

# Diversity in Virginia Libraries

## Phase I: A View from the Top

### Introduction

There is a growing need for self-examination within the field of librarianship when it comes to our diversity practices and the state of representation of minority groups within our profession. At the national level, the American Library Association fosters discussion and initiatives to address diversity issues in libraries. Within individual states, however, the levels of engagement and discourse varies. This research seeks to provide a baseline measure of the diversity already present within Virginia libraries in order to provide a foundation for designing future diversity initiatives.

- Phase I of this anonymous survey contains questions that specifically look at diversity in hiring practices, staffing, and representation within Virginia libraries from the perspective of library administrators or those in charge of hiring for the library or library system.
- Phase II [to take place in spring 2018] will ask library staff to anonymously identify the minority group or groups they self-identify as and share information about diversity practices and attitudes they have personally encountered.

Data collected will be used to compare the consensus-reported diversity within our state to the actual levels of diverse staff serving our communities. Current diversity initiatives and practices will also be documented. The results for each phase will be reported at the VLA Annual Conference and used to inform future diversity initiatives.

### Materials and Methods

- Distributed to 213 administrators and hiring managers in libraries across the state of Virginia
- Recipients included academic libraries, public libraries, and special libraries
- The survey was created using Google Forms and distributed via Mail Chimp
- Accompanying letter requested recipients to provide only one response per library or library system
- An Excel spreadsheet was used to track and organize results

### Survey Parts

- Part I - Established the type of library, the region of Virginia, and the role of the respondent in the library
- Part II - Asked about diverse public service [customer-facing] staff
- Part III - Asked about diverse internal [behind-the-scenes] staff
- Part IV - Asked about diverse MLS/MLIS [degreed] staff
- Part V - Asked about diverse staff in management or supervisory positions
- Part VI - Asked about diversity practices for recruitment and retention of minority employees

### Discussion

#### Limitations

- Library administrators have access to only the information their employees share regarding race, disability, and LGBTQ+ status.
- If the workplace is perceived to be less accepting of diversity, employees may not be "out".
- Identifying employees racial makeup based on physical characteristics can be problematic. Some directors aren't comfortable making the attempt.

#### Strengths

As directors and administrators, the respondents have an important role to play in shaping the policies and attitudes on minorities in their library/library system. The view from the top gives us, not only insight into what is being done to promote diversity, but also a chance to measure administrative perspectives of what diversity looks like against the self-identified numbers in Phase II. A disconnect between the two data sets might indicate that the needs of diverse staff are not being adequately met.

#### Percentage of minority library staff managing at least one other employee or student worker

Non-Caucasian	4.1%
LGBTQ+	0.5%
Disabled	0.6%



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#### References

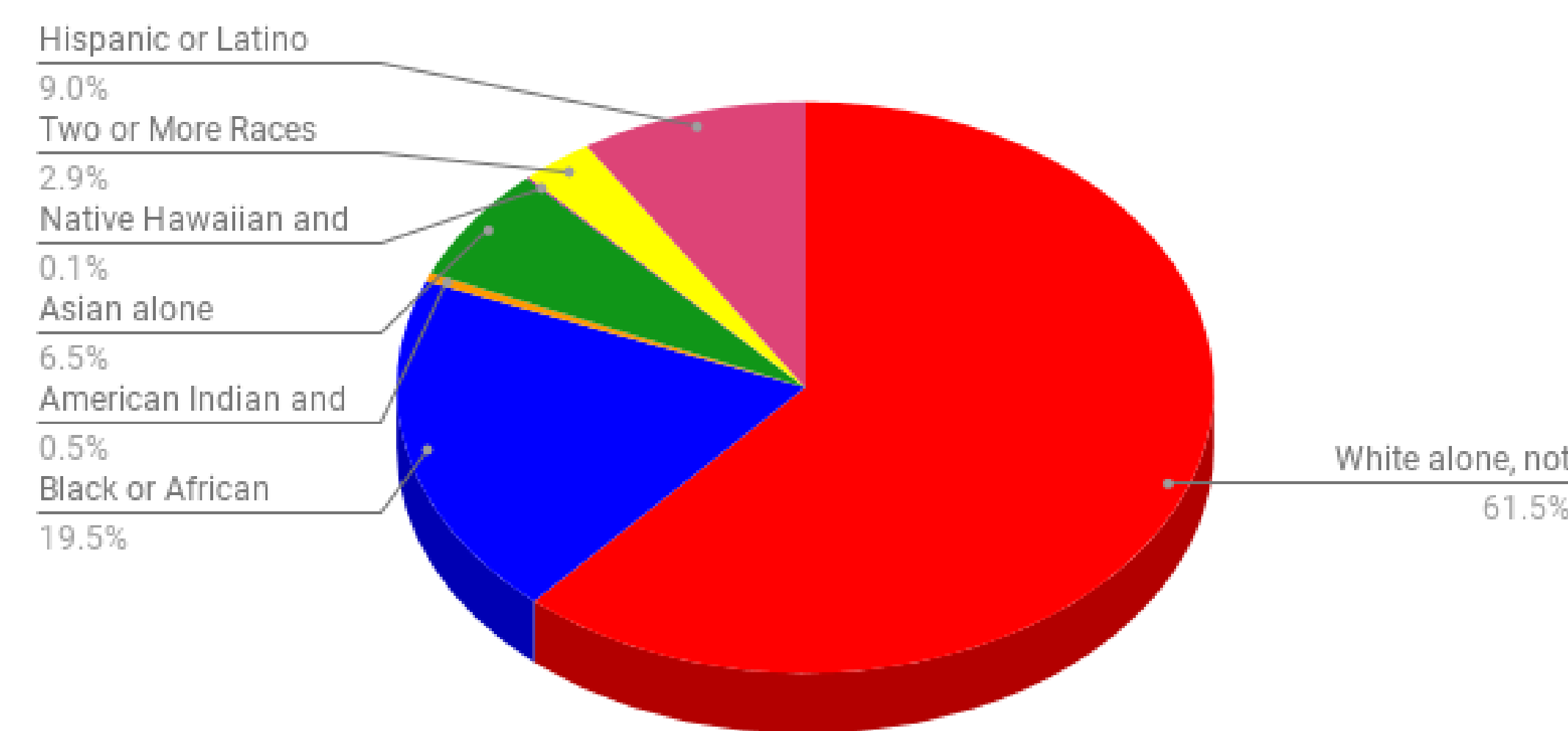
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- United States Census Bureau. (2016). Quickfacts: Virginia [Data file]. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/VA>

## Phase I Survey Results

Out of 212 library directors and administrators surveyed, 44 or 20.7% submitted at least partial responses to the six part survey. 60% of respondents answered all questions. None of the questions were mandatory; therefore, in some cases only partial information was provided. For example, some respondents answered questions regarding racial makeup, but did not feel informed regarding LGBTQ+ employees. All charts and tables below include only the data provided by those respondents who completed the section in question. Data collected covered **44 libraries** and **1,096 employees**.

### Diversity in Virginia's Population

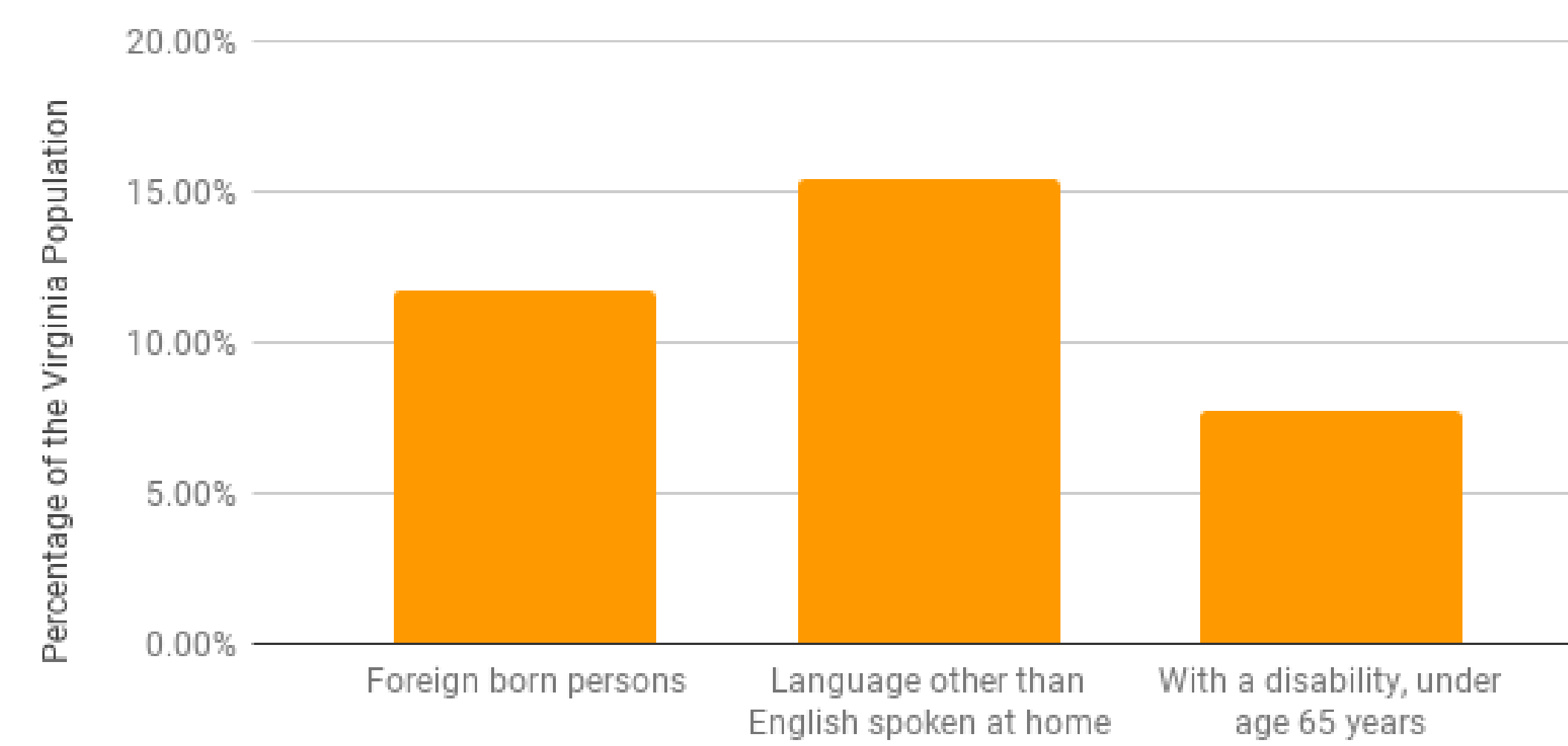
U.S. Census Bureau, 2016: Race and Hispanic Origin in Virginia



### Percentage of U.S. Adults Identifying as LGBT, 2015-2016 Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index survey

	Percentage	Sample size
Virginia	3.4%	20,357
U.S. Population	4.1%	1.6 million

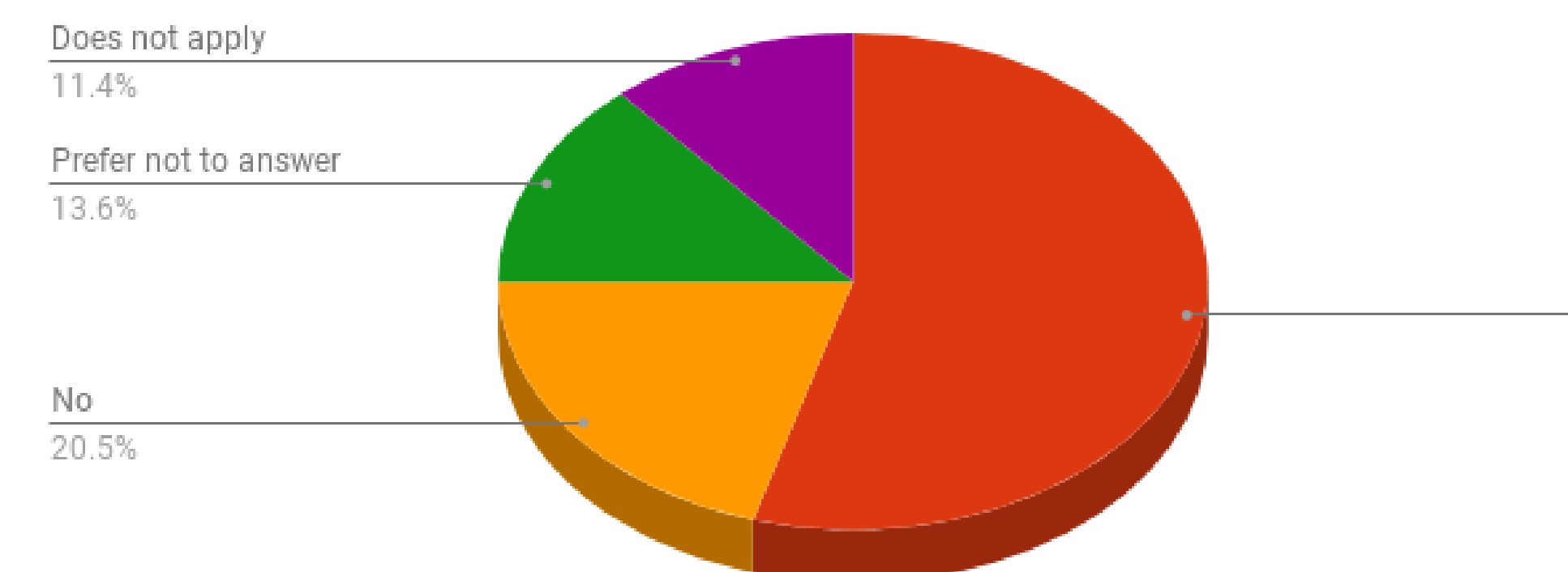
### Other Minority Groups in Virginia



Census Bureau Statistics, 2011-2015

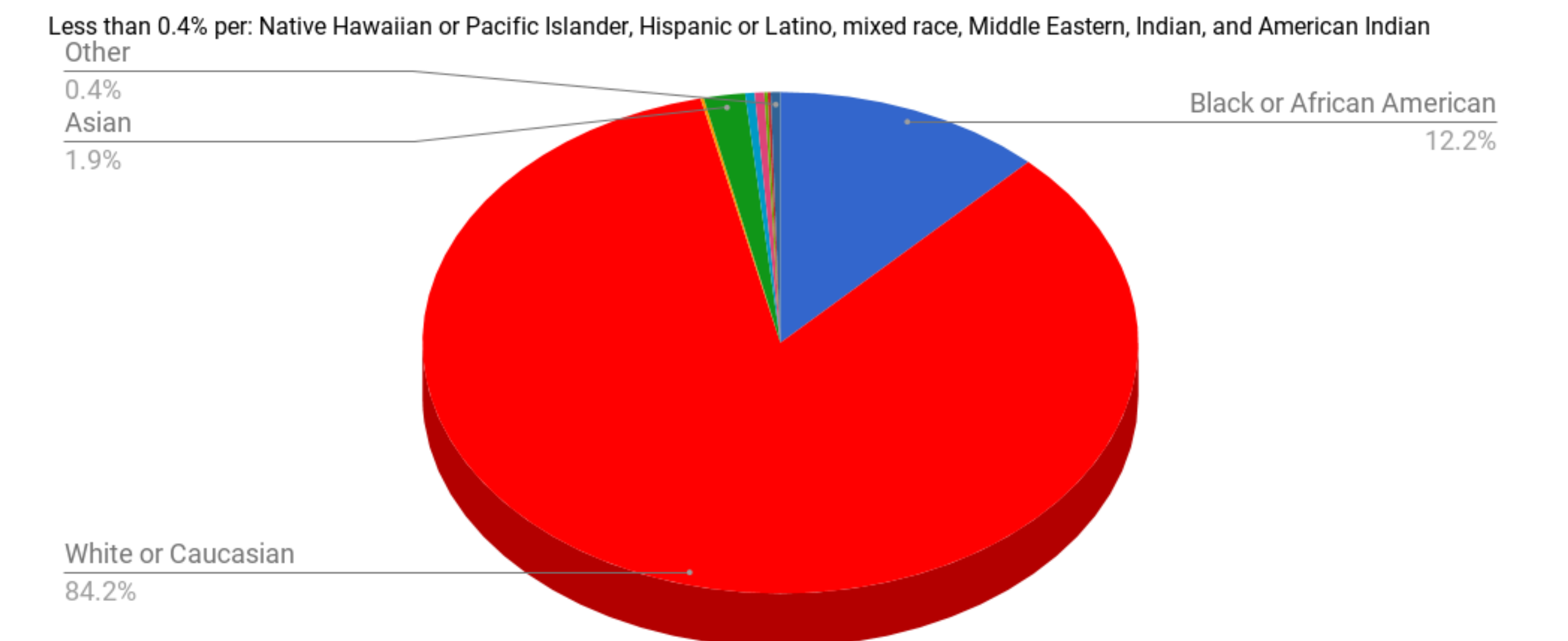
### Do you actively recruit diverse people and minorities?

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### Diversity in Virginia's Libraries

#### Public Services Staff by Race



	Total number of staff [full or part-time]	Total number of Caucasian staff	Total number of non-Caucasian staff
Public Services Staff [primarily customer-facing]	696	588 [84.4%]	108 [15.5%]
Internal Staff [primarily behind-the-scenes]	171	141 [82.5%]	30 [17.5%]
MLIS/MLS staff [those with a terminal library degree]	214	186 [86.5%]	28 [13%]

	Total number of staff [full or part-time]	Total number of disabled staff	Total number of LGBTQ+ staff
Public Services Staff [primarily customer-facing]	747	13 [1.7%]	16 [2.1%]
Internal Staff [primarily behind-the-scenes]	178	1 [0.6%]	1 [0.6%]
MLIS/MLS staff [those with a terminal library degree]	220	4 [1.8%]	8 [3.6%]

### Public Services and Internal Staff by Race

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