**TO:** PLA Board of Directors

**RE:** Recognize PLA Social Worker Task Force contributions and sunset in current form

**DATE:** June 17, 2022

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:**

Recognize significant contributions and sunset PLA Social Worker Task Force

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:**

Kathleen Hughes, Manager, Publications

Larra Clark, Deputy Director

**DRAFT OF MOTION:**

Recognize PLA Social Worker Task Force and its members for developing foundational resources for public libraries in the emerging service of addressing social service needs of customers. With thanks, sunset PLA Social Worker Task Force at conclusion of 2022 Annual Conference with expectation of future proposal for engaging social workers and other allied professionals in the public library field to advance PLA mission and strategic goals.

**BACKGROUND**

The Social Worker Task Force was created in 2018 with the charge: To develop and recommend a strategic and coordinated approach for PLA related to how public libraries address the social service needs of customers. The task force will identify best practices and will consider resources to be developed that will allow PLA to offer guidance and technical support to libraries. Task force activities include but are not limited to: recommendations for training and ways to engage library staff on the topic; identification of model programs in order to generate and share best practices; consideration of how social work methods can be integrated into libraries and PLA's educational programming; identifying ways PLA might influence social work services within public libraries; and helping libraries serve diverse communities. The group will also work to ensure that the model developed here can be adapted to support other non-librarian professionals working in public libraries (i.e., early literacy experts, IT staff, etc.).

Since then, the Task Force has developed foundational resources and provided training, culminating in the release of the Trauma-Informed Framework for Supporting Patrons and the related sold-out PLA 2022 preconference using the framework.

Over time, however, the Task Force also has experienced declining membership. While there are several factors both personal and social (e.g., pandemic pressures), there also are financial and professional issues specific to this PLA group, comprised of allied professionals from the field of social work. Current members’ terms of service expire at the end of June.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

The PLA Social Worker Task Force has networked allied professionals in public libraries, identified best practices, and developed resources and training to disseminate these practices to the public library field. Highlights of their work include:

* Developing a strategic and coordinated approach for public libraries to address social service needs of customers by providing first an Overview of Trauma-Informed Care and ultimately developing and publishing the ALA Editions book *A Trauma-Informed Framework for Supporting Patrons: The PLA Workbook of Best Practices.* Published in March 2022, the title already has sold more than 600 copies.
* Convening an Ideas Exchange of social workers across the country to initiate the Task Force’s work and connect these allied professionals and develop resources and training for public libraries. This networking and sharing continued through a monthly online social work forum (2018-2020) in which Task Force members answered questions and shared experiences. The Social Work Interest Group hosts more than 300 members.
* Developed PLA web page of [Resources for Serving Persons Experiencing Homelessness](https://www.ala.org/pla/resources/tools/homelessness) as a central hub for public libraries featuring articles with effective practices developed and delivered by Task Force members.
* Provided timely training that included the “Why Trauma-Informed? A PLA Social Worker Task Force Webinar,” “Social Worker Dialogue on Reopening,” and “Public Libraries Respond to COVID-19 Strategies for Managing Stress and Anxiety” webinars as well as conference presentations: Social Workers in Public Libraries: Lessons Learned, The Person-Centered Approach to Providing Library Services, and Social Work Inspired Best Practices for Supporting Patrons.
* Created and disseminated [‘Guidance for Social Work Positions at the Library](http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2021/09/guidance-for-social-work-positions-at-the-library/).”

The Task Force has met its original charge and provided significant contributions to PLA and the public library field.

**CURRENT STATUS**

Work has begun to develop a new structure for supporting social workers and other allied professionals in advising PLA in this emerging service area and supporting transformation in the public library field, but additional discussion and consultation is needed to explore implications and next steps within PLA priorities and practice for the 2022-2026 PLA Strategic Plan period. PLA’s immediate next step will be to contract with Task Force members and other social worker subject matter experts to develop proposal for PLA structure and support continuing education project(s) tied to increasing awareness and use of the trauma-informed framework to advance PLA mission and strategic goals.

**RECOMMENDATION**

PLA sunset the task force at the same time current members’ terms expire at the end of the month.