

Charter Archivist's Task Force on Racism

Scope and Objectives: As our nation continues to struggle with issues of racial inequality, we are called upon to think about our own roles in making improvements as an agency, both for our employees and our customers.

This summer, NARA employees engaged in a dialogue on race through multiple training sessions offered by Equal Employment Opportunity Director Erica Pearson; through a training session offered by senior diversity practitioner Dr. Benjamin Reese, Jr.; through thoughtful and spirited discussion on the ICN; and in numerous local formal and informal conversations. From these conversations, I've identified several major, interrelated, themes:

- Employee Experience - Issues such as recruitment, advancement, retention, assignment of work, access to opportunities.
- Diversity and Inclusion - How we interact with each other and our customers.
- Race-Based Harassment (e.g., EEO)
- Archival Description - How we address anachronistic or offensive terminology in legacy descriptions in the National Archives Catalog.
- Museums - How we ensure a diversity of representation, viewpoints, access, and outreach in our exhibits, education, and public programs.

Talking and listening can be cathartic, but if conversation is unaccompanied by action and concrete steps for improvement, the catharsis will ultimately be short-lived.

Consequently, I am creating the Archivist's Task Force on Racism to take action regarding racial inequality in both our customer-facing operations and internally within our workplaces. Additionally, I am chartering two subgroups to work in parallel with the main task force. The Task Force and subgroups will identify recommendations to NARA's internal and external systems, policies, processes, and procedures in support of an equitable environment. The recommendations should seek to provide an inclusive organization for all employees and customers, including those in protected classes.

I view the Task Force and subgroups as a facilitative effort since ultimately progress will rest on the efforts of every NARA employee. This will require accountability at all levels across the agency.

In performing this work, the Task Force and subgroups will carefully consider recent internal and external analyses and reports and draw upon subject matter experts throughout the agency. Internal resources include but are not limited to:

- NARA's Strategic Plan
- NARA's Employee Viewpoint Survey results
- NARA's Equal Employment Opportunity Management Directive (MD) 715 Report
- NARA's Workforce profile and related data

The Task Force and subgroups should offer all staff the opportunity to participate by providing input on the issues and solutions to the identified themes, as well as identifying gaps in the themes. We will use multiple avenues to offer opportunities to maximize participation and to solicit ideas and feedback from staff at the various facilities across the country. The Task Force and subgroups should consult NARA's subject matter experts (SMEs) regularly.

While the Task Force and subgroups will seek to hear about staff experiences to inform actionable outcomes, this will not be the appropriate platform to report official EEO or harassment complaints. The Task Force and subgroups will refer staff with these complaints to the proper channels.

Archivist's Task Force on Racism

This Task Force will focus on the following issues:

- Employee Experience - Issues such as recruitment, advancement, retention, assignment of work, access to opportunities.
- Diversity and Inclusion - Issues related to how we interact with each other and our customers.
- Race-Based Harassment (e.g., EEO)

The Task Force will coordinate with and serve as a resource for the Archival and Museum subgroups. Care should be taken to coordinate communications and data collection activities.

Membership:

Erica Pearson, Director, Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (NEEO), Chair
Ovnelle Millwood, Director of Workforce Strategy and Analysis (H), Co-chair
Jena Cochrane (ANDC)
Jametta Davis (ACO2)
Michael Davis (SC)
Gabrielle Hutchins (RR2A)
Willie M. Johnson (AFOE-FW)
Tina Ligon (RR2R)
Ashney Randle (RRPO)
Stephanie Sizemore (AFN-MC2)
Beverly Versey-Riley (AFN-MC2)
Ashley Young (AFN-MC2)

Task Force members will be relieved of one-third of their regular work assignments to allow them to fully engage in this effort during the next 16 weeks.

Deliverable: The Task Force will prepare a report that:

- Identifies the key issues and barriers relating to the employment experience, diversity and inclusion, and race-based harassment.
- Identifies concrete, actionable recommendations and next steps to address these issues.

This report will not necessarily contain solutions to issues; however, it will identify an approach to address them. The report will contain both short- and long-term actions.

Subgroup on Archival Description

This subgroup will examine matters relating to anachronistic or offensive terminology in legacy descriptions in the National Archives Catalog, including how we present our information to the public and how NARA's description standards and lifecycle authority control [policy](#) as documented in the [Lifecycle Data Requirements Guide \(LCDRG\)](#) addresses this terminology.

Membership:

Pamela Wright, Chief Innovation Officer (V), Chair
Daniel Rooney, Director, Special Media Division (R), Co-chair
Rose Buchanari (RR1R)
Alex Champion (RR2A)
Elise Fariello (RRFC)
Brittany Gerke (LP-WJC)
Daria Labinsky (LP-JC)
Alexandra Lange (RRSS)
Katharine Seitz (RZA)
Crystal Gail Shurley (RRFE)

Members will be relieved of one-third of their regular work assignments to allow them to fully engage in this effort during the next 16 weeks.

Deliverable: The subgroup will prepare a report that:

- Identifies the key issues;
- Identifies current thinking, benchmarking, and activity on these issues in the broader archival and library communities;
- Identifies concrete, actionable recommendations and next steps to address these issues.

This report will not necessarily contain solutions to issues; however, it will identify an approach to address the issues. The report may contain both short- and long-term actions.

Subgroup on Museums

This subgroup will examine matters relating to how we ensure a diversity of representation, viewpoints, access, and outreach in our exhibits, education, and public programs.

Membership:

Alan Price, Director, John F. Kennedy Library (LP-JFK), Chair
Meredith Evans, Director, Jimmy Carter Library (LP-JC), Co-chair
Catherine Brandsen (VH)
Netisha Currie (RR2R)
Michael John Hancock (RR2R)
Alice Kamps (LO)
Amanda Melancon (LP-LBJ)
Kimberlee Ried (LO)
Ian Shepherd (LP-JFK)

Members will be relieved of one-third of their regular work assignments to allow them to fully engage in this effort during the next 16 weeks.


Deliverable: The subgroup will prepare a report that:

- Identifies the key issues;
- Identifies concrete, actionable recommendations, and next steps to address these issues.

This report will not necessarily contain solutions to issues; however, it will identify an approach to address them. The report may contain both short- and long-term actions.

Meetings and work schedule: The Task Force and subgroup chairs will establish a work plan and meeting schedule. They will meet with me regularly to provide status updates.

Duration: The Task Force and subgroups will begin work immediately, with the final reports due on January 29, 2021.



DAVID S. FERRIERO
Archivist of the United States



DATE