**TO:** PLA Board of Directors

**FROM:** Melissa Faubel Johnson, CMP

Conference Manager

**RE:** PLA 2022 Conference Assessment

**DATE:** October 8, 2021

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:** Action Requested

## Background

PLA’s first priority in all meetings and events decisions is the safety and welfare of our attendees, exhibitors, partners and team. On December 15th, the PLA Board will decide whether to continue with the face-to-face conference as planned or cancel the face-to-face conference and instead offer an enhanced virtual conference. PLA staff continue to monitor the health, safety and travel situation and will consider the factors outlined below in making a recommendation to the PLA Board on December 15th.

The PLA Conference is the premier event for public library professionals. Like the institutions they support, the role of the public library worker is ever-changing. The COVID-19 crisis magnified this more than any of us could have imagined, but public libraries responded swiftly and creatively to meet their communities' evolving needs. The PLA 2022 Conference will provide public library professionals the opportunity to reconnect with one another, recreate the services they provide, and revitalize the passion for the work they do every day.

**PRIOR TO RECOMMENDATION**  
In addition to considering the factors below, the PLA staff will consult with the PLA 2022 Conference Co-Chairs prior to making the recommendation. Additionally, the PLA staff will consult with ALA legal counsel and local Portland conference partners before presenting the recommendation to the PLA Board.

Based on the factors below, the recommendation will either be to continue with the face-to-face PLA 2022 conference as planned or cancel the face-to-face conference and instead offer an enhanced PLA 2022 Virtual Conference.

**FACTORS**  
Below are the primary factors for consideration.

**FEDERAL AND STATE GUIDELINES AND RESTRICTIONS**

* [Guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/mass-gatherings-ready-for-covid-19.html#postponing) (CDC) and the [World Health Organization (WHO)](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance-publications?healthtopics=b6bd35a3-cf4f-4851-8e80-85cb0068335b&publishingoffices=aeebab07-3d0c-4a24-b6ef-7c11b7139e43&healthtopics-hidden=true&publishingoffices-hidden=true) regarding large gatherings
* Guidelines from the CDC on travelers prohibited from entry to the United States as well as other countries restricting travel to the U.S.
* State of Oregon Department of Health recommendations and guidelines for events to ensure public safety
* [Local directives](https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19.aspx) from the Multnomah County Health Department

**HOST CITY AND VENUE CONDITIONS**

* Oregon Convention Center safety measures
* Condition of Portland conference hotels and operations and procedures around safe and sanitary environments
* Travel Portland (Greater Portland Convention and Visitors Association) information about current COVID-19 conditions and similar-size events, as well as what is open for business. For example, are places of interest/history/culture/ restaurants/dining open and available, if so, what are the conditions of visiting?

**SAFETY AND SECURITY OF ATTENDEES AND STAFF**

* Air travel: Travel guidelines, processes, restrictions as outlined by the Federal Aviation Administration and the Transportation Security Administration will be reviewed.
* Hotels and restaurants: Are there sufficient hotel rooms available? Are there enough restaurants operating for attendees. What are the conditions for ensuring visitors have a safe, comfortable and appealing experience?

**ATTENDEES’ ABILITY TO PARTICIPATE**

* Consideration of institutional travel bans in place over our conference dates
* Current PLA Conference registration numbers

**LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

* Conference Cancellation Insurance
* Contractual Obligations to the Oregon Convention Center and PLA 2022 Conference Hotels
* Human resources liability concerns for ALA/PLA staff travelling and working at Conference
* Risk of Litigation from Attendees and Providers

## FISCAL IMPACT

## Financial impact will be assessed continually as planning for the event continues in whichever format is decided.

## Action Recommended

That the PLA Board of Directors approves:

That the above factors are adequate for the PLA Conference Co-Chairs and staff to make a recommendation for a Face-to-Face Conference or Virtual Conference to the PLA Board on December 15th.