emphasizing the integration of equity with strategic planning, including digital and health equity, and the importance of building awareness and cultivating compassion. Others stressed collaborative leadership, shared governance, and board education. A few respondents highlighted "equality of opportunity" as a priority, while some expressed skepticism, suggesting that these areas are a waste of time. Another comment emphasized the ongoing nature of equity work and the necessity of overcoming ego for progress.

Key Insights by Leadership Level:
- **Executive Leaders:** Prioritize community engagement (51.52%) and communication (45.45%) the most. Prioritize data & evaluation (6.06%), advocacy (12.12%), and facilitation (12.12%) the least.
- **Senior Leaders:** Most prioritize communication (68.18%) and community engagement (59.09%). Prioritize data & evaluation and facilitation the least (each at 4.55%)
- **Mid-Level Leaders:** Prioritize communication (66.67%), recruitment & retention (33.33%), and community engagement (33.33%) the most. Prioritize data & evaluation and organizational/programmatic assessment the least (each at 9.09%)
- **Emerging Leaders:** Prioritize communication (60%) and self-awareness/reflection (55%) the most. Prioritize data & evaluation and facilitation the least (each at 0%)
- **No Leadership Responsibilities:** Prioritize communication (60%) and community engagement (70%) the most. Prioritize data & evaluation (0%) the least.

Key Insights by Years of Experience:
- **Less than 1 Year:** Prioritize community engagement (78.57%) and communication (57.14%) the most. Prioritize data & evaluation (0%) and change management (7.14%) the least.
- **1-3 Years:** Prioritize communication (65.63%) and self-awareness/reflection (53.13%) the most. Prioritize data & evaluation (0%) and facilitation (6.25%) the least.
- **4-6 Years:** Prioritize communication and community engagement the most (at 47.37%). Prioritize data & evaluation, facilitation, and organizational/programmatic assessment the least (each at 5.26%)
- **7-10 Years:** Prioritize communication (70.83%) and self-awareness/reflection (50%) the most. Prioritize organizational/programmatic assessment (4.17%) the least.

- **More than 10 Years:** Prioritize communication (51.72%) and community engagement (44.83%) the most. Prioritize data & evaluation (6.9%) and facilitation (13.79%) the least.

Key Insights by Community Diversity:
- **Highly Diverse Communities:** Prioritize communication (59.18%) and community engagement (51.02%) the most. Prioritize data & evaluation, advocacy, and facilitation the least (each at 10.2%).
- **Moderately Diverse Communities:** Prioritize communication (61.7%) and community engagement (46.81%) the most. Prioritize data & evaluation (2.13%) and facilitation (12.77%) the least.
- **Slightly Diverse or Non-Diverse Communities:** Prioritize community engagement (55%) and communication (50%) the most. Prioritize data & evaluation (0%) and facilitation (5%) the least.

Preferred Training Formats:

- **Top Formats:** Online webinars (77.12%) and in-person workshops (73.73%) are the most favored formats. Self-paced online courses are also popular (41.53%). A small portion (3.39%) of respondents selected "Other" for their training methods. Additional comments mention resources like curated children's book collections, institution-wide initiatives, and mandatory online diversity training modules. Some libraries depend on self-directed or HR-led EDI training, while others report limited or no available resources.
- **Session Length:** The preferred length for EDI training sessions is 1-2 hours, selected by 64.41% of respondents. 27.97% of respondents selected half-day sessions, and only a minority selected full-day (5.08%) and multi-day (2.54%) sessions.

Preferred Formats by Leadership Level:
- **Executive Leaders:** Favor online webinars (75.76%) and in-person workshops (72.73%), with a moderate interest in self-paced courses (30.30%).
- **Senior Leaders:** Prefer in-person workshops (72.73%) and online webinars (63.64%), with a growing interest in self-paced courses (36.36%).
- **Mid-Level Leaders:** Show the highest preference for online webinars (87.88%) and strong interest in both in-person workshops (72.73%) and self-paced courses (42.42%).
- **Emerging Leaders:** Equally favor in-person workshops and online webinars (75%), with a high preference for self-paced courses (55%).
- **No Leadership Responsibilities:** Display balanced preferences across formats, favoring online webinars (80%) and showing interest in both in-person workshops (80%) and self-paced courses (60%).

Barriers to Engagement

Common Barriers:

The survey identifies several critical barriers to engaging in EDI training across different roles, leadership levels, and library types:

Timing:
- **Overall:** Timing is the most significant barrier, with 55.08% of respondents citing it as a challenge.
- **By Leadership Level:** Timing is a critical barrier (70%) for individuals with no leadership responsibilities.
- **By Years of Experience:** Timing is a critical barrier for leaders with 7-10 years (70.83% of experience in their leadership role.
- **By Library Type:** Timing is especially a critical barrier for School Libraries (83.33%) and Academic Libraries (70.59%).
- **By Community diversity:** This barrier is most pronounced in highly diverse communities (65.31%).

. Cost:
- **Overall:** Cost is another substantial barrier, affecting 50.85% of respondents.
- **By leadership level:** This barrier is particularly pronounced for emerging (60%) and mid-level (57.58%) leaders.
- **By Library Type:** Cost is especially a critical barrier for Academic libraries (70.59%)
- **By Years of Experience:** Cost is a significant issue for newer leaders, particularly those with less than 1 year (78.57%) and 7-10 years (62.50%) in their roles. This barrier is significantly less pronounced for individuals with more than 10 years (31.03%)
- **By Community Diversity:** This barrier is significant across all community types, particularly for highly diverse communities (55.10%).

Ability to Attend Training During Work Hours:
- **Overall:** The ability to attend training during work hours (48.31%) is a significant barrier.
- **By Leadership Level:** This barrier is significant across all levels of leadership, particularly for emerging (60%) leaders.
- **By Years of Experience:** This barrier is least pronounced for individuals with more than 10 years (37.93%) of experience in their leadership role.
- **By Library Type:** This barrier is more pronounced among school libraries (66.67%).
- **By Community Diversity:** This barrier is significant across all community types, particularly for moderately diverse communities (51.06%).

Finding Quality Training:
- **Overall:** Many respondents (44.07%) struggle to find high-quality, relevant EDI training.
- **By Leadership Level:** This barrier is significant across all levels of leadership, particularly for executive (48.48%) and mid-level (48.48%) leaders.
- **By Years of Experience:** This barrier is more renowned among leaders with 1-3 years (53.13%) and 4-6 years (52.63%) experience.
- **By Community Diversity:** This barrier is significant across all levels of community diversity.
- **By Library Type:** This barrier is more pronounced among public libraries (46.81%).

Length of Training:
- **Overall:** 39.52% of respondents consider the length of training to be a barrier, with Librarians (43.59%) and Senior Leaders (54.55%) particularly affected.

- **By Leadership Level:** This barrier is most pronounced for senior leaders (54.55%) and least for individuals with no leadership responsibilities (10%).
- **By Years of Experience:** This barrier is more pronounced among mid-career leaders with 1-3 years (38.78%) and 4-6 years (38.10%) in their roles.
- **By Community Diversity:** The barrier is least pronounced in moderately diverse communities (29.79%)
- **By Library Type:** This barrier is more pronounced among academic libraries (52.94%).

Location
- **Overall:** 40.68% of respondents consider the location of training to be a barrier.
- **By Leadership Level:** This barrier is more pronounced among senior (50%) and executive (48.48%) leaders.
- **By Years of Experience:** This barrier is more pronounced among leaders with 4-6 years (52.63%) and 10+ years (48.28%) in their roles,
- **By Library Type:** This barrier is more pronounced among Public Libraries (43.62%).
- **By Community Diversity:** This barrier is more pronounced in moderately diverse communities (50%).

Additional Barriers (Other):
- **Leadership Support:** Some respondents highlighted a need for more interest or support from leadership as a barrier to EDI training.
- **Skepticism:** There is also skepticism about the effectiveness of available training, particularly regarding the diversity of facilitators and management's ability to lead EDI efforts.

The need for flexible, accessible, and high-quality training is evident, as these barriers highlight the difficulties library professionals face in balancing their responsibilities with the pursuit of EDI skills. Addressing these barriers will require more adaptable training formats, better financial support, and a focus on delivering relevant, high-quality content.

Qualitative Analysis

Common Themes:

The qualitative analysis of open-ended comments from the EDI training survey reveals several key themes:

- **Accessibility and Availability:**
  - **Frustration:** Respondents expressed frustration with the limited availability of quality EDI training, especially for front-facing staff who struggle to find time for professional development.
  - **Suggestions:** There is a strong call for more in-house training opportunities, better access to specialized topics, and partnerships with organizations like Get Inclusive for self-paced training options.
- **Leadership and Implementation Challenges:**

- ○ **Frustration:** Many comments reflect dissatisfaction with leadership's engagement in EDI, with upper management often assuming they are already competent in these areas, which may not be accurate.
        - ○ **Suggestions:** Respondents suggest that EDI training should include more targeted content for leadership and provide actionable steps to ensure implementation rather than just raising awareness.
    - ● **Content and Focus of EDI Training:**
        - ○ **Frustration:** Some feel that the EDI training content is too general and not actionable, particularly when addressing the needs of culturally or religiously diverse patrons.
        - ○ **Suggestions:** There is a desire for more specific, practical examples in training and a focus on addressing class inequities, financial barriers, and accessibility issues, both physical and digital.
    - ● **Inclusivity and Representation:**
        - ○ **Frustration:** Concerns were raised about the representation of trainers, with a preference for those from the communities being discussed. Additionally, there is a sense that EDI efforts often fail to result in actionable change, and some view the concept of equity as problematic.
        - ○ **Suggestions:** Recommendations include involving more community-based trainers and ensuring that training sessions reflect the state's diversity, avoiding a "one size fits all" approach.
    - ● **The Need for Systemic Change:**
        - ○ **Frustration:** Respondents noted a perceived disconnect between ongoing EDI discussions and the need for action to integrate EDI into library policies and services.
        - ○ **Suggestions:** There is a call for training that includes accountability measures and concrete steps to drive systemic change, particularly within library leadership and policy development.

These themes highlight the need for more accessible, targeted, and actionable EDI training that addresses leadership involvement, content specificity, and systemic change within libraries.

Actionable Insights & Recommendations

Insights Based on Training Accessed and EDI Training Prioritized:

The data reveals several key insights about the training needs of library leaders in New Jersey, highlighting how these needs differ based on leadership level, years in leadership, and community diversity.

Leadership-Level Training Insights
- ● Survey trends suggest that the longer someone is in leadership, the more likely they are to have accessed various EDI training, particularly in areas like implicit bias, microaggressions, and cultural humility. However, there are areas like religious diversity and supporting incarcerated populations that appear underrepresented across the board.

- When rating top EDI areas, communication, self-awareness, and community engagement emerge as top EDI areas for leaders across levels. More experienced leaders prioritize equity analysis and change management, while those in less decision-making roles value implementation and community engagement more highly.

Impact of Years in Leadership
- Leaders with 1-3 years of experience prioritize communication and self-awareness, indicating that newer leaders may benefit from training focusing on personal development and effective communication strategies.
- Those with 7-10 years and more than 10 years in their roles place a stronger emphasis on implementation, change management, and strategic EDI areas, suggesting that more experienced leaders are focused on moving from planning to action and addressing systemic issues.

Impact of Library Type
- Public libraries emphasize training on implicit bias, microaggressions, and serving unhoused patrons but lack focus on cultural humility. Academic libraries prioritize implicit bias and LGBTQ awareness, with less engagement in serving vulnerable populations. School libraries have the least training access overall, especially for vulnerable groups, though they focus on implicit bias and LGBTQ issues.
- This suggests each library type tailors its EDI training to its role: public libraries emphasize community service, while academic and school libraries focus more on institutional diversity. All library types could improve cultural humility training and better address marginalized communities' needs, with school libraries requiring more investment for comprehensive EDI access.
- Regarding EDI training priorities, public libraries focus on communication, community engagement, and equity analysis. Academic libraries prioritize communication, self-awareness, and equity, while school libraries emphasize communication, self-reflection, and implementation, highlighting a need for practical EDI strategies and personal development.
- Training priorities differ by library type, with public libraries focusing on community-centric skills, academic libraries emphasizing introspective and equity-driven approaches, and school libraries needing practical EDI implementation and foundational knowledge.

Community Diversity and EDI Training Needs
- Leaders in highly diverse communities engage with a broad spectrum of EDI topics, including implicit bias, microaggressions, cultural competency, and inclusive practices. This reflects the need for comprehensive training to address the complexities of serving diverse populations.
- There is a balanced approach in moderately diverse communities, with significant attention to microaggressions and cultural competency but slightly less engagement with broader EDI topics.
- Slightly diverse and non-diverse communities show lower engagement in EDI training, with a more focused approach to specific issues like neurodiversity. This suggests a perception of the lesser need for broad EDI competencies in these environments.

- The data suggests gaps in EDI training access that could be opportunities for future training initiatives. Topics like religious diversity, cultural humility, service delivery equity, and anti-racism strategies would benefit from increased focus, especially in a diverse library setting.
- Data & evaluation ranked low across all types of communities (from 10.20% in highly diverse settings to 0% in not diverse ones). This suggests that leaders may still need to see the value of using data-driven approaches to assess the impact of their EDI efforts or that there is a gap in understanding how data can inform these initiatives.
- While not a high priority currently, data and evaluation should be embedded into all training sessions to help leaders measure the effectiveness of their EDI efforts. Leaders can benefit from knowing how to collect, analyze, and use data to drive improvements in their inclusivity practices.

Effective Training Methods:

- **Preferred Formats:** Online webinars (77.12%) and in-person workshops(73.73%) are the most favored formats, indicating a strong preference for interactive and potentially live training sessions.
- **Session Length:** Most respondents (64.41%) prefer shorter sessions (1-2 hours), suggesting that training programs should be designed to fit within manageable timeframes.
- **Flexible Learning:** There is growing interest in self-paced courses (41.53%), particularly among emerging leaders and mid-level staff, pointing to the need for training that accommodates varied schedules.

Priority Areas for Toolkit and Training Program Development:

- **Addressing Barriers:**
  - **Flexible Training Formats:** Develop self-paced courses and modular sessions that allow participants to engage with the material at their convenience. This flexibility can accommodate diverse schedules and learning preferences.
  - **Accessibility and Affordability:** Offer EDI training that is both accessible and affordable. This could involve tiered pricing models or sliding scale fees to accommodate financial constraints. Additionally, funding options or partnerships should be explored to subsidize costs, particularly for smaller libraries or organizations with limited budgets.
  - **Context-Specific Content:** Increase the availability of high-quality EDI training tailored to specific contexts. This ensures that the training is relevant and immediately applicable to the unique challenges faced by different organizations or communities.
  - **Collaborative Partnerships**: Explore partnerships with other institutions, non-profits, or governmental organizations to share resources, reduce costs, and enhance the reach of EDI training programs.
- **Enhancing EDI Training Programs**
  - **Specialized and Practical Content**: Ensure that EDI training provides specialized content that is practical and directly applicable. Focus on including

actionable examples that address the needs of culturally or religiously diverse patrons, making the training more relevant and impactful for participants.

- **Actionable Examples**: Incorporate real-world scenarios and case studies into the training to demonstrate how EDI principles can be effectively implemented in various contexts. This approach helps participants understand how to apply what they've learned in their day-to-day interactions and decision-making processes.
- **Community-Based Trainers:** Involve trainers from the communities being discussed to lead or co-facilitate sessions. This not only increases the relevance of the training but also ensures that it reflects the lived experiences and insights of those communities, enhancing the overall impact of the training program.

- **Expanding Content Focus:**
  - **Prioritize High-Demand Skill Areas**: Focus on developing training content that addresses the most requested skill areas, such as communication, community engagement, and self-awareness. These core skills are essential for fostering inclusive environments and are highly valued by participants.
  - **Comprehensive Topic Expansion**: Broaden the scope of EDI training to include less commonly covered areas like structural inequality, data analysis, facilitation, and other critical topics. This expansion meets the growing demand for more comprehensive and in-depth EDI education, ensuring that participants understand these complex issues well.
  - **Integrated Learning Pathways**: Create integrated learning pathways that combine foundational skills with more advanced topics. This approach allows participants to build on their existing knowledge while exploring new areas, leading to a more nuanced and effective application of EDI principles in their work.

- **Improving Leadership Engagement:**
  - **Targeted Training for Upper Management**: Design training programs specifically for upper management, focusing on strategic and actionable steps leaders can take to implement EDI principles within their institutions. This ensures that those in key decision-making positions are equipped to drive meaningful change.
  - **Accountability Measures**: Incorporate clear accountability measures into the training to ensure that EDI principles are discussed and actively integrated into the organization's policies and practices. This could include setting specific goals, timelines, and metrics to track progress.
  - **Concrete Examples and Case Studies**: Provide concrete examples and case studies demonstrating successful integration of EDI into library policies and practices. This helps leaders visualize the practical application of EDI strategies and understand the potential impact on their institutions.
  - **Ongoing Support and Resources**: Offer ongoing support, such as follow-up sessions, resources, or mentoring, to help leaders continuously engage with EDI initiatives and adapt their strategies as needed.

Addressing Identified Gaps & Priorities:

1. **Advanced Communication Skills for EDI**

- ○ Target Audience: All leadership levels, but especially senior and mid-level leaders.
- ○ Rationale: Communication was identified as a top skill for all leaders, reflecting its importance in fostering an inclusive environment. Tailored training should focus on effective communication strategies for navigating difficult conversations, addressing microaggressions, and promoting inclusive dialogue in libraries. Higher-level leaders should be trained on communicating strategic goals and implementing EDI frameworks effectively within organizations.

2. **Facilitation for Equity and Inclusion**
   - ○ Target Audience: Senior, mid-level, and emerging leaders.
   - ○ Rationale: Facilitation is essential for leading inclusive conversations, meetings, and workshops. This training should teach leaders how to guide discussions on sensitive EDI topics, manage power dynamics, and create brave spaces for dialogue. Leaders must learn strategies for facilitating internal staff discussions and external community engagements. Leaders should be equipped to lead workshops, staff meetings, and community discussions on equity in a way that promotes understanding and collaboration across differences. This training could also include techniques like consensus-building, conflict resolution, and trauma-informed facilitation practices.

3. **Cultural Humility and Self-Awareness**
   - ○ Target Audience: Emerging and mid-level leaders, as well as executive leaders.
   - ○ Rationale: There is a strong emphasis on self-awareness and cultural humility, particularly in early and mid-level leadership positions. Structured training on cultural humility and the role of self-reflection in leadership would benefit leaders at all stages of their careers. This training should focus on understanding biases, developing ongoing self-awareness, and addressing privilege in decision-making.

4. **Equity Analysis & Change Management for Executive and Senior Leaders**
   - ○ Target Audience: Senior and executive leaders.
   - ○ Rationale: Executive and senior leaders highlighted equity analysis and change management as critical areas. These leaders need robust skills in analyzing organizational structures for inequities and leading effective change. Offer a course that integrates these two areas, teaching leaders how to audit policies for bias, conduct equity impact assessments and guide organizational shifts toward more equitable practices. This training can also touch on data-driven decision-making to guide equity-focused changes.

5. **Data Analysis and Equity Assessment for Decision-Making**
   - ○ Target Audience: Executive, senior, and mid-level leaders, as well as emerging leaders involved in decision-making.
   - ○ Rationale: While data and evaluation were less prioritized in the earlier feedback, data analysis is critical for understanding and advancing EDI goals. Leaders need the skills to assess the current state of equity in their organizations, measure the impact of EDI initiatives, and use data to drive decisions. This training should focus on collecting, analyzing, and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data through an equity lens. It should also cover conducting equity audits, analyzing demographic and workforce data, and evaluating the effectiveness of EDI programs.

6. **Community Engagement Strategies**
   - Target Audience: Leaders at all levels, particularly emerging and mid-level leaders.
   - Rationale: Community engagement is highly valued across leadership tiers, especially for emerging leaders and those without decision-making authority. Training on authentic community engagement should focus on building partnerships with underserved populations, listening to community needs, and using EDI principles to inform library programming and policies. Modules could include participatory research, active listening, and co-creation with communities.

7. **Inclusive Leadership Development for Recruitment and Retention**
   - Target Audience: Executive, senior, and mid-level leaders.
   - Rationale: Recruitment and retention were identified as important, particularly for executive and senior leaders. Training should focus on creating inclusive hiring practices, building diverse teams, and retaining talent by fostering an inclusive organizational culture. This module should also cover leadership strategies for addressing barriers to

8. **Neurodiversity and Inclusive Programming**
   - Target Audience: All leadership levels, particularly newer leaders.
   - Rationale: Neurodiversity and serving vulnerable populations like those who are unhoused, incarcerated, or older adults are under-addressed areas across many leadership levels. Training that equips leaders with the knowledge and tools to better serve neurodiverse populations and those experiencing marginalization (e.g., trauma-informed services and inclusive library spaces) would be beneficial. This training should also cover practical strategies for making library services accessible to all patrons.

9. **Implementation of EDI Strategies**
   - Target Audience: Executive and emerging leaders, along with non-leaders.
   - Rationale: While executive leaders often make high-level EDI decisions, the actual implementation may fall on emerging leaders or those without formal decision-making roles. Training focused on effectively implementing EDI strategies on the ground is critical. This could involve workshops on project management, monitoring progress, and adapting strategies based on community feedback.

10. **Addressing Religious and Cultural Diversity**
    - Target Audience: All leadership levels, especially mid-level leaders.
    - Rationale: Religious diversity was one of the topics that was least addressed in the past training and perceived importance. Incorporating more in-depth training on understanding and respecting religious diversity and other aspects of cultural identity will help address this gap. This training should include real-life case studies and scenarios relevant to library settings.

11. **Advocacy for Equity and Social Justice in Libraries**
    - Target Audience: All leadership levels, especially those in senior roles.
    - Rationale: Advocacy was moderately rated but still crucial, especially for senior leaders who shape policy and decision-making. Focused training on how to advocate for EDI both within the library and in broader community or governmental contexts is necessary. Topics could include: building coalitions,

working with policymakers, creating public-facing advocacy campaigns, and ensuring that libraries serve as spaces of social justice. This training would provide practical steps for engaging in equity-driven advocacy and policy reform.

12. LGBTQ+ Advocacy and Awareness
   ○ Target Audience: All leadership levels, focusing on leaders with 1–6 years of experience.
   ○ Rationale: LGBTQ+ awareness was an important topic, especially among mid-career leaders, but could be expanded. Offering ongoing, advanced training on LGBTQ+ advocacy and best practices for creating inclusive spaces for LGBTQ+ patrons and staff would benefit the library community. This could include policy implementation and allyship training.

Recommendations for Additional Training Modules to Increase Training Access:

● **Serving Patrons Who Are Incarcerated or Formerly Incarcerated:** Create a focused module on serving patrons who are incarcerated or formerly incarcerated. This should include understanding these patrons' unique challenges, offering tailored resources (such as re-entry programs, legal information, and educational support), and strategies for reducing stigma and building trust within this community. Libraries have a critical role in supporting incarcerated individuals during and after their release, providing them with resources for education, personal development, and reintegration into society. Empowering leaders to address these patrons' specific needs will foster equity and access to knowledge for all community members.
● **Equity in Service Delivery:** Include a module that addresses explicitly equity in service delivery, offering practical tools for ensuring that library resources and programs are equitably distributed across all population segments, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or ability. Many library leaders may need more skills to implement equity in service delivery, particularly in slightly diverse communities. Equipping them with this knowledge can ensure marginalized groups receive equal access to library services.
● **Serving Older Adults:** Develop content to improve services for older adults, including accessibility adaptations, digital literacy support, and programs designed to address social isolation. As populations age, libraries play a crucial role in supporting older adults. Leaders must be prepared to adapt their services to meet the unique needs of this demographic, especially in more diverse settings.
● **Serving Immigrants and Refugees:** Develop focused sessions or resources on serving immigrant and refugee communities, including language accessibility, trauma-informed practices, and legal or cultural barriers these populations may face. As immigrant and refugee populations grow, particularly in moderately and highly diverse communities, library leaders must ensure that services are welcoming, inclusive, and tailored to these groups' specific needs.
● **Anti-Racism Strategies:** Expand training on anti-racism strategies, including actively dismantling systemic racism within library operations, policy, and programming. This could include historical context, anti-racist communication skills, and developing community partnerships to advance racial equity. Though anti-racism strategies are vital, they are currently under-accessed. More comprehensive and actionable training in this area will empower leaders to address racial inequities in their libraries proactively.
● **Accessible Library Services:** Include a module specifically focused on creating accessible library services, highlighting physical accessibility (e.g., ADA compliance) and digital accessibility (e.g., web content for those with disabilities). Address ways to include diverse learning styles, assistive technology, and service adaptations. Access to library resources is foundational to inclusivity. Slightly diverse communities, in particular, could benefit from a deeper understanding of how to make services more accessible to all patrons.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the findings from the survey on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) training needs among New Jersey library leaders highlight the strong desire for more tailored, leadership-level-based training. Despite the time, cost, and institutional support barriers, respondents clearly preferred practical, interactive training formats like webinars and workshops, focusing on core EDI skill areas such as communication, community engagement, and self-awareness. The diverse range of roles and leadership responsibilities across library types underscores the importance of adaptable, flexible training resources that address the unique needs of various positions and communities. Future training efforts should focus on expanding access, overcoming structural barriers, and ensuring that content is practical, actionable, and deeply integrated into library leadership practices, particularly in communities with greater diversity. These insights are crucial for shaping inclusive, equitable library environments that effectively serve all patrons.

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https://librarylinknj.org/EDI/strategic-roadmap