



Service Focus Committee: Transgender People Report

May 2, 2007

Submitted by
Sharon Grimm
Karen Bar
Lori Pulliam
Aaron Skog
Kay Speyer
RoseAnn Vonesh

Contents

Introduction _____	3
Charge _____	3
Process _____	3
Evaluation Results _____	4
Collection _____	4
Staff _____	5
Facilities _____	6
Communications _____	8
Policies _____	9
Procedures _____	9
Practices/Behaviors _____	10
Employment _____	11
Recommendations Summary _____	13
Conclusions _____	16
Appendix A _____	17
Appendix B _____	19

Introduction

The *Service Focus Committee: Transgender People* at the Oak Park Public Library (the Library) was formed to support the LSTA grant project: Crossing Barriers. As stated in the grant application, “This project will ... cause us to look carefully at our own policies and practices, and to work to eliminate barriers that transgender people face as patrons or as employees The Assistant to the Director will chair a committee, made up of the Human Resources Manager and other staff, to look carefully at our existing practices, procedures, and policies for employing, serving, and welcoming transgender people.”

Serving on the *Service Focus Committee: Transgender People* were:

Sharon Grimm, Webmaster/Assistant to the Executive Director, Administration (chair)
Karen Bar, Librarian – Cataloger, Technical Services
Lori Pulliam, Manager, Youth Services
Aaron Skog, IT Librarian, Information Technology
Kay Speyer, Human Resources Director, Administration
RoseAnn Vonesh, Manager, Information Services

Charge

In January 2007 the *Service Focus Committee: Transgender People* adopted this charge:

- Evaluate library policies and procedures and identify any barriers to serving and employing transgender people.
- Consider other aspects to welcoming, reflecting, serving, and employing transgender people and identify any barriers.
- Recommend changes to remove those barriers.
- Prepare a written report by May 2007.

This report outlines the committee’s steps to achieve this charge.

Process

The Committee designed a four step process, Education, Evaluation, Recommendations, and Completion (Report) to achieve the charge.

Step 1 – Education

In order to learn about issues, interests, and trends relevant to transgender people, the Service Focus Committee obtained and read information that defined the populations and communicated the populations’ issues and needs. Information was also sought that discussed needs of transgender people as library users, although what was found was narrow in scope (discussing only informational needs, as in Taylor’s paper, see Appendix B) or included lesbian, bisexual, and gay library users (as in articles by Albright and

Greenblatt, see Appendix B). The committee also made use of transgender resources in the Library's collection to better understand all segments of the transgender population.

The Library hired Shannon Sullivan to conduct staff awareness workshops. Shannon is a highly trained and experienced facilitator in the areas of sexual orientation and gender identity. She is the Executive Director of the Coalition for Education on Sexual Orientation, a 48-member statewide coalition with the mission of working together to ensure the safety and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth in Illinois. The Service Focus Committee participated in both a Basic Transgender Awareness workshop and the Advanced Transgender Awareness workshop.

As with other workshop participants, members of the Service Focus Committee learned a great deal of information and increased their knowledge of gender and gender identity issues through these workshops. Moreover the workshops were opportunities for the committee to observe staff reactions to and engagement in this subject. At the advanced workshop the committee had the opportunity for further discussion of library specific scenarios that might arise as related to serving and employing people who are transgender.

Step 2 – Evaluation

The Service Focus Committee divided the Library into 8 parts and structured 41 questions (see Addendum A) to aid in identifying barriers as well as ways the Library could better welcome, reflect, serve, and employ transgender people. To answer these questions committee members engaged in discussion with other library staff; walked through the library buildings; continued to learn via print, video, and online resources; and, searched for best practices at libraries and in other fields.

Step 3 – Recommendations

Based on the evaluation in step 2 and discovery of best practices, the Service Focus Committee discussed and recommended changes to remove barriers and make the Library more welcoming.

Evaluation Results

COLLECTION

With the addition of Transgender Resource Collection materials, the Library's collection of print and non-print material accomplishes all three objectives of welcoming, reflecting, and serving transgender library users. The inclusion of materials by and about transgender people is an important element of welcoming them to the Library. The collection reflects transgender library users by increasing available materials about a formerly ignored group; these titles increase awareness of gender identity and gender expression issues. The range of subjects covered addresses the wide variety of informational needs of the transgender populations.

The library catalog has the potential to be a barrier to any library user. This is being addressed with this collection by the addition of “Transgender Resource Collection” as a unifying heading in addition to all the appropriate Library of Congress subject headings. The Service Focus Committee understands that staff will also address this barrier by creating various finding tools such as bibliographies, pathfinders/subject guides, bookmarks, etc. The Service Focus Committee recommends these finding tools be made widely available in the Library in both obvious displays (on Service Desks, with book displays, etc.) and by discreet methods (tucked into books in the Transgender Resource Collection). Discreet methods of distribution will better serve reticent library users who may be reluctant to take something from a display.

The Service Focus Committee understands that a wide range of methods will be employed by the Library to publicize the Transgender Resource Collection outside the Library. The range of these methods will increase the chances of these materials being subsequently used by those who need them.

The Transgender Resource Collection may be more prone to loss or damage than other areas of the collection. For a number of reasons, including fear or lack of a library card, individuals may remove items from the Library without checking them out. Individuals may choose to retain hard to find items. Similarly, for a number of malicious reasons items may be damaged or stolen. The Service Focus Committee notes that regular tracking procedures occur but recommends that items in the Transgender Resource Collection in particular be tracked by staff for loss or damage.

The Service Focus Committee understands that additional steps to create a welcoming environment will include the ongoing acquisition of materials, in particular, exploring appropriate periodical titles.

STAFF

In general, the staff is proud to have received the LSTA grant to build a premier Transgender Resource Collection for use within the Oak Park community and by other interested communities.

Customer service is a top priority for all staff at the Oak Park Public Library. Therefore the Library scheduled Basic Transgender Awareness workshops in January, February, and March of 2007. The two-hour workshops were designed to raise the level of understanding about transgender populations among library staff and ensure that the Library offers informed and excellent customer service. Staff were required to attend one of the basic awareness workshops and 94 library staff members out of 125 at the time participated. Workshop participants indicated they learned a great deal of information and very much increased their knowledge about gender identity and gender issues. Participants also indicated that they gained understanding, sensitivity, or awareness for working with others.

The two-hour Advanced Transgender Awareness Workshop, also scheduled in March of 2007, was designed to allow for deeper conversation about the issues as they relate to the library setting. 12 library staff members (including the Service Focus Committee) participated in both a basic workshop and the Advanced Transgender Awareness workshop. Both workshops provided an excellent foundation for understanding how the Library needs to be better prepared to serve transgender library users.

Many of the scenarios discussed at the advanced workshop were resolved through the practice of excellent customer service skills, skills that apply to a range of scenarios not solely those involving transgender people. To ensure that all library staff are prepared to provide excellent customer service to people who are transgender, the Service Focus Committee recommends that future staff training, on topics from customer service to poster design, should be infused with sensitivity for gender issues and for working with transgender people.

The Service Focus Committee attended department meetings in April and May 2007 to further prepare staff through discussion of many of the scenarios used in the advanced workshop. Staff appreciated the opportunity to discuss these scenarios as they apply to transgender issues, but also understood that excellent customer service skills have broad applicability. The discussions at department meetings reaffirmed staff commitment to welcoming all library users and providing customer service with respect.

Staff may need an ongoing forum to discuss actual situations that arise. The committee recommends that a forum be created (for example, through a portion of the Staff Blog, department meetings, or discussion with staff who have served on the Service Focus Committee), so that staff may continue to discuss these issues and learn from each other.

FACILITIES

The primary issue with facilities at all three Library locations is restroom use.

At the Main Library, public restrooms are located on all three floors. These are comprised of women's rooms (with three locking stalls) and men's rooms (with 1 locking stall and 1 urinal). The locking stalls in these public restrooms provide private use of restroom facilities without infringing on the privacy of other users. The committee does not recommend any changes to these public restrooms.

Also located on the First Floor of the Main Library in the Children's Room are two single-use public restrooms, currently labeled as "boy's" and "girl's" restrooms. To facilitate use of these restrooms by anyone in need and to create a welcoming environment, the Service Focus Committee recommends that signs for these restrooms be changed to indicate the rooms are unisex and accessible, see photo.



Two additional single-use public restrooms are located on the First Floor and on the Third Floor of the Main Library. These restrooms are currently



labeled “assisted use restroom, obtain key at desk.” For the person who feels unsafe entering women's or men's restrooms because of public response to their gender expression these single use restrooms at the Main Library are options. However, the sign designating the restroom as “assisted use” makes it unclear that a single user may use the facility. Furthermore, the room is locked and signage directs would be users to “obtain key at desk.” A person wishing to use this room must first make an assumption that it is permissible to do so and second ask staff for a key. To overcome this barrier and create a welcoming environment, the Service Focus Committee recommends that these restroom signs be changed to indicate the rooms are unisex and accessible, see photo. The committee also recommends that the room be kept unlocked for people to use, with appropriate measures taken to maintain ADA accessibility with the installation of an automatic door panel on the exterior and a mechanical key lock. If, as a result of the room being unlocked, problems present themselves, the Library should address those issues, keeping in mind that a single-use restroom is a necessity to welcoming and serving segments of the transgender population.

The Oak Park Public Library offers single-use staff restrooms on all floors of the Main Library. These restrooms are currently labeled “Staff Men” and “Staff Women.” To facilitate use of these restrooms by anyone in need and to create a welcoming environment, the Service Focus Committee recommends changing signs to indicate the rooms are unisex and accessible, see photo.



There are four restrooms at the Dole Learning Center which are shared by the public and library and village staff. The two restrooms on the First Floor (currently located outside of the Dole Branch Library space) are single-use and wheelchair accessible. These restrooms are currently labeled “Men” and “Women” with a wheelchair accessible symbol on each. The two restrooms on the Second Floor (outside the Park District offices) are also single-use and wheelchair accessible. These restrooms are currently labeled “Men” and “Women” with a wheelchair accessible symbol on each. The Service Focus Committee notes there are no automatic push plates to open the doors of any of these restrooms. The Service Focus Committee recommends consultation with the Village of Oak Park regarding all restroom signage and recommends all four signs be changed to indicate the rooms are unisex and accessible, see photo.



There are two restrooms at the Maze Branch which are shared by the public and library staff. Located on the lower level, the restrooms are multi-use and wheelchair accessible. These restrooms are currently labeled “Men” and “Women” with a wheelchair accessible symbol on each. The “Men’s” restroom has a urinal. The locking stalls in these public restrooms provide private use of restroom facilities without infringing on the privacy of other users. The Service Focus Committee notes there are no automatic push plates to open the doors of either restroom. The committee does not recommend any changes to these restrooms.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Service Focus Committee reviewed library communications (signs, handouts, posters, forms, website, etc.) with particular interest to where gender is involved and where transgender people/issues are invisible or excluded.

Staff should be aware of gender stereotypes and representations of diversity when using images of people in communications. Images of multiple people can represent a range of gender expression rather than reinforce stereotypes. Staff should also be aware of what an image in singularity might communicate. The Service Focus Committee recommends that staff use images of multiple people in order to be inclusive. It is further recommended that a committee be formed to create graphic communication standards to work in conjunction with the existing written communication standards.

The Service Focus Committee notes that the concepts of diversity and multiplicity also apply to library displays. In creating displays, staff should aim for a variety of themes to create a representation of diversity. For example, a women's history month display may be a gender specific display, but would appear as one of several displays over the course of the year. The Main Library has the added benefit of having multiple display spaces for a variety of concurrent thematic displays. Moreover, the Service Focus Committee recommends that staff consider diversity in all displays. The women's history month display should include materials that represent a diversity of women and might include materials about transsexual women.

The Service Focus Committee evaluated all types of automated email and print messages (ex. overdue notices) to discover that only the automated email courtesy notice uses the "Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name, First Name" format. The use of "Mr./Ms." as an either/or reinforces the idea of a gender binary. Moreover, at least one person has objected to the non-specific greeting as poor customer service. It is recommended that the salutation be removed from this notice.

Poor navigation signage has the potential to be a barrier to any library user. Improved signage, especially in the Main Library Lobby, would help all library users find materials. Clearly indicating where adult materials are located would help transgender library users find their own way without asking staff for assistance. The Service Focus Committee recommends navigation signage be improved.

The Service Focus Committee understands that a Transgender Resource Collection page will be added to the public website, as per the grant project, which will assist the Library in welcoming, reflecting, and serving transgender people. To further welcome, reflect, and serve transgender library users, the committee recommends the Library create subject guides on transgender topics and schedule programming on transgender relevant topics (legal issues, medical issues, authors of interest, etc.).

POLICIES

The Policy Manual was reviewed for barriers to welcoming, reflecting, serving, and employing transgender people. No policy barriers were found for welcoming or serving. Employment policies are dealt with in the Employment section (below).

Several instances in policy were noted where the term “sex” would be better used than the term “gender.” The Service Focus Committee recommends that policies be amended such that “sex” refers to biology and “gender” refers to gender identity and/or gender expression. (The majority of these instances are in the Sexual Harassment policy, see EMPLOYMENT below.) This clarification of terms facilitates the addition of “gender identity and gender expression” to the Diversity Statement as noted under EMPLOYMENT (below).

The evaluation of policies resulted in 56 instances of his/her language, which reinforce the idea of a gender binary. (‘Gender Binary’ is the idea that there are only two groups that a person, action, or behavior can belong in: male or female. – cited from Wikipedia 4/11/07) This dichotomized language does not reflect all transgender populations, including intersex people, androgynes, and gender fluid people. Both library staff and the Library Board of Trustees should be aware that instances of his/her language in library policy reinforce the idea of a gender binary. The Service Focus Committee recommends changing all instances to the pronoun “their,” “them,” or “themselves.” While not traditionally perfect grammar, the committee recognizes that these pronouns are being adopted in formal language and are therefore a workable option. Furthermore, it is recommended that when an improved language option is available the Board adopt such language.

PROCEDURES

The Service Focus Committee reviewed library procedures for barriers to welcoming, reflecting, and serving transgender library users.

A primary barrier is the gender portion of the current library card application. Currently the library card application offers two check boxes, one for Male and one for Female. This presents a barrier to individuals who do not feel they belong to one of the two categories presented. An option is for the individual to leave both fields blank. However, the Service Focus Committee understands that in practice, when receiving an application with this field left blank, staff make a determination and enter the borrower into the integrated library system in one of two categories.

To welcome transgender people and reflect the existence of people who are uncomfortable choosing between male and female, the Service Focus Committee recommends the library card application be changed to allow people to self identify their gender. The committee recommends that portion of the application be changed to “Gender: _____.” To accommodate this change, the committee further recommends that a “Self-identified/Blank” Bstat be created in the integrated library system. Staff

should be instructed to enter borrowers into the system using this Bstat if an application is marked with a self-identification that is not male/man or female/woman or is left blank.

For library users who wish to check out Transgender Resource Collection materials, the Self Checkouts offer a great deal of privacy. However, current Self Checkout procedures have the potential to be a barrier to any library user. In particular, with the current procedures, videos in the Transgender Resource Collection will be in security cases, requiring staff intervention before an item can be viewed by a library user. The Service Focus Committee recommends staff continue to practice good customer service by not commenting on any titles being checked out by library users. The committee understands that the Library is discussing general improvements for use of the Self Checkouts.

The Service Focus Committee also evaluated whether procedures are in place so that the Library is prepared to serve transgender library users. In particular, the committee's discussion at the Advanced Transgender Awareness workshop indicated the need for formal complaint procedures for staff to follow. The Complaint Procedures drafted by the Service Focus Committee in April 2007 recommend how staff should deal with general complaints, collection complaints, and restroom complaints. At the department meetings in April 2007 staff received copies of these procedures. The committee recommends these procedures be included with other procedures communicated to staff. The committee further recommends the Library broaden customer service training to incorporate staff awareness and responsibility for making the Library safe and welcoming.

PRACTICES/BEHAVIORS

Practices are difficult to tease away from library policies and procedures but include unwritten behaviors that staff develop to conduct their job responsibilities. As the Service Focus Committee met with departments in April 2007, staff had the opportunity to clarify practices and expectations on a department level as they relate to welcoming, serving, and reflecting transgender library users. Staff should understand that practices should reflect the inclusive environment at the Oak Park Public Library.

A specific practice that was discussed at the Youth Services and Information Services department meetings was the practice surrounding the current "assisted use" restrooms on the First Floor and Third Floor of the Main Library. Staff may have had differing understandings of who may use those rooms, but through discussion, staff now understand that such usage is not covered under policy and have agreed that anyone may use those rooms.

The Service Focus Committee recommends that staff focus on gender within services at the Oak Park Public Library, not just transgender issues. The committee recommends that staff use inclusive language and examples and design activities that include people of all genders. Inclusion of this aspect of diversity should be considered in promotion of materials, public relations, programs, speakers, etc. As a recent example, Youth Services

created a “ROYALTY” category for their picture book collection rather than a “PRINCESS” category to avoid reinforcing a gender stereotype for children.

In interacting with library users, the Service Focus Committee recommends that staff be polite, courteous and friendly in all interactions and should use their best judgment when addressing customers by name and/or pronoun. The Transgender Awareness workshops have raised awareness and knowledge of gender and gender identity for current Library staff. Staff should understand that sometimes it may be necessary to ask someone for their preferred gender pronoun.

At the department meetings in April 2007 staff discussed scenarios and talking points to prepare to handle difficult situations. The Complaint Procedures drafted by the Service Focus Committee in April 2007 address how staff should deal with general complaints, collection complaints, and restroom complaints. The Service Focus Committee recommends that staff follow complaint procedures and management hierarchy in difficult situations.

Staff practices in general hinge on the recommendations made in this report. The Service Focus Committee recognizes that practices will evolve as committee recommendations are enacted. The committee recommends that staff practices/behaviors be reviewed again as needed.

EMPLOYMENT

The Oak Park Public Library has employment policies and practices that welcome all prospective employees. The Service Focus Committee took extra steps to review and evaluate the Library’s employment policies and practices as they pertain to existing and potential transgender staff.

Restroom use, often an issue with transitioning and transgender individuals, is not expected to be a barrier for employment at the Oak Park Public Library. Single-use restrooms are available in staff areas of the Main Library and also in public areas of the Dole Branch. Public restrooms at the Main Library and restrooms at the Maze Branch have locking stalls.

The Library’s Dress Code policy is gender-neutral; specifically, “Library employees are required to be well groomed to project a favorable image to the public. Overly casual or extreme styles, not suitable for a business situation, are not acceptable.”

The Service Focus Committee recognizes that the Library has no control over the terms of the medical plans negotiated by the Village of Oak Park. However, the committee understands that the Library would be supportive of any time an individual might need in transitioning by allowing use of sick or vacation leave.

There are a number of articles written such as “Managing Transsexual Transition in the Workplace” by Janis Walworth and publications from the Human Rights Campaign that

guide and assist with specific suggestions for those employers who have an employee going through transition. They address issues like communication to coworkers, change of records to reflect the new name and gender, dress codes, and use of the restroom. Similarly, they urge confidentiality and respectful disclosure, treating the transitioning individual in a manner consistent with their gender presentation and having an inclusive non-discrimination statement. The Service Focus Committee recommends that the Oak Park Public Library refer to and follow the guidance of these learned publications as necessary.

The Service Focus Committee recommends the following amendments to the Library's Diversity Statement in order to be inclusive of transgender people:

The people of Oak Park choose this community, not just as a place to live, but as a way of life. Oak Park has committed itself to equality not only because it is legal, but because it is right; not only because equality is ethical, but because it is desirable for us and for our children. Ours is a dynamic community that encourages the contributions of all citizens, regardless of race, ~~gender~~, sex, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, **gender identity or expression**, disability, religion, economic status, political affiliation, or any of the other distinguishing characteristics that all too often divide people in society.

The Service Focus Committee recommends the following clarification to the Library's Equal Employment Opportunity policy (the committee understands that gender identity is not part of Title VII, therefore the Library can only amend its own position statement as reflected in the Diversity Statement above):

"All qualified applicants for employment will be considered regardless of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability, or sexual ~~preference~~ orientation in accordance with the legal requirements of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972."

The Service Focus Committee reviewed the Library's Sexual Harassment policy and found no changes necessary in order to protect transgender employees. The relevant statement in the Sexual Harassment policy is:

"The Oak Park Public Library is committed to maintaining a work environment that encourages and fosters appropriate conduct among employees and respect for individual values and sensibilities."

To clarify the language of the Library's Sexual Harassment policy (see POLICIES above) the Service Focus Committee recommends the following changes:

under A. Statement of Policy

"Sexual harassment can occur between ~~men and women, or between persons of the same gender~~ **people of different sexes or of the same sex**. This behavior is unacceptable in the work place itself and in other work - related settings such as business trips and business - related social events."

under B. Prohibited Conduct

“Sexual harassment most frequently involves a man harassing a woman. However, it can also involve a woman harassing a man or harassment between members of the same ~~gender~~ sex.

The most severe and overt forms of sexual harassment are easier to determine. On the other end of the spectrum, some sexual harassment is more subtle and depends to some extent on individual perception and interpretation. The trend in the courts is to assess sexual harassment by a standard of what would offend a “reasonable woman” or “reasonable man,” depending on the ~~gender~~ sex of the alleged victim.”

under D. Complaint Process

“4. Investigation of Complaint

When a complaint has been reduced to writing, either by the complainant or the complainant’s supervisor, the appropriate person informed pursuant to paragraph A above will initiate an investigation of the suspected sexual harassment as soon as possible but in no event later than within three (3) working days of notification. If necessary, the person receiving the complaint may designate another supervisory or management employee of the opposite ~~gender~~ sex to assist ~~him/her~~ in the investigation. If any of said individuals is the subject of the investigation, the investigation will be conducted by the Library Director and/or designated staff.”

Recommendations Summary

1. COLLECTION
Make items in the Transgender Resource Collection easily findable (unifying trace, finding tools).
2. COLLECTION
Use both obvious and discreet methods to market the collection and make finding tools available.
3. COLLECTION
Use a wide range of methods to publicize the Transgender Resource Collection.
4. COLLECTION
Track collection items for loss or damage.
5. STAFF
Infuse staff training with sensitivity for working with gender and transgender issues.
6. STAFF
Create a forum for staff to report their experiences working in this area.
7. FACILITIES
Main - Change signage for all four public single-use restrooms to indicate the rooms are unisex and accessible, see photo.



8. FACILITIES

Main - Change both locked public single-use restrooms to not require obtaining key at desk.

9. FACILITIES

Main - Change signage for all staff restrooms to indicate the rooms are unisex and accessible, see photo.

10. FACILITIES

Dole - Consult with Village of Oak Park to change all four restroom signs to indicate the rooms are unisex and accessible, see photo.

11. COMMUNICATIONS

Use multiple images of people and be aware of gender stereotypes and representations of diversity.

12. COMMUNICATIONS

Expand communication standards to include graphic standards.

13. COMMUNICATIONS

Create a variety of displays and consider diversity when creating displays.

14. COMMUNICATIONS

Remove salutation on automated email courtesy notices.

15. COMMUNICATIONS

Improve navigation signage in Main Library (Lobby) to make adult materials more findable.

16. COMMUNICATIONS

Add a transgender resource collection page to the site, as per the grant project.

17. COMMUNICATIONS

Create subject guides for transgender relevant topics.

18. COMMUNICATIONS

Schedule programming on transgender relevant topics (legal issues, medical issues, authors of interest, etc.).

19. POLICIES

Change instances of "gender" to "sex" where biological sex is intended.

20. POLICIES

Change instances such as "his/her," "he/she," "herself/himself" to "their," "they," "themselves."

21. POLICIES

Amend language when improved pronoun options exist.

22. PROCEDURES

Change relevant area of library card application to "Gender: _____."

23. PROCEDURES

Create a Self-identified/Blank Bstat field and train staff on when to choose this Bstat option.

24. PROCEDURES

Include Complaint Procedures with other procedures communicated to staff.

25. PROCEDURES

Broaden staff training to incorporate awareness of library safety and staff responsibilities for making the Library safe.

26. PRACTICES/BEHAVIORS

Focus on “gender” within services at the Library, not just “transgender.” Use inclusive languages, examples, and activities that include people of all genders.

27. PRACTICES/BEHAVIORS

Staff should be polite, courteous, and friendly in all interactions and should use best judgment when addressing customers by name and/or pronoun.

28. PRACTICES/BEHAVIORS

Staff should follow complaint procedures and management hierarchy in difficult situations.

29. PRACTICES/BEHAVIORS

Conduct a follow-up evaluation of practices/behaviors after recommendations are enacted.

30. EMPLOYMENT

Support any time needed by transitioning employees through the use of sick or vacation leave.

31. EMPLOYMENT

Refer to employment resources as necessary to support transitioning employees.

32. EMPLOYMENT

Add “gender identity or expression” to the Diversity Statement.

33. EMPLOYMENT

Change “sexual preference” to “sexual orientation” to clarify the Equal Employment Opportunity policy.

34. EMPLOYMENT

Clarify the language of the Library’s Sexual Harassment policy.

35. GENERAL

Evaluate the success of the grant project and the Service Focus Committee.

Conclusions

The Service Focus Committee entered this process with the presumption that there were inadvertent barriers to “employing, serving, and welcoming transgender people” at the Oak Park Public Library. The committee quickly expanded its charge to look for ways the Library could better welcome, reflect, serve, and employ transgender people. The committee found that actual barriers were minimal but that heightened staff awareness has largely contributed to the Library being prepared to welcome, serve, and employ transgender people. By enacting the recommendations made in this report the Service Focus Committee believes the Library can be best prepared.

The Service Focus Committee commends the Library’s investment of time in both the awareness workshops and the follow-up discussions at department meetings. The number of staff involved in these conversations and the depth of these conversations have exponentially increased the level of staff awareness of gender identity and gender issues. These conversations allowed the entire Library to participate in the focus on transgender people and the committee benefited from staff insights in these and other informal conversations. The Service Focus Committee salutes the staff and their commitment to welcoming all library users and providing excellent customer service.

Throughout, the *Service Focus Committee: Transgender People* was mindful that its process was setting precedent and may provide a useful foundation for future Service Focus Committees. The committee also recognizes that the Library will be on new ground as it receives the report of the committee and determines how to act on the recommendations. How the Library responds may establish a new process for working with reports of future Service Focus Committees.

As a final recommendation the committee suggests that both the grant project and Service Focus Committee be evaluated for success. The success of both the Transgender Resource Collection and the committee’s recommendations may be partially evaluated through the use of a focus group of transgender people or through a feedback form on the Transgender Resource Collection web page.

Finally, the Service Focus Committee extends its gratitude and praise to Bluee Benton, Collection Development Manager, whose foresight initiated this grant project. As a result of Bluee’s research and efforts in the application process the Oak Park Public Library received the LSTA grant. Her know-how, diligence, and enthusiasm continue to guide the Library through this project. Thanks to her commitment the Oak Park Public Library is in a unique position to offer the very best in informational and customer service to transgender library users.

Addendum A – Committee Structure

Process

Step 1– Education

Learn about issues, interests, trends, etc. relevant to transgender people.

Step 2 – Evaluation

Answer questions below specifically to identify barriers and what more could be done.

Step 3 – Recommendations

Discuss and recommend changes to remove barriers.

Step 4 – Completion/Report

Submit written report to Bleue Benton by May 2, 2007.

Evaluation Process

The Committee recognizes that the Library is made up of the following working parts:

Collection – RoseAnn (Bleue)

Staff (attitudes) – Lori, Kay

Facilities – Aaron, RoseAnn

Communications (signs, handouts, posters, forms, website, etc.) – Lori, Sharon

Policies (Board approved) – Sharon, all

Procedures (formal) – Sharon, all

Practices (less formal) – Karen, Aaron

Employment – Kay, Karen

Working Definitions

Barriers – Barriers in general are boundaries, limits, obstructions. In a library context a barrier is “anything that gets in the way of providing great customer service at the library.” It may or may not be necessary.

Welcome – library users feel comfortable in Library

Reflect – library users see themselves in the Library (represented in the collection, represented on staff, represented in images and other materials)

Serve – library users find what they need

Evaluation Questions

The *Service Focus Committee: Transgender People* will ask and answer these questions specific to library users’/employees’ transgender identity.

COLLECTION – RoseAnn (Bleue)

1. Does the collection welcome transgender library users? (Collection Coordinator to answer)
2. Does the collection reflect transgender library users? (Collection Coordinator to answer)
3. Does the collection serve transgender library users? (Collection Coordinator to answer)
4. Are there any collection barriers to transgender library users? Are relevant items accessible?
5. What more could the Library be doing to create a welcoming environment?

STAFF – Lori, Kay

6. Does the staff welcome transgender library users?

7. Does the staff (know how to) serve transgender library users?
8. Are there any staff barriers to transgender library users?
9. What more could the Library be doing to create a welcoming environment?

FACILITIES – Aaron, RoseAnn

10. Do library facilities welcome transgender library users?
11. Do library facilities reflect transgender library users?
12. Do library facilities serve transgender library users?
13. Are there any facility barriers to transgender library users?
14. What more could the Library be doing to create a welcoming environment?

COMMUNICATIONS – Lori, Sharon

15. Do library communications welcome transgender library users?
16. Do library communications reflect transgender library users?
17. Do library communications serve transgender library users?
18. Are there any communication barriers to transgender library users?
19. What more could the Library be doing to create a welcoming environment?

POLICIES – Sharon, all

20. Do policies welcome transgender library users?
21. Do policies reflect transgender library users?
22. Do policies serve transgender library users?
23. Are there any policy barriers to transgender library users?
24. What more could the Library be doing to create a welcoming environment?

PROCEDURES – Sharon, all

25. Do procedures welcome transgender library users?
26. Do procedures reflect transgender library users?
27. Do procedures serve transgender library users?
28. Are there any procedural barriers to transgender library users?
29. What more could the Library be doing to create a welcoming environment?

PRACTICES/BEHAVIORS – Karen, Aaron

30. Do practices welcome transgender library users?
31. Do practices reflect transgender library users?
32. Do practices serve transgender library users?
33. Are there any practical barriers to transgender library users?
34. What more could the Library be doing to create a welcoming environment?

EMPLOYMENT – Kay, Karen

35. Are there any barriers to hiring transgender people?
36. Are there any staff issues that are barriers to employing transgender people?
37. Are there any facility issues that are barriers to employing transgender people?
38. Are there any policies that are barriers to employing transgender people?
39. Are there any procedures that are barriers to employing transgender people?
40. Are there any practices that are barriers to employing transgender people?
41. What more could the Library be doing to create a welcoming environment?

Addendum B – Selected Bibliography

Albright, Meagan. (2006). The public library's responsibilities to LGBT communities: Recognizing, representing, and serving. *Public Libraries, September/October*, 52-56.

Greenblatt, Ellen. (2003). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender library users: Overcoming the myths. *Colorado Libraries, winter*, 21-25.

Taylor, Jamie Kathleen. "Targeting the information needs of transgender individuals." Paper submitted to the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at North Carolina State University and the Department of Library and Information Sciences at University of North Carolina at Greensboro.