



Book to Action 2021 Case Study

Library: Riverside County Law Library

Book to Action 2021 Summary & Impact Reflection

Please summarize your Book to Action 2021 public programming series. Write for an audience that has never heard of your library, your community, or the Book to Action concept. Start by introducing your library and community. Be sure to show how the Book to Action topic and titles met a specific community need or aspiration. Be sure to highlight your community partners, explain significant, innovative, or new models for public programs, and show how this program impacted your community. Limit 2-3 paragraphs.

Riverside County Law Library is the only public library law library in Riverside County. Our mission is to enable everyone in Riverside County to perform the highest level of research and practice through free and open access to the law. We have three locations, a branch library in Indio, a resource center at the Ronald H. Roberts Temecula Public Library and our main location in downtown Riverside near the courts. Our Book to Action theme was equity and we chose the book *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson to discuss equity in the Rule of Law. We tied our program with National Law Day, held annually on May 1. The 2021 theme was "Advancing the Rule of Law NOW!" Equity in law is crucial to delivering justice and maintaining trust in the legal system. A large number of our users are self-represented and deserve the same access to information and justice as clients represented by attorneys.

We partnered with Haywood Public Library since we both chose *Just Mercy*. We advertised our respective events on social media and our websites. Leading up to our main event on May 1, we offered a series of programming related to equity and the law. For one program, we partnered with the Riverside County Public Defender's office to offer a virtual program on their post-conviction relief program. Our speaker for National Law Day was Obie Anthony, Founder and Director of Exoneration Nation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting exonerees acclimate back into society.

Our call to action was impacted by our closure due to Covid-19. We opted for a 10-day educational challenge that customers could complete at home and that could be emailed to them after registering on our website. Challenge activities ranged from visiting Bryan Stevenson's Equal Justice Initiative website, to reading an article from a resource list we provided and checking out an ebook on equity or justice from our digital library. We asked customers to tag us on social media when completing an activity to be entered into a raffle but no customers participated. We also created a TikTok account and asked teens to submit a video on what advancing the rule of law means to them. We also had no participants/submissions, which is consistent with last year's essay contest so we are rethinking how we will engage teens, particularly those in local high school debate clubs.

Community Member Quotes

Please enter 1-2 community member quotes from surveys or public comments that may be anonymized and used in future grant applications and program model sharing.

"I learned about the criminal justice system. It is not fair for many reasons. And, we should take actions to correct and reform it. The Riverside County Law Library's Virtual Events and its "10 Day Educational Challenge & Resources List" reinforced my reading of "Just Mercy" by Bryan Stevenson and my learning of criminal justice reform. Participating in this Book to Action event encouraged me to educate myself and take actions to

work towards an equitable criminal justice system and equity in the law. I learned about Riverside County Law Library and I will use their resources and services. Thank you!”

“It revealed once again the misuse of the police force, the innocence of the convicted, and the impact of the media and demands of a community when a murder takes place in their town. Unfortunately, this is not a relic of the South only. This book reminds of the Central Park Five, whom the former President wanted to see convicted and given the death penalty, even though the youths were innocent.”

Impact on Professional Development

Please summarize how participating in the Book to Action 2021 initiative impacted you and your team’s professional development. As a result of participating in this program, what skills did you or your team learn? What professional takeaways would you share with others looking to improve community engagement with adults & intergenerational groups?

Participating in the Book to Action 2021 initiative was a new experience for our library. Our team leader first learned of the initiative from their time working in public libraries and wanted to bring it into the law library environment. It was the first time our law library had participated in a statewide program of this scale that focused on community action. We all saw how implementing this programming was in line with our goal as a law library to provide legal information to the community. Staff members each had a chance to participate in programming activities, lead book discussions, and have staff wide discussions on how we can further improve our role to the public and legal professionals. Additionally, we added nonfiction materials to our collection on the topic of equity that aligns with these goals. The Book to Action initiative provided us with the ability to show that this type of programming is not only needed, but also wanted as these topics are relevant to our community. We would encourage other specialized libraries to participate in the initiative to expand their programming and community engagement opportunities.

Final Words of Advice

What brief bit of advice (1-2 sentences) would you give to library staff members interested in coordinating a Book to Action or similar community engagement series for adults and intergenerational groups in their community?

Have buy in from your admin and don’t be afraid to apply- the application process isn’t that strenuous, and the program is so rewarding!

Total # Programs: 4

Total Attendance at Programs: 29 with 82 views of 3 recorded programs

Book to Action URL(s): <https://www.rclawlibrary.org/>

Book to Action Images: Please attach 1-2 images (.jpg or .png files only) that best represent your Book to Action 2021 series. Sample File Name: BTA 2021 San Leandro Library Image 1.jpg.

Image 1 File Name: An Afternoon with Obie Anthony, Exonerated Nation.png

Image 1 Caption: On May 1, Obie Anthony, Founder and Director of Exonerated Nation, spoke about being wrongfully convicted of a crime and how that experience compelled him to create his nonprofit company. The event was our National Law Day program.

Image 2 File Name: Riverside County Board of Supervisors declared May 1 National Law Day in Riverside County.png

Image 2 Caption: On April 27, The Riverside County Board of Supervisors declared May 1 National Law Day in Riverside County.

Book to Action Program Coordinator Name & Title: Jenna Pontious, Public Services Librarian

Book to Action Program Coordinator Contact: 951-368-0365 jenna.pontious@rclawlibrary.org

May others contact you with questions? Yes No



Image 1 Caption: On May 1, Obie Anthony, Founder and Director of Exonerated Nation, spoke about being wrongfully convicted of a crime and how that experience compelled him to create his nonprofit company. The event was our National Law Day program.



Image 2 Caption: On April 27, The Riverside County Board of Supervisors declared May 1 National Law Day in Riverside County.

California Center for the Book is a program of the [California Library Association](#), supported in whole or in part by the [U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered in California by the [State Librarian](#).