

As part of our DEI work, the Foundation Board and staff are working to educate ourselves on the role of public libraries and philanthropic organizations in forming, perpetuating, and benefiting from social inequities. The following guide is an incomplete, evolving collection of resources on this topic:

Racial Bias, Discrimination, and Segregation

Many public libraries were racially segregated during the Jim Crow era and a target of activists in the Civil Rights Movement:

- [Libraries, Segregation, and Civil Rights](#) – EveryLibrary (2020)
- [The Hidden History of Libraries and Civil Rights](#) – Santa Clara University (2018)

At libraries without the same legacy of outright segregation, racial disparities in how patrons are treated have persisted, including in Seattle:

- [Is Your Librarian Racist?](#) – CityLab (2018)
- [People of Color, Especially Children, Most Likely to be Asked to Leave Seattle Libraries](#) – South Seattle Emerald (2018)

Philanthropy has its own legacy of resource-hoarding and racial bias by largely White-led organizations:

- [The Unbearable Whiteness of American Charities](#) – Vox (2019)
- [The Problem with “Color-Blind” Philanthropy](#) – Harvard Business Review (2020)

Underrepresentation in Careers and Collections

Both the library profession and nonprofit sector are disproportionately White and unrepresentative of the diverse communities they serve.

- [Diversity Counts](#) – American Library Association (2012)
- [Nonprofit Leadership is Out of Step with America’s Changing Demographics](#) – Urban Institute (2021)

Library collections and catalogs, and the book industry at large, have traditionally undervalued or disrespected stories by and about marginalized communities.

- [Momentum Grows to Eliminate Bias and Racism in the Dewey Decimal System](#) – School Library Journal (2021)
- [Reading Between the Lines: Race, Equity, and Book Publishing](#) – PEN America (2022)

Limited Access to Resources

Despite efforts to improve, many public libraries and philanthropic organizations still struggle to reach traditionally underserved communities.

- [Study Reveals Race, Wealth Disparities in Library Access During Pandemic](#) – Library Journal (2021)
- [In Philanthropy, Race is Still a Factor in Who Gets What, Study Shows](#) – The New York Times (2020)