ILA Statement on Racism and Social Justice

Dear ILA Members,

As representatives of the Iowa Library Association, we proclaim our solidarity with Iowans and Americans who are currently demonstrating for racial justice and for the rights of all to live free of oppression. We state unequivocally that Black Lives Matter. The systemic racism that negatively impacts the lives of people of color is contradictory to all that libraries stand for as institutions committed to equal access to information, content, and services.

The Iowa Library Association stands with library workers, with our library patrons, and with members of the communities we serve who experience acts of prejudice, threats of violence, and discrimination based solely on their race or ethnicity. We believe that it is necessary for our profession to speak out against the violence experienced due to racism and ensure that we provide equitable services and resources.

We feel moved to speak out on this subject out of concern for our colleagues, our patrons, and our communities as a whole. As a profession, we need to be clear that Black Lives Matter. Hatred, violence, prejudice, or exclusion of people because of their appearance is not acceptable and that needs to be demonstrated by libraries on a daily basis. We can only do this by voicing our support for people of color and by working against systemic oppression. ILA has taken action to work against systemic oppression by forming the Committee for Diversity and Inclusion (CD&I) in 2016, which works to advance awareness and improve services to a wide range of often underserved populations in Iowa. The Committee promotes awareness of issues related to traditionally underrepresented groups. CD&I presented the ILA Statement on Social Justice, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion which was adopted by the ILA Executive Board on December 6, 2019. As an organization, we are committed to continuing this work to address inequality in our profession and in the larger culture.

We are proud of how Iowa Libraries continue to serve our communities through these difficult times. Libraries across the state are providing resources, creating booklists, providing safe spaces, and supporting those who depend on us. Let us stand together and support those seeking justice and equity.

Be well,
ILA Board of Directors