

Outreach: *Or, Who Is Not Being Served?*

Outreach consists of library programs and services designed to meet the information needs of users who are unserved or underserved, such as those who are blind or visually impaired (BVI), homebound, institutionalized, not fluent in English, illiterate, or marginalized in some other way. Large public libraries often have an outreach librarian who is responsible for providing services to unserved or underserved populations.

Library extension differs from library outreach by providing programs and activities that enable a library to deliver traditional services outside the physical walls of its facilities and can include bookmobiles, books-by-mail, and direct delivery of library materials to patrons.

Resources:

- **The Outreach Librarian FAQ** from ALA:
<http://www.ala.org/educationcareers/libcareers/jobs/outreach>.
- **Community Engagement & Outreach** resources devoted to helping you increase your community engagement and outreach, including: the ALA Libraries Transform campaign, outreach strategies, information on bookmobiles, how to work with community groups, universal access, and much more:
<http://www.ala.org/pla/resources/tools/community-engagement-outreach>.
- **First Ever National Library Outreach Day Held During National Library Week 2021:** Libraries across the country observed [National Library Outreach Day](#) on April 7, 2021. Formerly known as National Bookmobile Day, communities celebrated the invaluable role library professionals and libraries continuously play in bringing library services to those in need. National Library Outreach Day is always held on the Wednesday of National Library Week. For more information on National Library Week, visit <http://www.ala.org/conferenceevents/celebrationweeks/natlibraryweek>.
- **The American Library Association's Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services (ODLOS)** supports library and information science workers in creating responsible and all-inclusive spaces that serve and represent the entire community. To accomplish this, we decenter power and privilege by facilitating conversations around access and identity as they impact the profession and those we serve. ODLOS uses a social justice framework to inform library and information science workers' development of resources and strives to create an

association culture where these concerns are incorporated into everybody's everyday work. ODLOS offers resources that include:

- Initiatives and partnerships promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion in libraries and the library profession,
 - Resources, grants, and initiatives supporting literacy across the lifespan,
 - Initiatives and programs geared to promote access to library services to all,
 - Strategic planning, trainings, and other continuing education presentations for library audiences,
 - Committees, roundtables, interest groups, and affiliate organizations which liaise with ODLOS,
 - Year-round and Conference-based events held by the Office,
 - *EDI Update*, the ODLOS Newsletter, Archives available for issues October 2026 to present.
 - To learn more, visit <http://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/diversity>.
- **The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** (PL [101-336](#)), which first went into effect in July 1990, guarantees that people with disabilities shall have equal access to employment, public services and accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications services.
 - The American Library Association (ALA) offers advice for implementing the ADA in library services and programs: <http://www.ala.org/tools/programming/americans-disabilities-act>.
 - The U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals has held that the Americans with Disabilities Act protects access not just to brick-and-mortar public accommodations, but also to the websites and apps of those businesses. For more on web accessibility, take a look at ALA's Core Webinar: Web Accessibility Beyond Best Intentions: <http://www.ala.org/news/member-news/2021/04/core-webinar-web-accessibility-beyond-best-intentions>.
 - For lots of information on the Americans with Disabilities Act, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Americans_with_Disabilities_Act_of_1990.

- **The Idaho Commission for Libraries** has collected resources for providing quality library service to patrons who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH); DeafBlind; blind, or visually impaired (BVI): <https://libraries.idaho.gov/dhh-bvi/>.
- People who are deaf and those who are hard of hearing can be individuals with disabilities within the meaning of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To learn more about how the ADA affects job applicants and employees who are deaf or hard of hearing, visit the **U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission** (EEOC) website: <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/deafness-and-hearing-impairments-workplace-and-americans-disabilities-act>.

If you would like to suggest topics or resources to add to this page, please contact Kevin Tomlinson: Kevin.Tomlinson@libraries.idaho.gov.