

Budget Equity Tool – Rochester Public Library February 2022

Benchmarking

1. *Reviewing your FY2021-22 Budget Equity Tool (BET) submission, please provide departmental status updates for each response documented for question #3 – “what are 2 to 3 equity priorities your department will focus on for the FY 2021-22 budget?”*

- a. *What were your successes?*

Our practice of reviewing each title as vacancies occur has helped several changes in the last year. We have created new titles at the Central Library and the Douglass Branch which have been filled with staff best able to deliver the services needed.

At the Central Library, we created an Early Learning Specialist for the Raising a Reader program and hired a Latina who is bi-lingual and has extensive experience in the early learning field. Previously, this title was in the Librarian series and needed a Master’s degree in Library & Information Science. This is a FT position.

Also, at Central, we created a new title, Circulation Specialist, to promote a Black woman who has given more than 30 years of service to the library in the Central Circulation Department. This is a FT position.

At the Douglass Branch, we have created a new title, Community Library Youth Services Specialist, in order to appoint a young Black man who has worked at the Branch as a Literacy Aide for several years. This promotion will give him access to tuition assistance, allowing him to finish his undergraduate work and potentially move on to pursuing a graduate degree in Library Science. This is a PT position.

We were also successful in revising the CSEA contract for PT staff to offer the same level of tuition assistance as FT staff enjoy. This will help staff who are working on college degrees or improving their personal skills.

While not a stated priority in the 21-22 BET, we offered access to an online training site through NicheAcademy which provided staff with courses on equity-related topics such as homelessness, sexual advances from the public, working with teens and unattended children, and working with patrons who have traumatic brain injuries and mental health issues. Ninety-eight staff enrolled in 369 courses and completed 248.

- b. *What were your challenges?*

Typically, I would cite the bureaucracy of Civil Service and hiring practices here, but the cooperation and help we received from DHRM in the last year has been exceptional.

Our biggest challenges continue to be the loss of staffing positions and the cost of PT to FT staff conversions. This makes it difficult to move the needle on our Affirmative Action

data, which remained relatively flat, except for the loss of staff. We have lost 23 positions since 2019, according to the data.

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

I will continue to review all vacancies and make changes as appropriate. I will also continue to advocate for and request PT to FT conversions, especially in the Community libraries.

2. *Comparing December 2020 and December 2021 Affirmative Action Annual departmental data (race, gender, retirement eligibility), what progress was made in closing representation gaps among departmental personnel in the past FY?*

- a. There was very, very little change to the Library's Affirmative Action annual data. The average age of employees stayed the same at 47. The percentage of female staff stayed the same at 65%, The number of minority staff stayed the same at 37%.

The number of staff eligible to retire dropped from 18% to 16%, due to retirements that occurred in the calendar year 2021. So, the number of staff eligible to retire in 3 years declined from 23% to 22%.

While this might suggest opportunities for hiring new people, most of the positions from which staff retired in 2021 were abolished in order to meet budget reduction requirements. I will almost always abolish a vacant position before I resort to a lay-off or transfer due to budget reductions.

The budget process for the City does not support proper staffing goals as we are faced every single year with having to eliminate some positions in order to meet our Budget Level Allocation. It is difficult to do succession planning when we never know how many staff positions will have to be cut in order to meet the BLA. As a public service unit, our biggest expense is staff. We continually trim budget lines that do not have a direct effect on public service but get very little savings without cutting staff positions. Central Library alone has lost more than 30 FTEs since 2010. I would like to see the BLA process changed to help us better protect and keep our staff.

Budget Proposal

3. *Utilizing 2021 Affirmative Action annual data, what are 2-3 equity priorities your department will focus on for the FY2022-23 budget?*

- a. The Library will continue to develop an internal mentoring program with the goal of helping under-represented staff with furthering their education and personal/professional goals.
- b. The Library will pursue more PT to FT conversions, especially in the Community libraries. Special attention will be given to the NW and NE quadrants. The Maplewood Library will be renovated and expanded, and we have requested a PT to FT conversion for the

Children’s Librarian position at that location. This conversion will provide equity of service to a neighborhood that is roughly 35% Black, 14% LatinX, 5% Asian, and 5% Mixed.

- c. In the NE quadrant, the Lincoln Branch will be fully renovated in 2022. This is also an equity of service issue for a neighborhood that is roughly 49% Black, 31% LatinX, 2% Asian, and 3% Mixed. Our budget request includes an increment for a PT to FT conversion for a bi-lingual Senior Library Clerk position. The incumbent has worked for the library for almost 20 years, lives in the neighborhood and knows the patrons.
- d. Finally, the Library will continue advocating to build a new Community Library Branch in the NE, which currently has only one branch for a population of roughly 35,000 people. We are pursuing discussion with area colleges about the addition of library science courses to undergraduate degrees, which would create a new staffing model that could, theoretically, let us hire people who live in the NE neighborhood and mentor them through a library science education pathway to achieve a post-graduate degree.

4. *What budgetary considerations are reflected in your FY2022-23 proposal which support your department’s two to three Affirmative Action equity priorities.*

See number 3 for specific details.

We recognize the need to diversify our workforce, especially in the Community libraries. We know that Black, LatinX, and Asian people feel more welcome and comfortable if they see people who look like themselves working in libraries. We plan to work on developing a staffing model that will let us hire and train neighbors, building a greater sense of community and ownership of the library within neighborhoods.

We see a collaboration with the Mayor’s Youth2Work program and other employment programs being developed by the Office of Violence Prevention. In order to pursue those connections, some staff will be shifted to focus on youth and employment development opportunities in both Central and Community Libraries.

5. *What proposed FY2022-23 budget considerations (continuing and/or new) are focused to reduce or eliminate inequities experienced by the underserved, underrepresented, and/or disenfranchised communities (internal or external to City structures) respective to your department?*

See 3c and 3d above.

6. *In review of all budget considerations proposed for the FY2022-23, 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?*

	Equity Challenges	Impact
Internal Stakeholders – PT Staff	Lack of FT opportunities. We are asking for 2 PT to FT	Lesser quality of life for City staff who do not have reliable

	conversions but could do more.	health care. Many work multiple PT jobs and struggle with childcare. We have evidence that a PT to FT conversion is “transformational” for staff.
External Stakeholders – City residents	A reduction to meet the BLA includes elimination of funds for tutoring provided in Community libraries.	Fewer opportunities for residents to have free access to professional tutors in ENL, citizenship, digital literacy, etc. This creates barriers for adults who are pursuing a GED and for children who are struggling in school.

7. *What supplemental equity strategies (resources, programs, structures) will you increase or establish to reduce inequities caused by your FY2022-23 budgetary proposal – impacting departmental underserved, underrepresented and/or disenfranchised personnel groups, and/or the diverse communities served by your department?*

As usual, we will pursue alternate funding through the library foundation, bullet aid through our state delegation to fund tutoring programs, and grants to supply funds for temporary PT to FT conversions of staff for specific projects.

8. *Accountability Measures: for each equity strategy in question 7, please provide the following:*
- a. *Please show the data and results from last year’s Budget Equity Tool submission.*
 - i. Number of staff who are in library school – 4 enrolled, 3 anticipating
 - ii. Training & development opportunities offered – 369 courses offered through NicheAcademy; data from Collaboration is not available.
 - iii. Track number of staff who successfully earn a degree – 1; 7 enrolled
Modified to include staff who successfully completed requirements for a promotion in their current work - 4
 - b. *How will you assess the effectiveness of the equity strategies proposed for 2022-23?*
 - i. We will watch the number of FT positions filled.
 - ii. We will track the number of job descriptions changed and filled.
 - iii. We will track the number of staff taking part in a mentoring program.
 - c. *What are the milestones for strategy success during the 2022-23FY?*
 - i. Library use at Communities Libraries which have a PT to FT conversion increases by 10%.
 - ii. Number of staff pursuing professional and education development opportunities increases by 10%.

- d. *Who is the responsible party (departmental personnel) leading the equity strategy?* The equity effort is being led by the Library Director and senior managers.
- e. *What is the expected outcome of the equity strategy?* We expect to right-size our workforce to better reflect the community we serve.

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 about what works. 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. Additionally, all Branch Managers and Central Supervisors have direct input to the budget process, and they have direct daily contact with our patrons.

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?*

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 budget year, we have not been able to offer more, but we have also not offered less.

Submitted by Patricia Uttaro, Library Director