

# Partners and Allies for Inclusive Reading (PAIR)

*A CROSS-COMMUNITY ALLIANCE TOWARDS READING FOR ALL*

## What is PAIR?

The Office of Equity and Social Justice (OESJ) announces the creation of the Partners and Allies for Inclusive Reading (PAIR). As a town-wide network, PAIR will serve as a non-partisan advisory group to the Director of Equity and Social Justice and will assist the division in establishing cross-community partnerships, assess organizational needs, and collaboratively develop plans and programs to bring the Reading community together for the vision of a Reading for All.

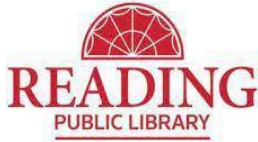
## Who is PAIR?

The OESJ proposes a three-tiered membership structure to bring together town employees, community organizations, residents and non resident stakeholders, as volunteers and with different levels of engagement. The preferred maximum number of members is 25, though exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis.

**Town and School Liaisons:** Town and School Liaisons are to be appointed by the appropriate department head or board chair. A liaison is responsible for bi-directional communication. This means reporting from PAIR (community feedback) to the department and updating PAIR on department initiatives, actions, or issues related to JEDI. Liaisons are expected to speak for the department, not on behalf of personal views.

**Community Partners:** Community organizations, networks and/or professional associations based out of or operative in Reading are invited to send representatives to PAIR. The objective here is to help the DESJ integrate into the Reading community by building networks and partnerships. Input from community partners can be individual or organizational stories, but the priority is the outward reporting to and growth of external networks.

**Resident and Stakeholder Representatives:** All interested resident and non resident stakeholders are invited to participate in PAIR as representatives. The DESJ solicits applications from any individual who has a demonstrated experience and/or interest in JEDI issues and volunteer experience in Reading.



## Office of Equity and Social Justice Reading, MA



Besides the more structured membership of PAIR, the Director of Equity and Social Justice will appoint and engage with advisors from the community, through the creation of 'expert bubbles' on an ad-hoc basis- comprising individuals/groups who will bring valuable inputs to a specific project/task at hand.

### **How frequently will PAIR meet?**

PAIR will hold meetings every third Wednesday of the month, starting June 2022. The Director of Equity and Social Justice will preside on the meetings.

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## **FAQs**

### **What drives PAIR?**

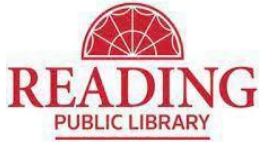
PAIR will be driven by the vision of Reading for All. We are better together! This means adopting a multi- directional, multi stakeholder and non-competitive approach to inclusive community building. This entails, on the one hand, pro-actively addressing exclusionary experiences of residents and stakeholders by creating conditions of equitable inclusion and on the other hand, inviting all community members and residents to take a seat at the table and be a part of this journey even if these experiences doesn't involve/affect them directly. Intent is not for 'all' to subsume issues facing 'some' but to be cognizant of what affects our friends and neighbors and work towards inclusive governance.

To this end, PAIR will be driven by the following principles

- Community driven; knowledge-centered
- Creative thinking; constructive learning
- Collaborative engagement; respectful dialogue

### **Who is PAIR for?**

The short answer is- PAIR is for everyone! An inclusive and equitable community is the cornerstone of a democracy and PAIR will strive to bring the entire Reading community together in this continued quest for good governance. Issues of equity, justice and inclusion are by no means a homogenous bucket and touch very many lives in tangential, direct and/ or overlapping/intersecting ways. Areas of functional interest for PAIR and the OESJ include (but are not restricted to) issues related to age, disability, gender and sexual identity, health, economic/social class status, racial/ethnic/religious identity, nationality, etc.



## Office of Equity and Social Justice

Reading, MA



### **Does Reading need PAIR?**

Reading is a thriving and vibrant community. Equity and Inclusion education and awareness entails lifelong learning, community-centered engagement and knowledge-driven best practices. PAIR in conjunction with the Office of Equity and Social Justice will supplement Reading's already existent good governance model. As a community forum, PAIR will be a way for town employees, residents and stakeholders to communicate and collaborate on creative programming, partnerships and strategic initiatives to service the community.

*Working Document Updated May 2022*