**TO:** PLA Board of Directors

**RE:** PLA Advocacy and Awareness Report

**DATE:** February 10, 2020

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:** Information

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:** N/A

**DRAFT OF MOTION:** N/A

**PLA Strategic Plan Goal: Advocacy and Awareness**

* **PLA leads in public library advocacy and influencing perceptions of public libraries.**

**DATA INITIATIVES**

*Submitted by Emily Plagman, Manager, Impact and Advocacy*

There are quite a few initiatives underway, all intended to provide PLA and its members with actionable data and resources to become more data savvy. As a reminder, the Measurement, Evaluation and Assessment Committee (MEAC) voted to “pause” the Public Library Data Service survey collection for FY19, opening up pathways to explore new data collection and analysis concepts. The following efforts are underway to 1) create new ways to view data about public libraries, 2) build library staff confidence in reporting, understanding and using data for action and 3) develop better data sets for ALA and PLA to use for advocacy on behalf of libraries.

Work underway:

* **Typologies:** this work is intended to create a set of library types, using IMLS Public Library Survey Data, that can be used by the field to quickly themselves in a peer group for future PLA survey results. Libraries would be able to self-identify the “type” they are most closely associated with and review the key demographics to see if they are in/out of range and how they compare to the median. Key demographics are likely to include mean and range of: FTE, operating budget, collection. The “types” and high-level findings from PLA surveys will live on the PLA website (free); more detailed peer comparison/benchmarking functions will live in a new data collection tool and tied to the Tech Survey data, planned for the second half of 2020 (subscription). For illustrative purposes only (NOT FINAL, STILL UNDER DEVELOPMENT):
  + Library Type X: Small (LSA of 5k or less), rural, part of a municipal taxing structure
  + Library Type Y: Large (LSA over 500k), urban, independent taxing authority
* **Technology Survey:** this survey will, in part, update the work of the Digital Inclusion Study in 2014, as well as test the concept of trend surveys as an alternative to a PLDS-type annual survey. PLA hired the American Institutes of Research to develop the sample size and administer the survey so that we can report the results as statistically valid. High-level findings will be reported on the PLA website (free), but further peer comparison/benchmarking functions will available through the new data collection tool (subscription). Data will be reported out this year.
* **Researching new data collection tool:** PLA is working with a consultant to assist in the research and development of a data collection and analysis tool that will be used to collect data about libraries; this tool (referenced above) will be built in 2020 and house any new survey data collected from public libraries (not limited to PLA members).
* **Elevating existing products in the field:** The MEAC is addressing issues related to lack of knowledge of existing data products in the field. They are planning to develop some outward type of communication to the field about what already exists. This effort came about as a result of town hall meetings held in fall 2019, in which subsequent analysis of comments revealed that many library staff are not aware of or do not have confidence in using *existing* data products that could help them with some types of decision making.
* **Public Library Data Service survey & data collection tool:** The MEAC continues to review the PLDS feedback, but all data gathered so far affirms prior understanding of the product being overly complex, difficult to use, and duplicative of IMLS’ Public Library Survey data set. While the primary loss of the sunsetting of the product as-is would be the immediate lack of timely data (as the IMLS data release lags collection by 18-24 months), there is much to be gained by making the improvements listed above over the long-term, including reduced survey burden and new statistically valid data that complements the IMLS survey data. The MEAC will consider and vote on the future of the PLDS at its PLA Conference meeting and the board will be updated about its decision in its spring meeting.

**2020 CENSUS**

*Submitted by Larra Clark, Deputy Director*

We are now moving into the final stages of preparation for peak 2020 Census operations. Most U.S. households will receive a letter asking them to respond online, by phone or by mail starting March 12. The joint ALA/PLA 2020 Census Library Outreach and Education Task Force and staff continue to develop and share resources at [www.ala.org/census](http://www.ala.org/census), most notably an updated [Libraries’ Guide to the 2020 Census](http://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org.advocacy/files/content/govinfo/Census%20Guide%20Update_Jan2020.pdf). Attendance has been high and feedback positive from webinars and an in-person [panel](https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/completing-the-count/) at ALA Midwinter Meeting (which included PLA Board and Census task force member Kelvin Watson). ALA also was able to secure funding to offer [mini-grants](http://www.ala.org/news/member-news/2019/12/ala-awards-more-100000-59-library-census-equity-fund-grantees) of $2,000 each to 59 libraries (out of more than 500 applications submitted), most of which are public libraries. PLA has added a [podcast](http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2020/01/new-podcast-the-2020-census-and-public-libraries/) to the Public Libraries Online series; the U.S. Census Bureau will exhibit at the PLA 2020 Conference (booth 1819); and PLA will host a session focused on [final census preparations](https://www.placonference.org/profile.cfm?profile_name=session&master_key=FB4C4B42-FFB8-0435-CF6E-26443177EED8&page_key=3B32BA3B-0C73-28BC-D7F3-2A5F86C92F37&xtemplate&userLGNKEY=0) Friday afternoon. The task force will sunset in June 2020.

**AWARDS**

*Submitted by Megan Stewart, Program Coordinator*

PLA opened its call for applications for the 2019-2020 awards cycle on Tuesday, September 10, 2019. The call for nominations closed on Friday, December 6, 2019. PLA accepted applications for ten (10) awards and grants during this awards cycle. Following the close of the call, each award’s jury received credentials to use in accessing the application database. The juries then had approximately five weeks to deliberate and choose a winner or winners. PLA will announce the winners’ names in February via a member news release and list them on its website (<http://www.ala.org/pla/awards>).

PLA received a total of 90 applications during the 2019-2020 awards cycle. That figure represents a considerable drop from the total number of applications received in 2017-2018 (121) and in 2018-2019 (115). The breakdown of applications received per each award over the last three cycles appears in the following table.

PLA Awards Applications Received Per Awards Cycle

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of Award** | **2017-2018** | **2018-2019** | **2019-2020** |
| Allie Beth Martin Award | 7 | 7 | 3 |
| Baker & Taylor Entertainment Audio Music / Video Product Award | 17 | 8 | 14 |
| Charlie Robinson Award | 8 | 6 | 6 |
| EBSCO Excellence in Rural Library Service Award | 8 | 8 | 2 |
| Gordon M. Conable Award | 2 | 5 | 9 |
| John Iliff Award | 11 | 15 | 7 |
| New Leaders Travel Grant  (f/k/a Demco New Leaders Travel Grant) | 9 | 2 | 4 |
| PLA Library Innovation Award  (f/k/a Upstart Innovation Award) | 34 | 29 | 21 |
| Romance Writers of America Library Grant | 17 | 26 | 21 |
| The Singer Group Helping Communities Come Together Award | 8 | 9 | 3 |
| **Total** | 121 | 115 | 90 |