

Library Staff

The culturally responsive library:

- ◆ Reflects the ethnic diversity of the local community in recruitment of library boards, administrators, staff and volunteers.

Culturally responsive staff:

- ◆ Recognize the validity and integrity of traditional knowledge systems.
- ◆ Is aware of local knowledge and cultural practices and incorporates it into their work.
- ◆ Is knowledgeable in areas of local history and cultural tradition.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for patrons to learn in a setting where local cultural knowledge and skills are naturally relevant.
- ◆ Utilize the expertise of Elders and culturally knowledgeable leaders in multiple ways.
- ◆ Respect the cultural and intellectual property rights that pertain to aspects of local knowledge.
- ◆ Participate in local and regional events and activities in appropriate and supportive ways.



Group Choral Reading, Annual Heritage Language Conference, Monument Valley High School, San Juan School District, Monument Valley, Utah.

How can I use this self-assessment?

As a library leader, you can use these guidelines to:

- ◆ Review mission and vision statements, goals, objectives, and policies to assure the integration of culturally appropriate practice.
- ◆ Examine the library environment and atmosphere provided for all library users.
- ◆ Review staff performance as it relates to practicing culturally specific behavior.
- ◆ Strengthen the commitment to facilitating and fostering the involvement of members of the indigenous community.
- ◆ Adapt strategies and procedures to include culturally sensitive library practices.
- ◆ Guide preparation, training, and orientation of library staff to help them address the culturally specific needs of their indigenous patrons.
- ◆ Serve as a benchmark against which to evaluate library programs, services, and collections.



UTAH STATE LIBRARY

250 N 1950 W, Suite A
Salt Lake City, UT 84116



Phone: 801-715-6777
Toll-Free: 800-662-9150

Fax: 801-715-6767

library.utah.gov



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Self-Assessment for Library Leaders

Do I Have a Culturally Responsive Library?



21st Century
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Libraries

Library Environment

A culturally responsive library:

- ◆ Is open and inviting to all members of the community.
- ◆ Utilizes local expertise to provide culturally appropriate displays of arts, crafts, and other forms of decoration and space design.
- ◆ Makes use of facilities throughout the community to extend the library's mission beyond the walls of the library.
- ◆ Sponsors ongoing activities and events that observe cultural traditions and provide opportunities to display and exchange knowledge of these traditions.
- ◆ Involves local cultural representatives in deliberations and decision making for policies and programs.



Students in the library during lunch hour. Monument Valley High School & Community Library, San Juan School District, Monument Valley, Utah.

Collections

A culturally responsive library:

- ◆ Provides assistance and leadership in teaching users how to evaluate material about cultural groups represented in its collections and programs.
- ◆ Purchases and maintains collections that are sensitive to and accurately reflect Native cultures.
- ◆ Seeks sources of materials that may be outside the mainstream publishing and reviewing journals.
- ◆ Seeks local community input and suggestions for purchase.
- ◆ Incorporates unique elements of contemporary life in Native communities into its collection.
- ◆ Encourages the development and preservation of materials that document and transmit local cultural knowledge.
- ◆ Makes appropriate use of diverse formats and technologies to gather and make available traditional cultural knowledge.
- ◆ Develops policies for appropriate handling of culturally sensitive materials.
- ◆ Reviews its collections regularly to insure that existing materials are relevant and appropriate.
- ◆ Collects materials in the languages used in its community when they are available.

Services & Programs

A culturally responsive library:

- ◆ Holds regular formal and informal events to foster and to celebrate local culture.
- ◆ Involves members from local cultural groups in the planning and presentation of library programs.
- ◆ Bases its programming and services on the expressed needs of the community.
- ◆ Recognizes and communicates the cultural heritage of the local area through its programming.
- ◆ Reaches out and adapts its delivery of services to meet local needs.



School can get stressful . . . sometimes students need a place to unwind and relax! San Juan High School.

This self-assessment is based on the publication *Culturally Responsive Guidelines for Alaska Public Libraries* developed by the Alaska Library Association and sponsored by the Alaska State Library. Used here with permission from the Alaska State Library.