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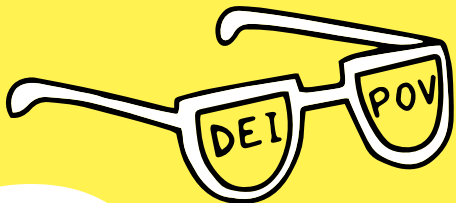
Building Equity-Based Summers

Workbook



Building Equity- Based Summers

Re-imagining and
Designing Library Services
with Your Community



Why equity

Working towards equity honors diversity and creates space for inclusion in all library services.

Why center library services in equity?

- Equity is foundational. Only on a bedrock of equity are library staff able to build and encourage strong and vibrant communities.
- Equity serves everyone. Libraries are one part of a greater community ecosystem which includes systemically marginalized youth, families, and adults.
- Equity requires sharing power. It's crucial that individuals from systemically marginalized groups have opportunities to bring their unique lived experiences to the design and delivery of community-based services.
- Equity embraces shared humanity and basic rights. Social justice and liberation require equity-based solutions.

Library staff goals are clear:

- As public servants, staff must center community needs over the desires of libraries and staff.
- Staff must focus on solutions, not problems. [See Subramaniam, et al.](#)

There are many aspects of summer library services that require attention to equity. Processes to re-think include: budgeting, program registration, performer and speaker hiring, programming activities, incentives, marketing and promotion, and collection development. When library staff apply a traditional cookie-cutter approach to summer services or when staff don't operate with an equitable mindset, those who could benefit the most are often left-behind. Rigid registration and completion restrictions, for example, tend to limit participation.

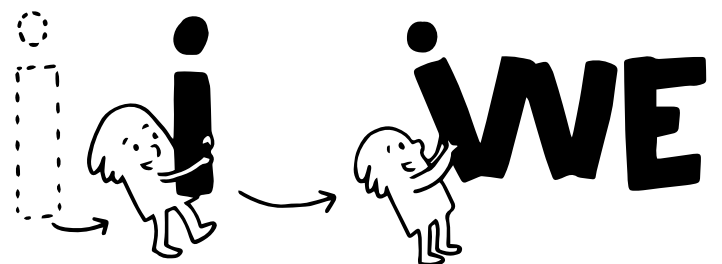
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Session 2

Letting Go of Traditions



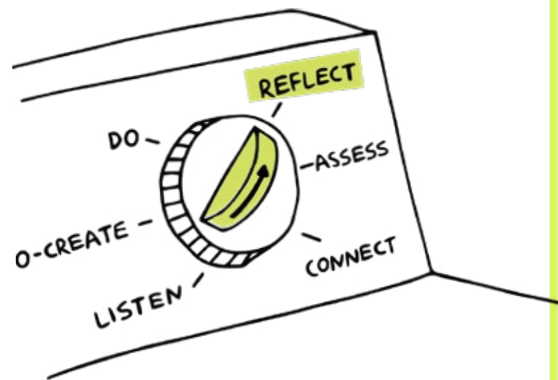
Introduction

It's pretty common that library staff move from one summer to the next without spending a lot of time to consider the overall structure of the summer program, what might be re-imagined, and what are traditions that worked once and are not as effective in the current age. Taking time to reflect on common summer practices that have become traditions for the library and the community will help you to move towards reaching your "why" and building equitable summer services.

Some equity pause questions to consider when thinking about the traditions libraries hold as a part of summer services include:

- Why do we require **registration**?
- Why do we require setting and meeting **finishing** goals?
- How do our **registration and finishing** practices support reaching equity goals?
- How do **registration and finishing** practices lead to systemically marginalized community members not participating in summer services?
- Who do we connect with to gather **feedback and advice** on summer service practices? Do we focus on school personnel, parks and recreation personnel, and those that already take part in our services? How do those groups help us to learn about designing summer services for youth, families, and community in order to reach our summer equity “why”?
- How are decisions made about summer services **budgets**? Are funds spent on the same things from year to year: Books to give away, performers, incentives and prizes, and so on? Are these the resources that best leverage the assets and help to meet the challenges of systemically marginalized community members?
- What are the **policies and procedures** related to summer services that have an impact on connecting with systemically marginalized youth, families, and adults? Are there borrowing policies, staffing policies, library hours, etc. that have an impact on who can access summer services, how summer services are accessed, and what summer services are available?

These questions should help you get started thinking and reflecting about the traditions your library regularly employs and the traditions you may need to be re-imagining in order to build equitable summer services.

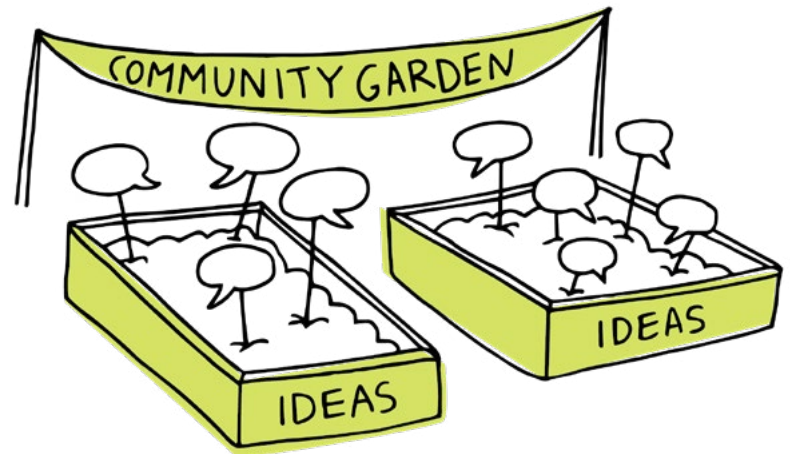


The Targeted Universalism Framework

Library staff sometimes struggle with getting support for the impact they seek to achieve through equity-based summer services. People (including customers, colleagues, and leadership) ask questions and show concern that those who are already taking advantage of summer services will lose those services when equity is centered. In these instances it's useful to bring up the framework of Targeted Universalism.

- Targeted Universalism focuses on recognizing mutual goals across a community** and designing targeted approaches to reach those goals. For example, many different organizations in a town may have the same goal: to give all youth opportunities for active engagement over the summer months. Reaching that goal will not look the same for every organization providing summer services nor will it look the same for every neighborhood or community.
- Different approaches need to be used to reach that goal and those approaches must be tailored to the specific assets and challenges of each community.** For libraries a targeted universalism approach means that not every community in a city or town or rural area will participate in summer activities in the same way. One community might be more engaged via online activities, while another may be more engaged with activities facilitated by community members.
- A one-size-fits-all approach is not a part of targeted universalism.** By focusing on the specific needs of each community a wide array of community members are served.

This [video on targeted universalism](#) can help you to understand the concepts and this [American Libraries column](#) will provide more context.



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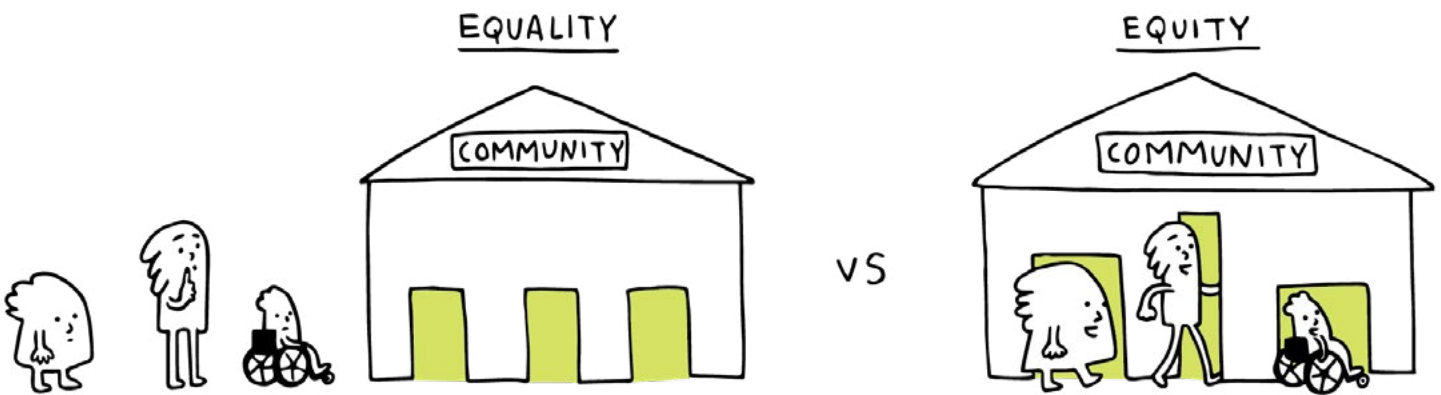
One community might be more engaged via online activities, while another may be more engaged with activities facilitated by community members. A one-size-fits-all approach is not a part of targeted universalism.

Auditing Equity in Summer Services by Activity

With an overarching understanding of how equity is and isn't already a part of your summer services and relationships with local community members and stakeholders, it's possible to begin to consider how equity can become foundational to your summer services. You can also start to re-imagine and make changes to better support equitable services.

Keep in mind that:

- **Equity does not equal access.** For example, bringing books to summer events is an access activity that does not equate to providing equitable library services. Equity in summer services goes beyond access to working with communities to determine what the needs are, and then specifically working to reach those needs through targeted approaches. An example of this is re-thinking summer registration procedures so that those who aren't easily able to register for events have targeted opportunities to do so.
- **Summer services that are designed and implemented by library staff only, even those services that are created to reflect the perceived lived experiences of community members, are not equitable.** For example, library staff that host multicultural food or music events are not implementing equity-based summer services if the programs are completely designed by library staff, the programs are primarily attended by those not of the culture represented, and the programs reflect a view of the experience defined by those not of the culture represented.



With the “why” of equity in summer services in mind along with ideas about bringing in community voices, take some time to consider the summer services you offer. Take an “equity pause” in relation to these and ask yourself how is equity authentically built?

Services and activities you may consider for this audit include:

- Participation Requirements: registration, finishing, reading logs, etc.
- Resources: staffing, budgets, etc.
- Prizes and incentives
- Community involvement
- Colleague and administration involvement
- Performer recruitment, selection, and hiring

The table below is a starting point for analyzing specific library services through an equity lens. Fill in the blanks about services and activities your library provides.

NAME/DESCRIPTION OF A SUMMER SERVICE HELD WITHIN THE PAST TWO YEARS	WHAT DO YOU NOTICE ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY THAT SUPPORTS EQUITY?	WHAT DO YOU NOTICE ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY THAT DOESN'T SUPPORT EQUITY?	WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO DIFFERENTLY TO BETTER SUPPORT EQUITY?	WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO MAKE NECESSARY CHANGES?

RE-ENVISIONING REFLECTION

What are your first thoughts about the ways in which specific services need to be re-envisioned/changed to better support equity in summer services?

Equity in Summer Services Decision-Making

With your ideas about how current services do and do not support equity-based summer services, you will want to think about how to make decisions related to re-thinking and re-imagining those services. It can be helpful to start by thinking about how library decisions are currently made.

Use the tables on the next several pages to begin to analyze how summer services decisions have been made in the past. Start by asking, how do you work within your library's structures and systems in order to make decisions and follow through with those decisions - how do you get buy-in. Some areas to consider as you reflect on and plan for decision-making:

- **You may need to have multiple conversations** in order to achieve the re-imagining you are working towards.
- **Approaches vary** based on who you will have decision-making conversations with. As you think about the different approaches, consider how to align the equity-based services you are working towards with the goals and experiences of who you are talking with.
- **Changes take time.** If you aren't successful at first that doesn't mean it's time to give up. Consider how to continue the conversations, leverage successes that you have had already, and bring in the voices of others to support the decisions you are working towards.



Get started thinking about the equity-based decisions that need to be made by considering different summer service activities and current decision-making processes.

The table below will help you review decision-making processes. Fill in the blanks about how your library makes decisions.

SUMMER SERVICE DECISION	WHO WAS A PART OF THE DECISION-MAKING?	IN WHAT WAY DOES THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS SUPPORT THE SERVICES QUALITY PRINCIPLES AND INDICATORS?	MAKING AN EQUITY-BASED DECISION
I.e., what programs are sponsored, what is theme, sign-up procedures, etc.	I.e., library youth staff, administration, community stakeholders, youth, etc.		What do you think would be a better approach?

DECISION-MAKING REFLECTION

What are your first thoughts about how to more intentionally make decisions in order to build equitable summer services?

Quality Principles, Indicators, and Decision-Making

The Quality Principles and Indicators are a useful tool for reimagining summer services decision-making in support of equity. They can be a first step in deciding how and where to start in building your equity-based summer services.

Keep in mind that:

- You do not have to reach, or work towards reaching, all of the principles and indicators all at once.
- You can build on your integration of these ideas into your summer services over time.
- This process is ongoing, you will want to continually reflect on the decisions made, whether or not you need to rethink those decisions and their impact on other aspects of service, and so on.

As you consider the decision-making process related to the Quality Principles and Indicators keep in mind:

- **WHAT DECISIONS HAVE TO BE MADE.** For example, to work towards an indicator do you need to make decisions about building relationships with community members and stakeholders? These decisions might relate to when the relationship building can take place, who is able to participate in the relationship building, if there are policies and/or job descriptions that have an impact on this work, etc.
- **ALL OF THE COLLEAGUES AND LEADERS** you may need to discuss the indicator with and the decisions that need to be made to see the indicator in practice.
- **WHAT DECISION-MAKING PHASE ARE YOU IN?**
 Are you just starting?
 Have decisions been made and you are now reflecting on those decisions?
 Are you ready to re-imagine decision-making?

Use the following activity sheets to guide you through each of the four quality principles and indicators.

Principle 1: Summer services are designed & implemented with community voices

Use the following table to organize your thoughts around Principle 1.

INDICATOR	WHAT DECISIONS HAVE TO BE MADE IN SUPPORT OF THIS INDICATOR?	WHO DO YOU NEED TO TALK WITH TO MAKE INDICATOR-BASED DECISIONS?	WHERE ARE YOU IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS?
Systemically marginalized community members are actively engaged as co-designers in all aspects of summer services including design, implementation, assessment, and evaluation.			
The summer program expands and harnesses trusted relationships across the community. Library staff trust and empower partners to take center stage.			
The summer program celebrates systemically marginalized community member interests and assets.			

REFLECTION

After reviewing this section, what reflections, thoughts, or comments do you have about decisions that need to be made to work towards this quality principle and indicators?

Principle 2: Summer services decision-making processes are embedded in an equity-based community mindset

Use the following table to organize your thoughts around Principle 2.

INDICATOR	WHAT DECISIONS HAVE TO BE MADE IN SUPPORT OF THIS INDICATOR?	WHO DO YOU NEED TO TALK WITH TO MAKE INDICATOR-BASED DECISIONS?	WHERE ARE YOU IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS?
A diverse set of staff voices are integrated into the design and implementation of summer services.			
Ongoing professional development provides all staff with an understanding of the "why" of equity-based summer services.			
Funding and staff resources provided for summer services are centered on meeting the needs of systemically marginalized youth and families.			
Library staff working on summer services actively inform and engage with administrators and managers.			

REFLECTION

After reviewing this section, what reflections, thoughts, or comments do you have about decisions that need to be made to work towards this quality principle and indicators?

Principle 3: Summer services expand opportunities for learning and connection

Use the following table to organize your thoughts around Principle 3.

INDICATOR	WHAT DECISIONS HAVE TO BE MADE IN SUPPORT OF THIS INDICATOR?	WHO DO YOU NEED TO TALK WITH TO MAKE INDICATOR-BASED DECISIONS?	WHERE ARE YOU IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS?
A diverse set of staff voices are integrated into the design and implementation of summer services.			
Ongoing professional development provides all staff with an understanding of the "why" of equity-based summer services.			
Funding and staff resources provided for summer services are centered on meeting the needs of systemically marginalized youth and families.			
Library staff working on summer services actively inform and engage with administrators and managers.			

REFLECTION

After reviewing this section, what reflections, thoughts, or comments do you have about decisions that need to be made to work towards this quality principle and indicators?

Principle 4: Summer services actively engage systemically marginalized youth, families, and communities

Use the following table to organize your thoughts around Principle 4.

INDICATOR	WHAT DECISIONS HAVE TO BE MADE IN SUPPORT OF THIS INDICATOR?	WHO DO YOU NEED TO TALK WITH TO MAKE INDICATOR-BASED DECISIONS?	WHERE ARE YOU IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS?
Multiple methods of participation are encouraged and include sites outside of the library.			
Summer services are hosted and facilitated by community members, organizations, and stakeholders.			
Library staff acknowledge and actively work to overcome barriers to participation including internal policies, job descriptions, structures and systems, and external factors such transportation and family structures.			

REFLECTION

After reviewing this section, what reflections, thoughts, or comments do you have about decisions that need to be made to work towards this quality principle and indicators?

Once you have answered the questions above, reflect on the ways in which you are building equity-based summer services:

Where do you see opportunities to expand and grow?

Where do you see challenges?

What would you like to learn about and what steps might you take to intentionally build equitable summer services?

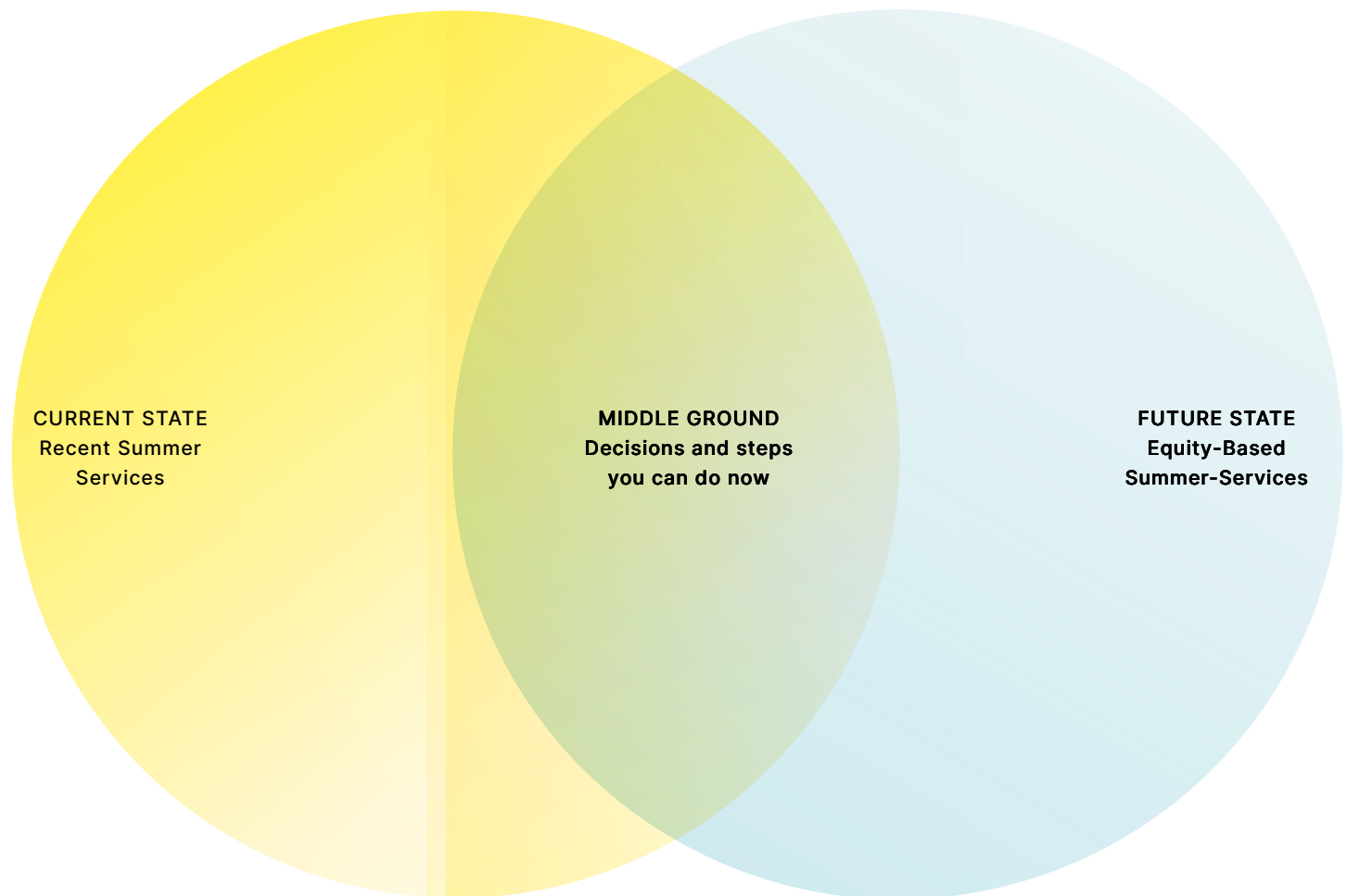
Additional thoughts?

The Middle Ground in Equity-Based Decision-Making

As you begin to intentionally focus on equity in summer service decision-making, you can call out the middle ground in that decision making. The middle ground is the bridge between what summer services you currently provide and what your goals are for equity-based summer services.

The middle ground are those activities, decisions, etc. that help you get from where you are today to where you would like to be in the future. Learn more about the middle ground in this [video](#).

Use the venn diagram below to begin to consider what your middle ground is. Where are you and what decisions do you need to make in order to get to equitable summer services.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The BEBS team would like to thank and acknowledge the work of the library staff who joined and inspired us during the first two years of the initiative. The materials on this website are a direct result of their openness to difficult conversations and vulnerability.

Years 1 and 2 participating libraries:

Alameda County Library	San Diego County Library
Altadena Library District	San Diego Public Library
Arcadia Public Library	San Jose Public Library
City of Commerce Public Library	Santa Barbara Public Library
City of Santa Maria Public Library	Solano Public Library
Kern County Library	Tehama County Library
Los Angeles Public Library	Torrance Public Library
Madera County Library	Tulare County Library
Redwood City Library	Yolo County Library
Sacramento Public Library	

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