



Illinois Heartland Library System

MEMO TO: IHLS Board of Directors
 FROM: Leslie Bednar
 DATE: February 17, 2022
 RE: Juneteenth Holiday

Juneteenth declared both an Illinois and Federal Holiday in 2021

Governor J.B. Pritzker signed legislation declaring June 19, 2021, an official state holiday, known in Illinois as National Freedom Day, to commemorate the abolition of slavery throughout the United States and its territories in 1865. President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law on June 17, 2021, recognizing June 19 as a federal holiday known as Juneteenth National Independence Day.

History of Juneteenth

Juneteenth's commemoration is on the anniversary of the June 19, 1865, announcement of General Order No. 3, by Union Army General Gordon Granger, proclaiming freedom for slaves in Texas, which was the last state of the Confederacy with institutional slavery.

Juneteenth (officially Juneteenth National Independence Day and also known as Jubilee Day, Emancipation Day, Freedom Day, and Black Independence Day) is a federal holiday in the United States commemorating the emancipation of African American slaves. It is also often observed for celebrating African American culture. Originating in Galveston, Texas, it has been celebrated annually on June 19 in various parts of the United States since 1865.

Recognizing the day as an official holiday for Illinois Heartland Library System

Recognizing Juneteenth is a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, (DEI) initiative and, most importantly, a step toward positive change out of the respect for African American communities. We are holding DEI educational classes, creating awareness of disparities, and acting as leaders to encourage positive change with our member libraries. Adopting Juneteenth for FY2022 is an opportunity to practice what we preach, as it will demonstrate IHLS's commitment to change and create awareness within our own organization.

Adoption as an official holiday

The federal and state proclamations occurred after the IHLS Board approved the FY2022 calendar. The Board has the authority to add this holiday in FY2022, to be observed on Monday, June 20, 2022. Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) does not plan to recognize this holiday in FY2022. However, several IHLS-member public libraries have already adopted Juneteenth as a holiday.

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On February 14, 2022, the Executive Committee moved the adoption of Juneteenth as a holiday to the full board for consideration and approval.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration. Please let me know if you have any questions.