**TO:** PLA Board of Directors

**RE:** PLA COVID Planning Framework

**DATE:** February 7, 2020

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:** Discussion

**ACTION REQUESTED BY**: Mary Hirsh, on behalf of PLA Staff

**OVERVIEW**

Library staff are navigating unprecedented situations for which there is little or no relevant preparation or training resources available. PLA staff and member leaders acted quickly to [survey](http://www.ala.org/pla/issues/covid-19/surveyoverview) the public library community and launch a series of rapid response webinars, addressing such topics as managing remote work, developing innovative services, and improving digital equity. The webinars were successful in both delivering right-in-time content and supporting peer learning and networking. Given the complexity and rolling nature of the COVID-19 crisis, new products and services need to be developed beyond these webinars.

To support these evolving CE/PD needs, PLA staff collected feedback, data, and direct requests from members. The late-March survey responses point to some next steps, including public library planning for phased re-opening, continuing to expand and introduce new services, and address health and safety concerns. Their top responses to the needs they have for state and national library organizations are: communicating the value of public libraries; working to protect, restore or expand library funding during the recovery process; and to provide guidance and training related to emergency policies. Public libraries greatest needs related to funding, health & safety, online access to library services, and preparing to meet anticipated higher demand for services for those most impacted by the crisis.

Ideas were then organized through a time-bound continuum of need and then crossed referenced with strategic plan areas. The four phases were identified as:

* Reactive: The initial weeks, focused on closing down buildings and launching digital services
* Maintaining: Getting used to working in the new abnormal
* Reopening: Preparing to safely reopen, with services that reflect new needs
* Recovering: Ongoing post-COVID operations

There are several ideas that PLA staff can handle without much additional cost or effort. For example, PLA deepened its partnership with Microsoft to make hotspots and training available to rural libraries. The professional tools page was reorganized to include COVID-related materials. Staff have other ideas on redeploying existing resources in new ways to meet the current challenges.

Several ideas came up that would require new investment in both time and money. Specific content around reopening policies and procedures is not included. ALA is convening a COVID Recovery Initiative (see doc 2020.61c for more info) which PLA is involved in. PLA is also supporting work that is being led by IMLS and state chapters and state libraries. Also, critical questions remain on threading advocacy and EDISJ content throughout.

New CE/PD ideas are presented below, organized by strategic plan goal area. Each has both revenue-generating and partnership potential. In-progress PLA activities will continue alongside any new work, such as paid webinars and the Family Engagement series.

We welcome the board’s feedback and input.

Transformation

**Library as a Recovery Resource**: Provide material and training to position libraries as key players in community stability, including workforce development, health insurance sign-up support, navigating new federal relief resources.

**Intended outcomes**: Increased alignment of library resources to community needs; increased understanding of library as vital community resource; Increased skills and capacity to meet patron needs

**Phase**: Reopening/Recover

**Level of effort and expense**: Moderate

**Addressing Academic Slide:** Extend traditional roll of plugging summer slide gaps to address learning loss from ongoing school closures and prepare for the potential to support schools operating in new/reduced capacities.

**Intended outcomes:** Increased ability to promote learning and school achievement, Increased teaching and training skills; Increased ability to partner with local school

**Phase:** Reopening

**Level of effort and expense:** High

Leadership

**Director’s Summit**: For current library directors to reflect on strengths and gaps in crisis response so far to increase effectiveness of leadership going forward.

**Intended outcomes**: Increased understanding of leadership best practices; Increased ability to manage change

**Phase**: Reopening

**Level of effort and expense**: Moderate

**Virtual Leadership Symposium:** Online event for both emerging and established leaders to extend and compliment Leadership Academy content. This is not a replacement for the in-person academy.

 **Intended outcomes:** Increased number of library leaders access relevant training

 **Phase:** Recovery

 **Level of effort and expense:** High

Advocacy and Awareness

**Amplify state and federal advocacy resources**: Work with Public Policy & Advocacy Office to identify and customize, as needed, resources for public library leaders

**Intended Outcomes**: Quickly add to the available resources for public libraries to make their case at all levels of government in the context of the current crisis

 **Phase**: Maintaining and beyond

 **Level of effort and expense**: Low

**Gather, analyze and promote public library data and research**: Work with IMLS, state libraries and public library collaborators to increase decisionmaker awareness of library roles and needs

 **Intended Outcomes**: Inform members and use data to directly and indirectly advocate with external decisionmakers

 **Phase**: Reactive and throughout

 **Level of effort and expense:** Medium/high

**Turning the Page 3.0**: Revise and relaunch signature advocacy training content, including new Project-Outcome-based modules.

**Intended Outcomes:** Increased advocacy skills and confidence; Increased or maintained library budgets in contracting economy

**Phase:** Recovery

**Level of effort and expense:** High

EDISJ

**EDISJ Virtual Town Hall Series:** Redeploy EDISJ training content to be virtual and address equity issues that have been exacerbated by crisis, including enhanced community stresses (employment, access to services/benefits, digital equity), and consider developing new content about equity issues directly impacting library staff such as working conditions and furloughs/layoffs.

**Intended Outcomes:** Increased understanding of disparate impact of crisis; Increased ability to apply equity lens to recovery plans; Increased ability to apply EDISJ principles internally

**Phase:** Reopening/Recovery

**Level of effort and expense:** High

**Trauma-Informed Care Series:** Re-run the trauma informed care webinar series, with a special focus on mental health impact of crisis and its aftermath.

 **Intended outcomes:** Increased ability to serve patrons experiencing trauma

 **Phase:** Reopening

 **Level of effort and expense:** Low

Organizational Excellence

**Member Engagement**: Consider how committee and board work can be better supported and effective through virtual channels. Create regular virtual meeting calendars, some staff facilitated where possible so that committees stay on track and become accustomed to virtual engagement.

**Intended outcomes:** Continued/increased member engagement using virtual channels; on-going support

 **Phase:** All phases

 **Level of effort and expense:** Medium

**Financial sustainability:** Revisit FY21 budget to realign for programs postponed/cancelled and new and to account for financial impacts on public library budgets post-COVID. Include focus on earlier PLA2022 planning. PLA conference is cornerstone of PLA’s finances and programming. It will need to be recalibrated to ensure continuing success.

**Intended outcomes:** Sustainability

 **Phase:** All phases

 **Level of effort and expense:** Medium

**External Partnerships/Grants:** Strategize about leveraging new resources from current funding partners and identifying prospects for future grants. Focus on aligning this support to existing programs (many of which are relevant to libraries and communities recovering post-COVID) rather than new work.

**Intended outcomes:** Sustainability

              **Phase:** All phases

              **Level of effort and expense:** High