

October 8, 2018

To Whom it May Concern,

The Government Alliance on Race and Equity is pleased to support the Saint Paul Public Library (SPPL) budget proposal for the City of Saint Paul 2019 budget to:

- eliminate late fees for overdue materials for all patrons
- permanently forgive \$2.5 million in uncollectable late fees
- provide \$215,000 of City of Saint Paul General Fund support to supplement late-fee revenue that is critical to funding accessible technology purchases for all patrons.

SPPL staff applied a racial equity analysis to the practice of assessing fines for late materials. The analysis scrutinized library quantitative data, interviews with staff and patrons and research gathered from the experience of other library systems. The findings of the SPPL analysis are that late fines pose an income-based barrier to library access. This barrier is even more pronounced in communities of color, who are disproportionately represented in areas of concentrated poverty in Saint Paul.

City of Saint Paul has been a Core Member of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) for the past 4 years. The City of Saint Paul and SPPL are leaders in racial equity. It is critical that jurisdictions at the forefront continue to strive for and achieve success. Your progress helps establish effective practice to support a growing regional and national movement. SPPL has taken the steps necessary to advance the movement and the field.

- The steps SPPL is taking are aligned with effective national practice to advance racial equity. SPPL has adopted foundational racial equity definitions and concepts to **normalize** racial equity as an institutional priority. It **organized** a staffing structure involving senior leaders, managers and line staff to undertake the work of institutional culture change, implemented a racial equity action plan, and organized community support to sustain changes in practice and policy. Finally - it built staff capacity to use racial equity tools to determine if institutional practices and procedures are contributing to racialized outcomes.
- SPPL is an active contributor to advancing racial equity in the national public library community, and its work is featured in the GARE Issue Brief "[Advancing Racial Equity in Public Libraries: Case Studies from the Field.](#)" SPPL has shared its lessons learned and racial equity impact at national forums such as the Urban Libraries Coalition, Public Libraries Association and American Libraries Association.

GARE encourages the City of St. Paul City Council and Mayor Melvin Carter to support the change in late fines policy SPPL is proposing, and to provide supplemental income of

\$215,000.00 from the General Fund. This will be a significant contribution to the racial equity field, and the GARE movement.

About GARE

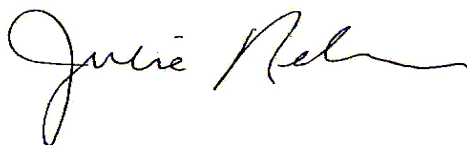
The [Government Alliance on Race and Equity](#) (GARE) is a core project of the [Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society](#) at the University of California Berkeley and [Race Forward](#). GARE is a national network of government working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all. Our methodology features the following:

1. We are a membership organization that supports national and regional networks of jurisdictions that are at the forefront of work to achieve racial equity (we now have nearly 100 members from across every region of the country).
2. We offer pathways for new jurisdictions to begin doing racial equity work, including contractual technical assistance and year-long learning cohorts.
3. We support and build local and regional collaborations that are broadly inclusive and focused on achieving racial equity.

Government's proactive work on racial equity has the potential to leverage significant change, setting the stage for the achievement of racial equity in our communities. GARE is building a national movement for racial equity; we share and expand best practices, tools and resources. GARE's work is underpinned by the knowledge that we will not be able to advance racial equity without the transformation of government into an effective and inclusive democracy. For government to advance racial equity, we must recognize the historical legacy of government having created and maintained racial inequity, explicitly from the foundation of our country, and implicitly for the last half a century.

I appreciate Saint Paul Public Library's leadership on racial equity and am excited about the possibility of this policy change. If you have any questions, please contact me at jnelson@raceforward.org or (206) 816-5104.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Julie Nelson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Julie" being more prominent and the last name "Nelson" following in a similar style.

Julie Nelson

Senior Vice President of Programs, Race Forward

Senior Fellow, Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society at the University of CA, Berkeley
Co-Director, Government Alliance on Race and Equity