INDEPENDENT BOOK PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

IBPA’s DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION (DEI) PRIORITIES, GOALS, & STRATEGIC INITIATIVES: 2020-2021

Leading and serving the independent publishing community through advocacy, education, and tools for success.
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Introduction

The Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA) commits to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion within its leadership, policies, practices, publications, and membership.

IBPA’s Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) Priorities, Goals, & Strategic Initiatives: July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

Drafted in August 2019, the 2020-2022 Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA) Strategic Plan identified the elimination of bias and enhancement of diversity as one of four high-level goals for the association. A key strategic initiative related to this goal was the mandate to “establish a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force of the board to develop IBPA’s strategic approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion.”

This report documents the priorities, goals, and strategic initiatives developed by the IBPA DEI Task Force during meetings held from June 2020 through August 2020. During this time, the IBPA DEI Task Force included IBPA staff members Angela Bole (CEO) and Lee Wind (marketing director) and IBPA Board members Tieshena Davis (joined July 2020), Seth Dellon, Karla Olson, Karen Pavlicin, Kelly Peterson, Kristina Radke, Lindy Ryan, Kathy Strahs, and Victoria Sutherland.

IBPA recognizes that the words, stories, and images presented in books have the power to shape culture and history in big and small ways. It also acknowledges that the legacy of the book publishing industry is undeniably one of privilege, bias, and exclusion, which significantly affects the books that are published. It is the intent of the IBPA DEI Task Force, that the priorities, goals, and strategic initiatives outlined here bring the association, and by extension the industry at-large, closer to positive, actionable, systemic change.

Angela Bole
CEO, IBPA

Karla Olson
Chairperson, IBPA
Director, Patagonia Books
IBPA Mission, Vision, Core Values, & Code of Ethics

Mission – A summary of why IBPA exists
IBPA’s mission is to lead and serve the independent publishing community through advocacy, education, and tools for success.

Vision – A summary of what’s possible because IBPA exists
IBPA’s vision is a world where every independent publisher has the access, knowledge, and tools needed to professionally engage in all aspects of an inclusive publishing industry.

Core Values – The implicitly understood, deeply held convictions that guide the spirit and nature of the IBPA Board, staff, and volunteers
IBPA’s core values are:

- **Service**, which expresses IBPA’s commitment to openness and accessibility. IBPA’s desire to be authentically helpful without further agenda reflects an understanding that the essence of leadership is service.
- **Leadership**, which is expressed through IBPA’s position as the largest professional publishing association in the United States, as well as in its commitment to providing expert programs and perspectives to aid independent, hybrid, and author publishers in the business of publishing.
- **Independence**, which reflects a deep commitment to independent points of view and the belief that enabling access to these points of view is essential to creativity and innovation.
- **Inclusivity**, which reflects allegiance to a publishing industry where everyone can tell their story and find themselves in the content they read.

Code of Ethics – A commitment to professionalism, confirming IBPA’s collective belief that the production of content of lasting financial and/or cultural value is just as important as securing open markets for this content.
As part of the independent publishing community, IBPA members pledge to the following code of ethics:

- To uphold the highest standards of our industry, to create works of lasting financial and/or cultural value, and to pursue editorial, design, and production excellence.
- To respect the rights of authors and other creators and stakeholders, to observe all copyright laws and conventions, and to never knowingly publish plagiarized work.
- To reward authors and contributors for their work, to be honest in our financial dealings, to write contracts in understandable language, to resolve all disputes promptly and fairly, and to foster equal opportunity in our workplaces.
- To not mislead readers or buyers with false promises, inflated sales data, or manipulated reviews.
- To not publish works that encourage violence or hate speech.
- To recycle and reuse and to follow green practices whenever possible.

**IBPA’s DEI Commitment**

To realize its vision of a world where every independent publisher has the access, knowledge, and tools needed to professionally engage in all aspects of an inclusive publishing industry, the Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA) commits to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion within its leadership, policies, practices, publications, and membership.

**Terminology**

**DIVERSITY**

**Defined:**
Diversity is the presence of differences that may include race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, language, (dis)ability, age, religious commitment, or political perspective. [These are] populations that have been- and remain- underrepresented among practitioners in the field and marginalized in the broader society.

**EQUITY**

**Defined:**
Equity is promoting justice, impartiality, and fairness within the procedures, processes, and distribution of resources by institutions or systems. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the root causes of outcome disparities within our society.

**INCLUSION**

**Defined:**
Inclusion is an outcome to ensure those that are diverse actually feel and/or are welcomed. Inclusion outcomes are met when [a person or institution] and its program are truly inviting to all [and] diverse individuals are able to participate fully in the decision-making processes and development opportunities within an organization or group.

---

1 IBPA takes its definitions of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion from the eXtension Foundation Impact Collaborative, [https://dei.extension.org/](https://dei.extension.org/)
IBPA’s DEI Priorities

With the overall goal of enabling positive, actionable, systemic change, the IBPA DEI Task Force has identified the following four priorities, each addressed in some way by the DEI Scope of Work below.

1. to ensure IBPA’s policies and practices welcome, include, value, and support members of underrepresented groups;

2. to facilitate conversation within IBPA’s membership that leads toward greater understanding and more diverse, equitable, and inclusive outcomes;

3. to engage and support underrepresented groups in IBPA’s community, education, advocacy, and tools for success; and

4. to develop resources to increase the cultural competency of IBPA’s staff, key volunteers, and members.
IBPA’s DEI Scope of Work

The following goals and strategic priorities represent the scope of work related to IBPA’s DEI priorities for fiscal year 2021 (being July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021):

Goal #1 – Recruit and retain an IBPA membership base that reflects the diversity of the United States.

Connection to DEI priorities: #3
Connection to IBPA mission: LEAD & SERVE

→ Research, define, and pilot an approach to membership outreach aimed at increasing membership from under-represented groups.
→ Set benchmarks and track changes in the number of members from under-represented groups.
→ Evaluate approaches and produce materials highlighting lessons learned and successful practices.

Goal #2 – Recruit and retain an association staff and set of key volunteers (e.g., IBPA Board, committee members, and others) that reflects the diversity of the United States.

Connection to DEI priorities: #3
Connection to IBPA mission: LEAD & SERVE

→ Research, define, and pilot an approach to volunteer outreach aimed at ensuring a diversity of key volunteers are affirmed each fiscal year.
→ Refine approach and set benchmarks based on pilot results. Recruit a qualified and diverse set of candidates for open seats on the IBPA Board and committees.
→ Evaluate approach and produce materials highlighting lessons learned and successful practices.

Goal #3 – Integrate DEI content, as well as a diversity of content leaders into IBPA meetings, programs, publications, and events.

Connection to DEI priorities: #2, #4
Connection to IBPA mission: EDUCATION

→ Recruit and track the diversity of speakers at IBPA meetings and events.
→ Create and offer DEI guidelines to all IBPA speakers to help them resonate with diverse audiences.
→ Identify and make available diverse experts to speak with organizations seeking to include diverse independent publishing perspectives in their own meetings and events.
→ Audit processes for soliciting member stories and tips for IBPA’s weekly enewsletter, *IBPA Independent* magazine, and other member-facing informational resources to ensure the inclusion of diverse perspectives. Adjust as needed.
→ Incorporate content into IBPA educational offerings that shares DEI best practices for independent publishing.
→ Evaluate approaches and produce materials highlighting lessons learned and successful practices.

Goal #4 – Provide annual training for IBPA staff and key volunteers in best practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Connection to DEI priorities: #2, #4
Connection to IBPA mission: LEAD & SERVE

→ Research, define, and pilot an approach to internal DEI training that includes IBPA staff, members of the board, and committee volunteers.
→ Refine training based on pilot and make it available to general membership.
→ Evaluate approaches and produce material highlighting lessons learned and successful practices.

Goal #5 – Ensure IBPA’s key governance documents and statements (Bylaws, mission statement, vision statement, core values, anti-harassment policy, etc.) comply with a modern understanding of DEI within a nonprofit association.

Connection to task force priorities: #1
Connection to IBPA mission: LEAD & SERVE

→ Conduct an audit of IBPA’s key governance documents and statements with an eye toward where DEI principles could be included.
→ Make necessary changes.
→ Evaluate approaches and produce material highlighting lessons learned and successful practices.
## Timeframe

**Goal #1 – Recruit and retain an IBPA membership base that reflects the diversity of the United States.**

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<td>Evaluate approaches and produce materials highlighting lessons learned and successful practices.</td>
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**IBPA DEI Task Force lead:** Angela Bole, Independent Book Publishers Association
Goal #2 – Recruit and retain an association staff and set of key volunteers (e.g., IBPA Board, committee members, and others) that reflects the diversity of the United States.

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IBPA DEI Task Force lead: Karla Olson, Patagonia Books
Goal #3 – Integrate DEI content, as well as a diversity of content leaders into IBPA meetings, programs, publications, and events.

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<td></td>
<td>Recruit a diverse set of speakers for IBPA Publishing University 2021 and IBPA PubU Online 2021.</td>
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<td>Announce a diverse set of speakers for IBPA Publishing University 2021.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Announce a diverse set of speakers for IBPA PubU Online 2021.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audit process for soliciting member stories for the <em>IBPA Independent This Week</em> newsletter to ensure the inclusion of diverse perspectives.</td>
<td>Create and offer DEI guidelines to all IBPA speakers to help them resonate with diverse audiences.</td>
<td>Audit process for soliciting articles for the bi-monthly <em>IBPA Independent</em> magazine to ensure the inclusion of diverse perspectives.</td>
<td>Identify and make available diverse experts to speak with organizations seeking to include diverse independent publishing perspectives in their own meetings and events.</td>
<td>Incorporate content into IBPA educational offerings that shares DEI best practices for independent publishing</td>
<td>Evaluate approach and produce materials highlighting lessons learned and successful practices.</td>
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**IBPA DEI Task Force lead:** Kelly Peterson, Independent Publishers Group
Goal #4 – Provide annual training for IBPA staff and key volunteers in best practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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<td>Begin researching, defining, and piloting an approach to internal DEI training that includes IBPA staff, members of the board, and committee volunteers.</td>
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<td>Conduct internal DEI training for IBPA staff and key volunteers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refine DEI training with an eye toward making it available to IBPA members.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Launch DEI training for IBPA members.</td>
<td>Evaluate approaches and produce material highlighting lessons learned and successful practices.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**IBPA DEI Task Force lead:** Victoria Sutherland, *Foreword Reviews*
Goal #5 – Ensure IBPA’s key governance documents and statements (Bylaws, mission statement, vision statement, core values, anti-harassment policy, etc.) comply with a modern understanding of DEI within a nonprofit association.

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<tr>
<td>Audit IBPA Mission and Vision with an eye toward where DEI principles could be included during the August 2020 board of directors meeting.</td>
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<td>Audit IBPA Bylaws and Code of Ethics with an eye toward where DEI principles could be included during the November 2020 board of directors meeting.</td>
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<th>April 2021</th>
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<td>Evaluate IBPA’s overall DEI fitness via results from an association audit conducted by JP Enterprises and presented during the January 2021 board of directors meeting.</td>
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<td>Audit IBPA Core Values and Anti-Harassment Policy with an eye toward where DEI principles could be included during the April 2021 board of directors meeting.</td>
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<td>Evaluate approaches and produce material highlighting lessons learned and successful practices.</td>
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</table>

**IBPA DEI Task Force lead:** Seth Dellon, *Publishers Weekly*
Appendix A: Statement of the Problem

The State of DEI in the Book Publishing Industry

The following summary highlights the state of DEI in the book publishing industry, which informed and influenced the priorities, goals, and strategic initiatives outlined in this plan.

In 2015, Lee & Low Books released the book industry’s first-ever Diversity Baseline Survey, documenting the lack of diversity among personnel who work in and lead the book publishing industry. The survey was repeated in 2019, demonstrating little change during the intervening four years despite increased awareness of DEI issues. Respondents included a broad group of people who work for the “Big 5,” university presses, and review journals, as well as literary agents, thus capturing many of the book industry’s leading gatekeepers.

As an illustration, here is how data from Lee & Low Books’ Diversity Baseline Survey compares to data from IBPA’s 2020 Member Demographics and Needs Survey (which for the first time included demographic questions) and to the national census from 2010:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>National average</th>
<th>2019 Lee &amp; Low Diversity Baseline Survey</th>
<th>2020 IBPA Member Survey</th>
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<tr>
<td>% White</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>18.5% (a)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Black</td>
<td>13.4% (b)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% First Nations</td>
<td>&lt;2% (b)</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Asian</td>
<td>5.9% (b)</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXECUTIVE LEVEL</td>
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<tr>
<td>% White</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>78% of respondents</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>identified themselves</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Black</td>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>as publishers or</td>
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<tr>
<td>% First Nations</td>
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<td>2% check</td>
<td>directors</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Asian</td>
<td></td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>% Women</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>68%</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXECUTIVE LEVEL</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Women</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>% straight</td>
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<td>% Bi/Pansexual</td>
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<td>% Gay/Lesbian</td>
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<td>The U.S. Census Bureau</td>
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<td>81%</td>
<td>87%</td>
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<td>does not ask</td>
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<td>10%</td>
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<td>6%</td>
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The statistics above illustrate what is already known: the book industry overall, and IBPA itself, does not represent the diverse makeup of the US population in several key areas. Within the book industry at large, this is especially true at the executive level, where, according to Lee & Low’s study, 86% identify as White.

Deeper analysis of IBPA’s 2020 Member Demographics and Needs Survey reveals additional observations.

**Racial Equity**

→ Base analysis shows that IBPA trends 1.8% below the industry in employees that identify as White, which is 17.1% over the census, thus putting IBPA more in line with the overall industry than the census data.
→ 7.6% of IBPA members surveyed identify as Black, not matching census data at 13.4%, but exceeding industry average of 5%.
→ IBPA exceeds census and industry in members that identify as Native American, with 3% of members, versus 1.3% of census and <1% of industry.
→ The largest gap in industry vs. census relates to Latinx, which represents 18.6% of census, but only 6% of the publishing industry and 3.8% of IBPA data.
→ 2nd largest gap for IBPA is in Asian population, where it trends less than 1% compared to census at 5.9% and the industry at 7%.

**Gender Identity**

→ Although more IBPA members identify as Women (68%) than represented by census (50.8%), this identification is 10% below the industry average of 78%.
→ IBPA underperforms industry in all non-cisnormative roles except genderqueer (1.82% vs. 1%) and no members identifying as trans or intersex.

**Sexual Orientation**

→ At 86.4%, IBPA exhibits a slight variance with industry data (81%) related to those identifying as Straight.
→ IBPA is less heterosexual in editorial roles, with 62.5% vs industry 76%. All IBPA demographic survey respondents in sales roles identified as straight.
Appendix B: Critical Issues

The implementation of this plan coincides with two critical issues that have significantly impacted IBPA, its members, and the publishing industry. The IBPA Board of Directors recognizes the unusual circumstances it is operating in and reaffirms its focus on the priorities, goals, and strategic initiatives outlined here.

Global Coronavirus Pandemic

In January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) a public health emergency of international concern. By March, alarming levels of spread and severity elevated the status of COVID-19 to a global pandemic.

Around the world: Hospitals reached overcapacity. Countries and states issued travel bans and stay-at-home orders. Schools moved to online learning. Nonessential businesses, restaurants, and places of worship closed to the public. Virtual meetings replaced in-person gatherings, professionally and personally. Unemployment soared, and the global economy plummeted into one of the deepest recessions in history.

IBPA members reported having to cut staff, delay publication dates, and close offices. An array of federal and state financial aid options and inconsistent restrictions varying by state added to business owners’ confusing menu of urgent decisions.

As members endured the effects of the coronavirus on their businesses and personal lives, IBPA renewed its commitment to providing as many resources as possible to IBPA members, as well as a forum for the independent publishing community to help one another.

IBPA developed an online COVID-19 Resource Center for Independent Publishers and weekly COVID-19 Member Roundtables to help members navigate business continuity options, such as the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL), Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act, and state and local small business assistance programs. In addition, IBPA extended membership expiration dates for all members by 3-months without charge.

Civil Unrest

Amidst already-intense emotional, economic, and health impacts of the global coronavirus pandemic, a graphic video captured in May 2020 of the police killing George Floyd in Minneapolis fueled renewed collective outrage and grief over systemic instances of hate, violence, and racism, and ignited a wave of Black Lives Matter protests in cities across the US and around the world.
IBPA responded to the Black Lives Matter protests on June 1, 2020 with a statement that read, in part:

“… At IBPA, we believe that building a world that is more equitable, just, and inclusive of people of color requires the stories, ideas, and contributions of a diverse field of publishers. We also believe that diversity in independent publishing is our strength and, explicitly, that Black Lives Matter. In this difficult moment, we reinforce our mission and vision, and stand with all of our communities against injustice and racism …”

Outcomes from the initial protests ranged from violent, destructive riots to peaceful, organized movements confronting enduring forms of racial discrimination, the removal of statues and other symbols with racist ties, and police reform.

The amplified racial tension and civil unrest also placed a magnifying lens on association and corporate behavior related to racial discrimination and an organization’s proactive policies and practices supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

With the implementation of the DEI components within this strategic plan already in process, IBPA reaffirmed its commitment to increase the diversity of its membership and ensure the inclusion of under-represented groups in its policies, programs, and publications.

Given the heightened sense of urgency created by this critical issue, the IBPA DEI Task Force hastened development of this DEI Strategic Plan by increasing the frequency of DEI Task Force meetings to weekly. A DEI Task Force Report with a summary of the plan’s progress is scheduled to be published in the weekly IBPA member enewsletter following the August 2020 IBPA Board meeting as well as in the September/October 2020 issue of the *IBPA Independent* magazine.

**Impact on Independent Publishers**

These critical issues have significantly impacted IBPA, its members, and the entire publishing industry. Lost revenue, canceled programs, and shifting restrictions forced immediate changes to the way the association, independent publishers, and publishing partners operate, budget, and deliver products and services.

Some of the specific challenges include:

- Canceled in-person events, such as trade shows, conferences, author events, customer programs, educational programs; *IBPA Publishing University*
- Transition to virtual events, including technology investment/learning curve, transitioning content, and promotion; *IBPA Shelter-in-Place Benjamin Franklin Awards*
- Access to evolving information; *IBPA COVID-19 Resource Center, Member Roundtables*
- Remote work; *staff at home, virtual meetings*
Disruptions in the industry, such as changes in the book review process, Amazon deprioritizing book sales, bookstores and libraries closed, emergence of Bookshop, printer delays, shipment delays

Economic impact on the industry, including changes in end-reader buying habits, distributors and wholesalers withholding payments, booksellers and suppliers going out of business

IBPA proactively responded by realigning resources to the most critical member support. While working remotely with an adjusted budget and operational plan. At the same time, staff and volunteers executed innovative programs and community-building opportunities to help members survive the economic challenges and sustain ongoing operations in the uncertain new normal.

*IBPA Independent* magazine articles, webinars, and weekly e-newsletter content contain information, tips, and success stories to inform and encourage independent publishers as they navigate, innovate, and define the future of independent publishing.
Appendix C: Key Discussion Points + Phase 2

Throughout the development of *IBPA’s DEI Priorities, Goals, & Strategic Initiatives: 2020-2021*, the IBPA DEI Task Force tackled many strategic questions as dedicated points of discussion within duly called meetings. The following decisions were made based on these discussions.

→ The Scope of Work included in this plan focuses on IBPA as an association with the understanding that IBPA must ensure its own operations follow DEI best practices before making broader recommendations for the industry at-large.

→ While the IBPA DEI Task Force identified specific (i.e., siloed) DEI initiatives to focus efforts in the first year, the goal is to apply a DEI lens over everything IBPA does.

→ The evaluation of IBPA programs to ensure they are appropriately diverse must be a continual effort.

→ IBPA is an anti-racist organization and expects its members to agree to inclusivity as a core value and to abide by a code of ethics, including to not publish works that encourage violence or hate speech.

The IBPA DEI Task Force commits to the development of a Phase 2 plan for implementation in fiscal year 2022 (being July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022). It is expected that the Phase 2 plan will consider issues beyond the operations of IBPA as an association to highlight DEI excellence within the independent book publishing industry and improve diversity, equity, and inclusion within the book publishing industry at large.