Ramsey County Library
Request for Library Board Action

Meeting Date	Action Requested	Presented By
June 21, 2017	Information and Discussion	Jill Boldenow, Library Director

SUBJECT:
Racial Equity Update

BACKGROUND:
Ramsey County Library identifies the promotion of "economic prosperity and racial justice" as strategic priorities. This focus is aligned with the fundamental values of the American Library Association to uphold equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The Library also joins with Ramsey County colleagues in recognizing that county residents experience significant racial disparities in poverty rates, employment, and household income. These disparities highlight the need for access to the Library's resources supporting education, employment, and economic development.

In 2016, the Library's Racial Equity Leadership Team developed a "Racial Equity and Inclusion Statement" and a set of principles for implementing a racial equity vision in Library programs and initiatives.

Using that framework, the Library developed a 2017 racial equity plan that distributes responsibilities for implementation throughout the Library. The plan weaves racial equity within collection development, facilities and programming, policy development, partnerships, hiring and training, and communications.

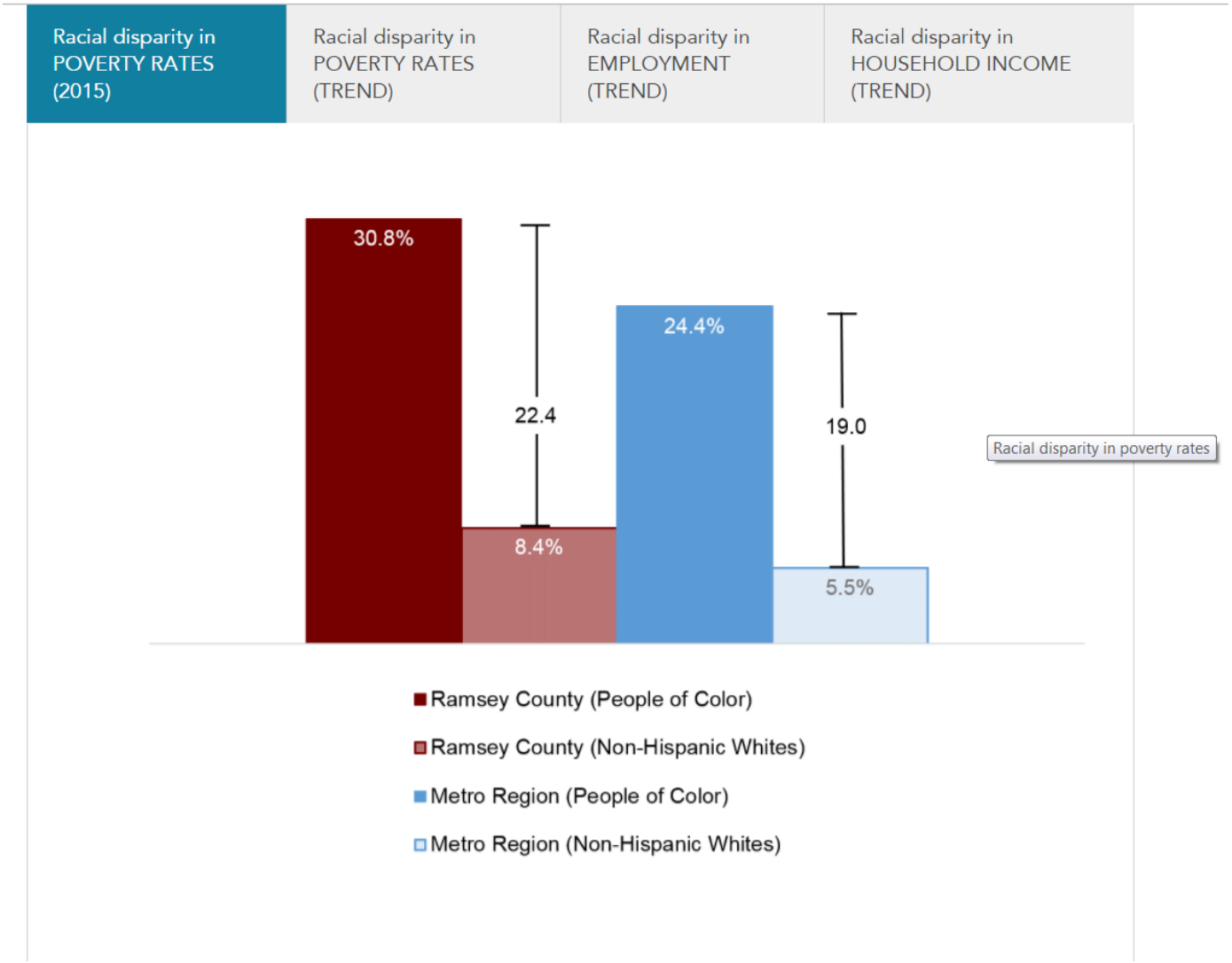
Attached are data on Ramsey County racial disparities; the Library's Racial Equity and Inclusion Statement; and an update on the Library's 2017 Racial Equity Work Plan.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:
For information and discussion.

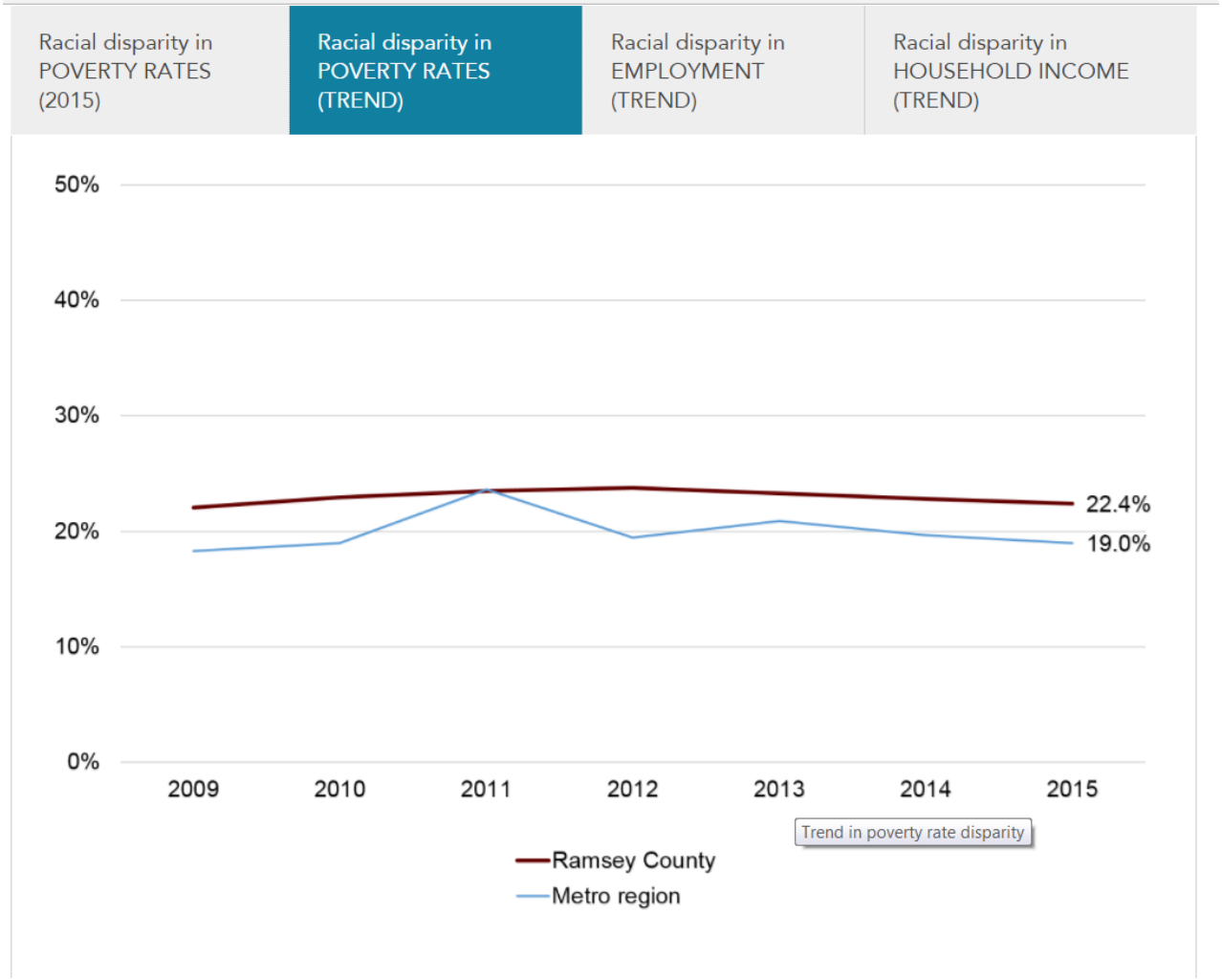
Ramsey County Racial Disparity in Poverty Rates

The difference in poverty rates for people of color and non-Hispanic whites shows racial disparity in how often communities of color experience poverty relative to their non-Hispanic white neighbors. Racial disparity in poverty rates highlights the need for connections to education, employment and economic development to enhance access to opportunity for *all* residents and businesses.

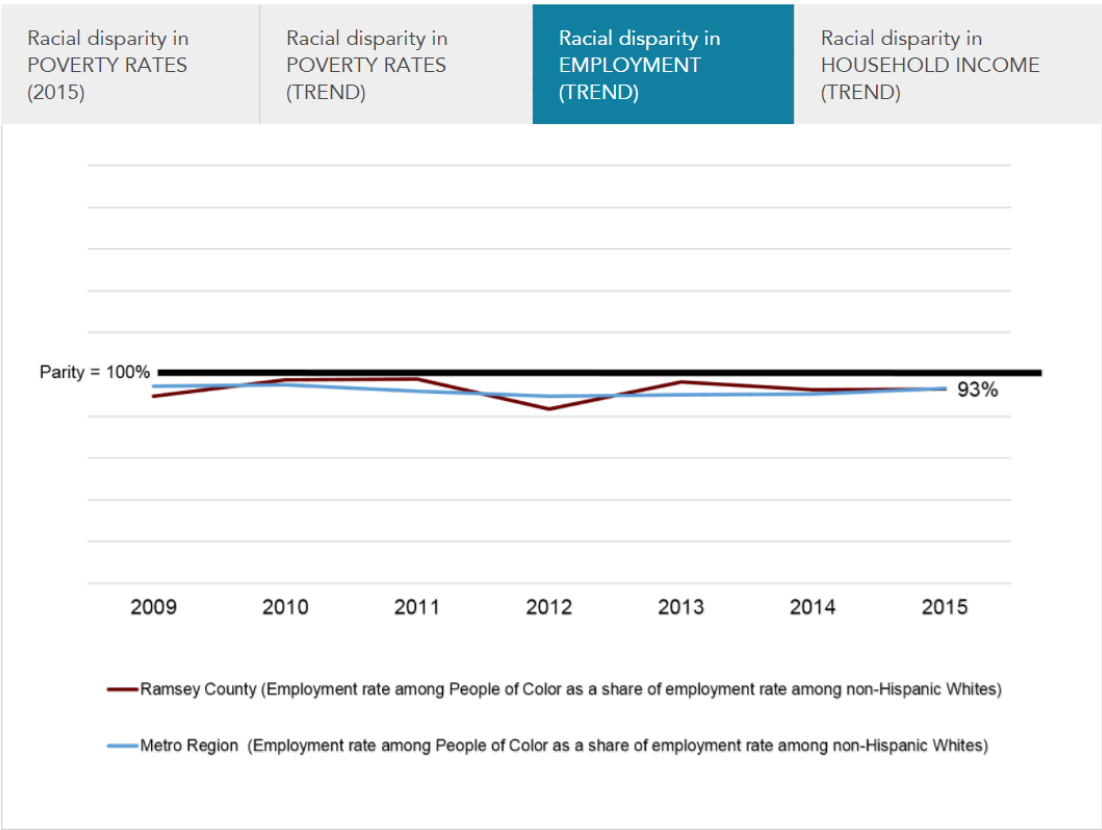
https://www.ramseycounty.us/your-government/about-ramsey-county/community-indicators/opportunity/racial-disparity-poverty-rates



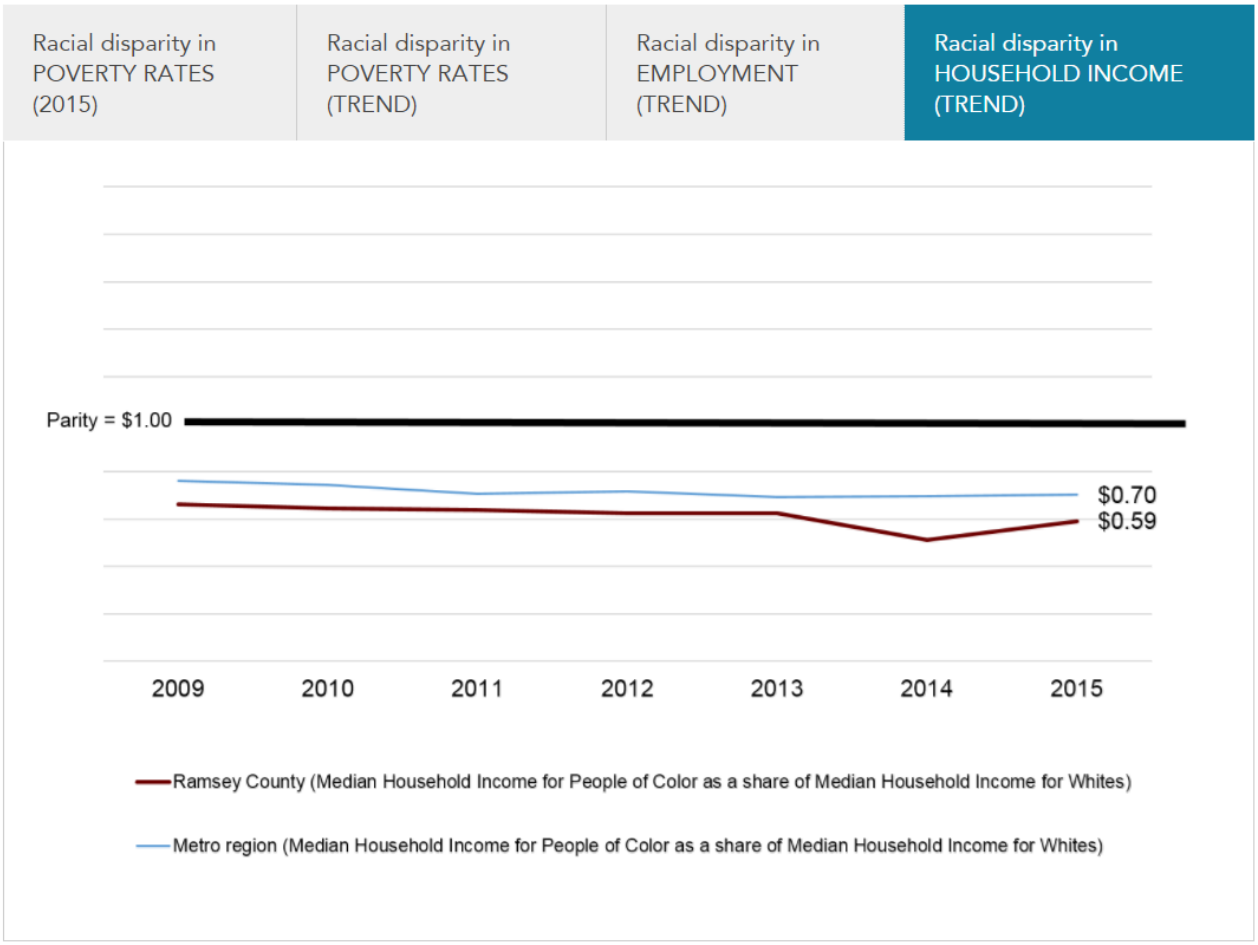
Ramsey County Racial Disparity in Poverty Rates (Trend)



Ramsey County Racial Disparity in Employment (Trend)



Ramsey County Racial Disparity in Household Income (Trend)



RAMSEY COUNTY Library

Racial Equity & Inclusion Statement

Ramsey County Library is committed to making racial equity and inclusion guiding values in all of our work. We strive to provide facilities, collections, programs and services that reflect the community we serve. We strive for racial diversity in our staff, our patrons and our community, and we value the culturally-responsive efforts of staff, volunteers and the Library Board.

"The persistence of deep racial disparities and divisions across society is evidence of institutional racism—the routine, often invisible and unintentional, production of inequitable social opportunities and outcomes. When racial equity is not consciously addressed, racial inequality is often unconsciously replicated." (raceforward.org)

Racial equity is when one's race and ethnicity does not act as the most powerful predictor of how one fares in achieving positive outcomes. Racial equity means that all residents have full participation and access to the benefits and institutions of society and are free from discrimination, hate and harassment.

Ramsey County Library's goal is to eliminate racial and culturally-based disparities in library programs and services.

The Ramsey County Library Racial Equity Leadership Team was formed in 2014 with the charge of assisting the Ramsey County Library in recognizing institutional racism and creating strategies for transformational change.

These Principles in Practice via Programs and Initiatives:

Provide opportunities for intentional, meaningful partnerships with communities of color

- Create pathways for clear communications with communities of color
- Participate in Marnita's Table and other community events
- Develop an engagement strategy through Community Engagement Team
- Develop communications outreach plan

Ensure the facilities, collections, policies, programs and services reflect the community

- Require collection managers to report on the percentage of items selected that feature racially diverse authors, illustrators, characters, or themes
- Develop programs that cover a broad spectrum of racial and culturally diverse subjects and meet the diverse needs of patrons
- Create equity in our policies and procedures

Increase the racial diversity of staff, volunteers and Library Board

- Examine hiring process, culture and recruitment strategies
- Evaluate statistics annually
- Make hiring and retention of racially diverse staff a priority

Increase the cultural intelligence of the staff, volunteers and Library Board

- Require and provide racial equity training for all staff
- Provide advanced levels of racial equity training for staff
- Develop and sustain Racial Equity Book Club

Updated 8/23/16

GROUNDING ASSUMPTIONS

- The work of equity and diversity is about creating community, which involves building trust through careful listening, respectful disagreement, and taking risks
- We respect each other's confidentiality; pay attention to what is yours to share –and what is not
- Growth and learning can be uncomfortable; remember it's ok to make mistakes -we all do
- Individuals and organizations can – and do – grow and change, but it doesn't happen overnight
- It's ok to take care of ourselves; practice forgiveness and letting go, so you can sustain yourself in this work

- Adapted from Jamie Washington, Washington Consulting Group

Ramsey County Library Strategic Planning 2016-2018

Mission Statement
CONNECT community, INSPIRE curiosity, CULTIVATE learning

Strategic Priorities

- Strengthen connections to community efforts and partners
- Foster literacy and student achievement
- Create vibrant learning spaces that engage the broad diversity of our community
- Promote economic prosperity and racial justice
- Ensure stewardship of public resources

Guiding Principles

Free Access
Offer collections and programs with no cost to use.

Available to All
Provide services to the whole spectrum of the community.

Relevant
Adapt services and programs to serve the changing needs of our community.

Bold & Fun
Foster creativity and innovation in providing engaging opportunities for users.

User Focused
Develop processes that are convenient, welcoming and customer centered.

RAMSEY COUNTY Library

Racial Equity Plan 2017

Strategy	*Key Actions & Lead Staff*	*Outcome Highlights*
Create pathways for communicating with and engaging communities of color	• Collaboration with RV ABE. (JL) • Develop pop-up library engagement. (CE team/ Jill) • Develop programs and partnerships with people of color (Programming teams and library staff)	• Summer 2017 Popup Library events at: Tuj Lub Courts opening (Keller Park); Ramsey County Fair; Farmers' Markets; RV Adult Learning Center. • Develop "Ask a Muslim Woman" and "Ask an Immigrant" programs with Do Good Roseville.
Participate in Marnita's Table and other community events (as host and/or participant)	• Promote these opportunities internally. (KS/CE Team) • CE team considers hosting. (CE team)	• Post Community dialogues and programs about race and equity as Racial Equity training opportunities on Staff Net.
Develop an engagement strategy through CE team and County CE team	• Clarify RCL partnership criteria and priorities. (JE) • Support County CE process. (JE)	
Develop communications plan, internal & external	• Communications reflect community and RE goals. (KS, Branch managers)	• Launched *All are Welcome Here* campaign. • Launched passive programs/displays that celebrate diverse races, cultures, languages. • Increased communications about racial equity training opportunities.
Report on percentage of items selected that feature non-white authors, illustrators, characters or themes	• LW – with selectors	• Twenty-one percent of purchases were by or about people of color in Q1, 2017 (vs. 20% in Q1, 2016).

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Racial Equity Plan 2017

Strategy	*Key Actions & Lead Staff*	*Outcome Highlights*

Develop programs on a spectrum of racial and cultural themes.	• Continue diverse themes and presenters in history programming, teen, children's. (JW, Teams)
	• Consider immigrant exhibit, funded with Legacy. (RE team)
		• *Race, the Power of an Illusion* film screenings and discussions.
		• *Green Card Voices* exhibits booked for summer 2017.
		• Children's program with author/illustrator Grace Lin.
		• Hosted two "Diverse Book Showcases" featuring new children's books.
		• Hosted "How to talk with young children about race".
		• Article published by staff librarians Tamara Lee and Anna Haase-Krueger, "Storytime-Palooza! Racial Diversity and Inclusion in Storytime," in *Children & Libraries.*
		• Club Book with sci-fi author Nnedi Okorafor.
		• History programs included:
		  o Duchess Harris on African-American History
		  o Islam and the West (w/ Ahmed Samatar)
		  o MLK and Me: A Personal Reminiscence of the Civil Rights Era
		  o The Making of Asian America (w/ Erika Lee)
		  o The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin
		  o Korean Adoptees in MN (with Kim Park Nelson)
		  o A History of Whiteness (w/ Jim Stewart)
		  o Hmong Chronicles: Refugee Life

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Racial Equity Plan 2017

Strategy	*Key Actions & Lead Staff*	*Outcome Highlights*
Collect data on program participants and audience members.	• Develop process for data collection. Introduce to staff. (JB/KS/LW)	Collected survey data with *All are Welcome Here* campaign.
Review equity in policies, procedures.	• Update Conduct Policy. (LW) • Review Customer Account benefits/requirements (LW)	• Policies slated for updating are reviewed by Racial Equity committee.
Review library displays	• Branch managers	
Examine hiring process, culture and recruitment strategies	• Participate in County project to identify barriers to recruitment and retention of diverse staff. (LW) • Seek candidates of color for volunteer and Library Board roles (Jill, HH)	• Distributed county survey to staff on recruitment, retention, and promotion. • Participated in Countywide Leadership Workshop on recruitment, retention, and promotion.
Evaluate personnel statistics annually	• (LW)	• Received and evaluated 2017 workforce statistics.
Prioritize hiring and retention of racially diverse staff.	• Apply w/St. Kate's for grant for MLIS scholarships for staff of color. (Jill, LW)	• Library shows significant diversity in new hires. • Grant process is delayed until late 2017.
Require and provide RE training for all staff.	• Specify requirements, deadlines. Monitor progress. (LW) • Refer staff to library programs that fulfill training req. (LW)	• Continue to track staff training. • Updated opportunities and clarified process for independent training.
Provide advanced racial equity training.	• Refer staff to County trainings. Develop additional trainings. (LW)	
Sustain RE Book Club.	• Continue to organize. (CJ)	• Spring Club w/ Shannon Gibney & *See No Color*.
Foster RE leadership among staff.	• Recruit participants and refresh membership.	