

Library Submission

BENCHMARKING

1. Reviewing your 2020-2021 fiscal year (FY) Budget Equity Tool (BET) submissions, please provide departmental status updates for each response documented for question #3 – “What will your department do to improve equity in the next year? In the next three years?”

a. What were your successes?

Recruiting diverse entry level staff to pursue a master's in library science.

Library Clerk Jonathan Hammond, a Black male, has entered a MLS program. Jon started his career at the library as a shelving page and now works as a clerk in the Arts and Literature Division. At least one other staff member, a Black female, has indicated interest in joining a MLS program.

Explore alternate titles to the Librarian series, especially ones that are flexible enough to respond quickly to changing community needs and demographics.

We made two changes in support of this goal. When the Assistant Library Director III for Branches became vacant, we changed the title to Deputy Director and broadened the education requirements to include master's degrees in Public Administration or an equivalent field. This did not, however, result in applications from diverse candidates. The successful candidate was a Black female who has worked as a librarian for RPL for many years, so it was, in the end, a successful process.

When the Librarian II supervisor of the Teen Center at the Central Library became vacant, we changed the title to Teen Center Coordinator and dropped the MLS requirement in favor of experience working with Teens and supervising a large department. That allowed us to promote a part-time Black female employee to a fulltime position based on her previous work experience and exemplary performance in her PT work for the library.

b. What were your challenges?

As I have stated many times in the past, Civil Service is our biggest single challenge to developing staff. We have to jump through hoops to create new titles, and to support staff who are forced to take exams that do not accurately reflect or represent their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

I was surprised at the lack of diverse candidates for the Deputy Director posting. I was told there were 11 applicants, but only 6 were approved by DHRM. I would have liked to see all the applications as there could have been local candidates unfamiliar with the City job application who might have qualified but did not fully complete the application.

I did have an issue with setting the salary for the Deputy Director which was based on an Administrative Policy that existing employees who are AFSCME members being promoted into an APT position can only increase their salary by a certain amount. I believe this policy should be re-examined as it penalizes current City employees who are promoted from earning pay equivalent to their peers.

c. As departmental leader, what will you do to address identified challenges?

I have come to accept that there is nothing I can do about Civil Service...except keep lifting it up to the Mayor and legislators as a barrier.

Hiring experiences with DHRM staff are usually smooth and staff are very supportive. However, there are instances where actions from DHRM staff don't make sense. Not being allowed to see all the applications for the Deputy Director position is one of those things that did not make sense, but in the end didn't really matter since we were able to hire a terrific candidate.

2. Comparing 2019 and 2020 Affirmative Action Annual departmental data (race, gender, disability status, veteran status, etc.), what progress was made in “closing representation gaps” among department personnel in the past FY?

a. Please list area(s) of benchmarked progress with correlating data (i.e. increase of 5 women).

We increased our total percentage of minority employees from 35% to 37%, with very slight increases in the hiring of Asian, Black, and Latinx employees.

b. Please provide response for why you believe there was or was not progress made in “closing representation gaps.”

Progress is being made, but slowly. Having to cut the budget usually means cutting staff, but we have been able to meet our BLA without significant reductions in the workforce. Having to make those cuts, though, has meant that we will not be adding staffing positions in the near future.

BUDGET PROPOSAL

3. Utilizing 2020 Affirmative Action Annual data, what are two to three (2-3) equity priorities your department will focus on for the 2021-2022 FY budget?

Are there opportunities to prioritize intersectional cultural (demographic) groups – i.e. race/ethnicity, gender: Hispanic, Women?

In a year of significant budget cuts, adding staffing positions is difficult. However, we will strive to fill vacancies as they happen, and will continue to advertise and recruit minority candidates. We will continue to

recruit and develop from within for the longer-term priority of encouraging more minority employees to pursue educational opportunities leading to the MLS.

4. What budgetary considerations are reflected in your 2021-2022 FY proposal which support your department's two to three (2-3) Affirmative Action equity priorities?

Examples:

a. Recruitment Efforts

b. Retention Efforts

c. Departmental Climate Assessment/Response Efforts

d. Professional Development (Training) Efforts

e. Programmatic Efforts

We will continue recruitment efforts from within and also in the community, specifically by leveraging a relationship with RochesterWorks to place young people in the libraries for summer work.

We are currently working with Labor Relations on negotiating a renewal of the CSEA contract covering PT library workers. We are proposing a change to the tuition reimbursement section of the CSEA contract which would change the program from a reimbursement process to a pay-up-front process. We have heard from PT staff that paying for classes then getting reimbursed months later is a barrier to educational development. The AFSCME tuition program has the tuition paid by the City rather than reimbursed to the employee. We seek to align the process for PT employees, which we believe will encourage more educational opportunities for those staff.

5. What proposed 2021-2022 FY budget considerations (continuing and/or new) are focused to reduce or eliminate inequities experienced by underserved, underrepresented, and/or disenfranchised communities (internal or external to City structures) respective to your department?

Examples: This could include shifts of programs, services, community infrastructure, community development, land usage, housing, youth and human services, education, etc.

The library's Equity Team has suggested the development of a mentoring program designed for staff who are interested in moving up through the organization. Mentors who worked their way from Library Page to Librarian and beyond will work individually with PT and FT staff who are interested in that same career path.

The Equity Team members have also recommended that information on scholarships and other education funding programs and job opportunities be abundantly shared with staff through the library system staff portal.

BUDGET PROPOSAL

6. In review of all budget considerations proposed for the 2021-2022 FY, what equity challenges may be created or increased for underserved, underrepresented, and/or disenfranchised groups - internally within your department or the communities served by your department?

a. Please list specific internal/external underserved stakeholder populations served by your department

b. Please list each equity challenge and its potential impact on internal/external City stakeholders

c. Per your list, are there any 2021-2022 budget considerations which can be revised to reduce disproportionate equity challenges on already disenfranchised communities?

We have been able to deliver a budget that does not reduce library hours or significantly reduce public-facing staffing. We expect to be able to continue to provide the same services to the Black, Asian, LatinX, LGBTQ+ and White communities in all our neighborhoods.

Restoration of a PT librarian at the Wheatley Branch would allow for additional computer and technology support for patrons.

7. What supplemental equity strategies (resources, programs, structures) will you increase or establish to reduce inequities caused by your 2021-2022 FY budgetary proposal – impacting departmental underserved, underrepresented and/or disenfranchised personnel groups, and/or the diverse communities served by your department?

Example: Pool resources (including funding) with other departments to maintain and increase critical equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) services and supports

The libraries will continue to offer space and access to other city departments needing to disseminate information or meet with community members. We will continue to support the Mayor's literacy initiatives and work with Roc the Future and other community partners on early grade literacy.

The library is working to partner with other community agencies in the Whole Child project recently announced by the Rochester Area Community Foundation. We expect this partnership to enhance the library's signature Raising a Reader program which focuses on early literacy for families.

The Central Library Business Insight Center will continue to provide assistance to emerging small businesses, inventors, and entrepreneurs in the forms of market research, legal assistance via a partnership with Tracy Jong Law Firm, and general research support for businesses.

The Central Library Technology Center will fully open to offer classes, one-on-one assistance, computer access and quiet workspace to community members.

8.Accountability Measures: Per equity strategy (resources, programs, structures), please provide the following:

a. How will you assess the effectiveness of the equity strategy?

b. What are the milestones for strategy success during the 2021-2022 FY?

c. Who is the responsible party (departmental personnel) leading the equity strategy?

d. What is the expected outcome of the equity strategy?

We will:

1. track the number of staff who pursue their education through to the MLS.
2. track and provide learning and development opportunities for staff outside their specific jobs to encourage educational and workplace advancement.
3. track the number of staff who successfully earn their undergraduate and post-graduate degrees and celebrate their success.

The milestones include:

1. Creation and implementation of the staff mentoring program.
2. Establishment of a scholarship section and jobs board on the library system portal.

The Library Director is leading the Equity Team and strategy.

The expected outcome of this strategy is more minority staff in positions of authority and control within the libraries.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

9. What methods were used to confirm equitable representation and feedback (input) from the Rochester community in determining your 2021-2022 FY budgetary priorities and process?

Staff on the Equity Team are in constant communication with the community and came into the team process with plenty of information regarding what works. Unlike other city departments, library staff hear needs and suggestions from the community directly every day. That experience and knowledge was brought to the Equity Team and drove our planning.

10. How did your department (1) actively engage with underserved, underrepresented, and/or disenfranchised communities before, during, and after the budget season (considering access gaps), and (2) incorporate their distinct community needs into your 2021-2022 FY budget proposal?

a. Where are these needs reflected specifically within your 2021-2022 FY proposed budget?

See the answer to #9. What we hear constantly from our community members is “we want more.” More hours, more staff, more programs, more computers. In this austere budget year, we have not been able to offer more, but we have also not offered less.