

Summary of Findings

Survey A: Experience of IBPOC Candidates in Libraries

About

- Survey collected response from June 4th to July 1st 2022.
- Survey recruited responses via BCLA listserv, ViMLoC network, social media, word of mouth.
- Survey received 72 responses from people who self-identify as Indigenous, Black or a person of colour.
- People from across Canada were invited to respond.

Types of positions that respondents have applied for in libraries

- Page / Shelver 26% (19)
- Library Clerk 31% (22)
- Library Technician 29% (21)
- Librarian 61% (44)
- Manager/Director/Head 25% (18)
- Chief / University Librarian 1% (1)
- Other 28% (20)

Types of libraries that respondents have applied to work at

- Academic 64% (46)
- Public 81% (58)
- Special 11% (8)
- Other 6% (4)

Respondents who are currently working in a library

- Yes 64 (89%)
- No 8 (11%)

Barriers or challenges experienced in applying for job opportunity in libraries

- 19% of respondents expressed experiencing no barriers
- 81% of respondents expressed experiencing barriers
- Stage of recruitment where the most barriers are experienced: 1) interviews, 2) selection (where feedback has been noted as the greatest challenge or gap), and 3) posting
- The most commonly described barriers by IBPOC are:

1. Feedback has not been helpful.

- a. There's a lack of transparency in the selection process.
- b. Lack of clarity on how the candidate could improve.
- c. Long deliberation and lack of communication during the process.

The absence of feedback or unhelpful feedback results in a feeling of mistrust and self-doubt. It contributes to signs of prejudice or unconscious bias. Candidates express they've been left wondering if the outcome has been because of reasons such as their name, their accent, or their background as an immigrant.

2. EDI statements can be flawed.

- a. There is no clarity about how and if this information factors into the hiring process or the job.
- a. Applicants wonder if they will be discriminated against when they do apply and self-identify.
- b. Applicants perceive this as a strategy meant to help an organization fulfill a target for shortlisting a number of candidates who fit a diversity criteria but not be truly considered for the job.

The diversity statement in a job posting has left applicants feeling conflicted about whether to disclose that they identify with the marginalized or traditionally excluded groups being invited to apply.

3. Education from outside of Canada / the United States is not recognized nor understood.

A respondent described the tension they feel when there are cases where we work with international professionals from other libraries remotely (– exchanging knowledge, collaborating) and yet we know they wouldn't be welcomed into our workplaces as equal colleagues because of this accreditation barrier.

4. Experience in libraries or related sectors outside of Canada is not acknowledged and valued.

A respondent described the feedback they received that they needed Canadian experience or credentials despite having worked in public libraries outside of Canada for 20 years.

5. Libraries with a predominantly white workforce and all white hiring committee raises barriers.

- a. Answering an EDI related question in particular can be challenging when asked by a panel of all white interviewers. It is difficult to feel at ease and to ascertain what is expected from you as a racialized candidate answering the question.
- b. A respondent described the experience as isolating to be the single BIPOC employee after onboarding.

6. There is a fear and suspicion of tokenism.

Candidates have felt that they've been interviewed only as a formality or box checking exercise. Related to this is the potentially performative EDI statement.

7. Job postings lack transparency on salary ranges.

8. There are tensions for both internal and external candidates.

- a. Respondents express frustration as an internal applicant when (white) external candidates with less experience are selected for a position. Related to this is the lack of feedback at the end of the process to clarify how the selection was made.
- b. Respondents also express the challenge as an external applicant when it appears an internal candidate was already pre-selected by the committee.

Recommendations for how libraries (managers/HR/unions) can support candidates in the hiring or promotion process

- Stage of recruitment most recommendations are connected to: 1) Interview and 2) Posting
- Some commonly described recommendations by IBPOC are:

During Posting & Screening

1. Post jobs more widely through different community channels and hubs.
2. Give more value to experience (including lived experience, experience outside of libraries), skills (including language), knowledge, relationships, cultural understanding; and dismantle the barrier created by prioritizing education and academia.
3. Be mindful about over-policed demographics when a criminal record check is part of your hiring process; clarify what the organization actually cares about from the record.

During Interviewing

4. Prepare and equip the hiring committee members with training and the ability to engage in more equitable hiring practices and processes.
 - a. Suggested training subjects: anti-racism, unconscious bias, cultural sensitivity, hiring with EDI approach, understanding DEI
 - b. Hiring committees should be able to answer EDI questions when they're being asked by candidates to the organization
 - c. Hiring committees should be prepared to talk about how they will support a person if they're the successful candidate
5. Include IBPOC member(s) on the hiring committee who can provide alternate perspectives.
6. Offer flexibility for the interview format.
7. Provide interview questions in advance.
8. Explain library jargon as needed during the interview.

Overall Process

9. Give helpful feedback that is consistent and specific.
10. Coach IBPOC candidates on the recruitment or interview process.
11. Be transparent about the entire hiring process (i.e. what is being judged).
12. Give clear and timely communication throughout the process.
13. Ask candidates how they can be supported during the hiring process.
14. Offer options for accommodations for candidates rather than placing the burden on the candidate to know what they might need.
15. Establish diversity benchmarking.
16. Let IBPOC employees know that they are hired and valued for their expertise and capabilities and not *just* for diversity purposes.
17. Have a safe mechanism for candidates to provide feedback about the hiring process.
18. Offer mentorship for internal IBPOC employees.
19. Provide opportunities to get in touch with current employees to ask about the workplace.
20. Provide opportunities to contact IBPOC staff groups (if in existence) to ask about support for IBPOC employees.

Summary of Findings

Survey B: Experience of Hiring Managers in Libraries

About

- Survey collected response from June 4th to July 1st 2022.
- Survey recruited responses via BCLA listserv, ViMLoC network, social media, word of mouth.
- Survey received 60 responses from hiring personnel in libraries
- People from across Canada were invited to respond.
- Respondents represented the following types of libraries:
 - Academic 30% (18)
 - Public 67% (40)
 - School 2% (1)
 - Special 2% (1)

Challenges experienced in hiring candidates with culturally diverse backgrounds

Most commonly described challenges:

- Not receiving applications from individuals with diverse backgrounds
 - 24% of respondents expressed this challenge
 - Some respondents see limitations because their local population size is small and they see their community having little diversity
- Language is a barrier
- Hiring process and systems are biased
- Shortlisting may be managed by another department (e.g., human resources) who prioritize credentials above lived experience, language, community affiliations
- Retention is an issue
- There isn't effective support for IBPOC when they're hired
- There are no vacancies
- Roles that are auxiliary/on-call are not attractive when there are no guaranteed hours
- Diversity is stratified in the organization; there are IBPOC staff in entry level and non-professional roles and few to none once you reach the management level

Additional challenges:

- Lack of transparency and unspoken expectations
- Lack of desire from others in getting broader range of applicants
- Facing barriers when asking for jobs to be posted in different channels
- Not seeing desired results after posting jobs broadly
- Hiring committees fail to see the validity of different experiences
- Witnessing racism/bias among hiring committee members
- Rubrics prioritizes experience but does not recognize potential
- Traditional measures focus on experience versus abilities
- A shortage of qualified applicants with an MLS degree; and the need for an MLIS degree as a barrier
- Not having an understanding of the culture from racialized people
- Unable to accurately assess skills and education from other countries

- Cultural differences in what is expected in an application
- Finding that foreign-trained professional candidates have less experience in public library culture
- Existing staff are not comfortable with people with diverse backgrounds
- Workplace environment is not welcoming for IBPOC
- Organizational understanding of EDI best practices
- Policies
- Unable to request or collect self-identifying information
- The need for candidates to self-disclose information for accommodations
- Wages compared to similar industries

Stage of hiring that respondents are most interested in improving

- Stage of recruitment that overall hiring managers are *most interested* in improving is:
1) Posting 2) Interviewing 3) Screening
- Stage of recruitment that overall hiring managers are *least interested* in improving is:
1) Selecting 2) Onboarding
- Stage of recruitment that academic libraries are *most interested* in improving is:
1) Interviewing and 2) Retaining
- Stage of recruitment that public libraries are *most interested* in improving is:
1) Posting and 2) Screening
- Both academic libraries and public libraries indicated they are *least interested* in improving this stage: Selecting

Libraries who have strategies to recruit candidates to diversify workforce

- Yes 62% (37)
- No 38% (23)

What will motivate library managers to implement new strategies/practices for hiring

- Training
- Support and communication from Human Resources
- Support from (senior) Management to apply strategies
- Better understanding of what strategies are available
- Strategies have good community support and are treating everyone respectfully
- Strategies give desired results (e.g., more diverse applicants apply to posted jobs)
- Addresses the barrier of qualifications keeping people out
- Funds
- Support and initiative from the organization (to move from one-size-fits-all approach to recruitment and employee development)
- More vacancies and hiring
- Strategies that are practical and achievable changes
- Strategies that do not affect the ultimate quality of the hire

Preview: Survey Questions for EDI Toolkit

Survey A: Experience of IBPOC Candidates in Libraries

Questions

1. Do you identify as Indigenous, Black, or as a person of colour?*

 - a. Yes
 - b. No

IF YES:

2. What type of positions have you applied for in libraries? *Check all that apply.**
 - a. Page / Shelver
 - b. Library Clerk
 - c. Library Technician
 - d. Librarian
 - e. Manager / Director / Head
 - f. Chief Librarian / University Librarian / CEO
 - g. Other

3. What type of libraries have you applied to work at? *Check all that apply.**
 - a. Academic
 - b. Public
 - c. School
 - d. Special
 - e. Other

4. Are you currently working in a library?*

 - a. Yes
 - b. No

5. What barriers or challenges have you experienced when applying for a job opportunity in libraries? (*This can be about the job posting, application process, interview and afterwards*). *
Example: Job posting does not recognize training or experience outside of Canada
Example: Feedback after interview was not clear or helpful
Example: Believe there was bias during interview

6. How can managers or libraries support BIPOC candidates in the hiring or promotion process?

7. Is there anything else you would like to share from your experience about how libraries hire?

Strategies

Over 40 strategies were identified. Few managers could describe whether the practices have been effective. The common response is that it is too early or difficult to assess these strategies. Organizations do not have benchmarks or indicators in order to measure this work. The EDI Strategies in Recruitment Toolkit will discuss the strategies in more detail.

Words to Others

The most prevailing thought shared from those with experience in undertaking work in making recruitment more equitable and inclusive:

This work is difficult.

It takes time.

It is important and needs to be done.

CONTACT

If you are open to being contacted for a 30 minute interview to share more about your experience, please provide your details below. I will reach out to you shortly to schedule a date and time. Note: Your contact information will not be linked to the responses you submitted.

8. Name
9. Email Address
10. I prefer an interview by: Zoom / phone / email / FaceTime / other

Survey B: Experience of Supervisors and Managers Hiring in Libraries

Questions

ABOUT YOU

1. Name of your organization *[Optional]*
2. Type of library *
 - a. Academic
 - b. Public
 - c. School
 - d. Special
 - e. Other

YOUR EXPERIENCE

3. What challenges have you experienced in hiring culturally diverse people who would bring a unique background and experiences to your organization? *
4. What stage of hiring are you most interested in improving to better support the strengths of different candidates? *

Rank from 1 to 6. 1 is most interested and 6 is least interested.

 - a. Posting (Includes writing job description or posting)
 - b. Screening (Includes evaluating credentials)
 - c. Interviewing
 - d. Selecting (Includes post-interview feedback)
 - e. Onboarding
 - f. Retaining
 - g. Other (please specify)

EDI PRACTICES

5. Have you used any strategies to recruit candidates to your workforce who would diversify your organization? *
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

IF NO:

6. What would motivate you to apply new strategies to diversify your workforce? *

IF YES:

7. What strategies/practices have you used to recruit people who would diversify your team? *
8. Which practices work and/or didn't work? Why?
9. From your experience, what would you like to share with other libraries or colleagues who are taking on this work?

CONTACT

If you are open to being contacted for a 30 minute interview to share more about your experience and your organization's, please provide your details below. I will reach out to you shortly to schedule a date and time.

10. Name
11. Email Address
12. I prefer an interview by: Zoom / phone / email / FaceTime / other