

Diversifying Libraries Now & Later

Lessons Learned from PLA's Inclusive Internship Initiative

**Sonja Somerville, Salem Public Library
Andrea Wallis, Everett Public Library**

Inclusive Internship Initiative

- The overarching goal of the III was to introduce students from diverse backgrounds to careers in librarianship.
- A Public Library Association grant funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services
- Provides \$3,500 to fund a paid internship for a high school student who represents diversity within the context of each local community
- Two trips for the mentor and student:
 - June - Kick off in Washington, D.C.
 - September - Wrap up in Chicago
- Libraries of all sizes participated
- Learn more: <http://www.ala.org/pla/initiatives/plinterns>



2018 III Mentors & Interns

What did the interns get out of the experience?



- Big picture view of the library world that not even many staff get
- Shadowing in all departments
- Meeting with department heads/mayor/support boards
- Lead on a project
- Meet teens from across the nation
- Work experience, resume classes, interviewing tips, head shots



Hear from the interns

**Nayeli Lara-Cuayahuitl
Everett Public Library**



National Night Out



Improvistional Art



Preschool Storytime



Hear from the interns

**Tito Flores-Bautista
Salem Public Library**



Hosting the "I Am ..." Exhibit



Speaking in Chicago



**Open Mic Night -
Coffee/Italian Soda Stand**



Rock On Escape Room



Summer Reading Kick-Off

99%

of participant responses indicate that Interns understand the scope of library work and how that work aligns to their skills & interests



“The support and training I get [from PLA] is very different from the support I get at school... it is very hands on and not just being given the information.”



96%

of participant responses indicate that Interns better understand the ways that libraries positively serve their communities

90%

of participant responses indicate that Interns view librarianship as a viable, rewarding and meaningful career path



“The library has decided that once the internship ends, I will become a part-time librarian! I am very excited and this internship continues to influence and affect my life.”



82%

reported that the work made them more interested in becoming a librarian

“I am so thankful for this amazing once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that not only has expanded my knowledge of library resources, but it has also connected me with people across the United States and has taken me places that no other job or internship has or most likely ever will.”

- Opportunity for staff to mentor
- Allowing teens to do more
- Extra help!
- Increased trust in volunteers
- Challenging questions and new perspective
- Well-informed advocates

What did our
libraries get out
of it?

Mentor Quotes:



We are very excited that this program enabled us to build an ongoing partnership with the public high school, which is primarily a minority population. We will be assisting students throughout the school year with resumes, interviews, and other job prep.

We are working on funding our own inclusivity-focused internships thanks to this program.

[This program] made me even more determined to make longer term, rich relationships with partner serving teens we don't see.

What are the essential elements of an internship?

- Value to the participant
 - Money
 - Or experience and resume building
- Job shadows
- Conversation - lots of chances to ask and answer questions
- Mentoring for an intern-driven project
- Fun!

Challenging questions and new perspectives

- The difficulty of providing successful programs and services
- How to make the library more welcoming
- Perception of use vs. actual use
- The work experience is not the same for all employees

Breakout discussions

- How would you answer some of the questions our interns asked us (or we ask our interns?)
 - How do we make the library more welcoming and inclusive?
 - How do we help people understand the importances of library services?
 - What is a successful program?
 - How do we promote diversity and inclusion in the profession?

Applying the lessons learned

- Developing mentoring skills
- Making time for big-picture conversations with volunteers, Teen Advisory groups
- Allowing teens to do more
- Increased trust in volunteers

Reach Out

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