**TO:** PLA Board of Directors

**FROM:** Barb Macikas

**RE:** PLA Communication to ALA

**DATE:** October 19, 2018

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

**OVERVIEW**

Last spring the board discussed how PLA might better communicate with ALA, especially ALA Council and Councilors who are PLA members. ALA is at a critical juncture, with many foundational issues being considered simultaneously. How might PLA support our PLA Councilor and regularly provide input to the Executive Board, Council, and other ALA divisions?

ALA Council should be aware of PLA’s thinking and contributions to ALA as it will be called upon to act based on recommendations for potential structural and financial changes. ALA Council is composed of 182 members. This includes 100 councilors-at-large who have no constituencies as well as one representative from each division; state chapter; and round table (so long as they have a membership that is 1% or more than ALA’s total membership). Of the total number on Council, as of the last count 59 are PLA members.

Considerations for the board:

* PLA should continue to leverage its relationship with other ALA divisions, sharing our positions and concerns and encouraging agreement and buy in across ALA division boards. We are stronger together.
* PLA should communicate with the ALA Executive Board and Council and with other PLA members and supporters serving on various ALA committees.
* Last May we talked about hosting an event for Councilors at the 2018 ALA Conference that would give PLA a chance to share our rationale and strategies related to Document 2019.3 (PLA Document re: ALA Investment). Due to limited time and the multiple conflicts inherent in ALA Conference, especially for ALA Councilors, that event was not held. Should we host Councilors (other divisions? committees?) to share ideas and concerns at Midwinter?
* If finding a time to meet with PLA members who are Councilors at conference proves too challenging (or even if it doesn’t), might we also consider regular communication with Council and other divisions such as a specific e-news focused on governance, finance, and PLA news?
* The chair of the PLA Budget & Finance Committee Clara Bohrer has offered to write a periodic column for *Public Libraries* and PLA E-News. The column will serve to inform PLA members about PLA and ALA finances and sustainability, as well as about the financial support PLA provides ALA.
* In the above communication or in a separate one, we need to inform PLA members about the on-going “[Organizational Effectiveness](http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2018/06/ala-president-jim-neal-announces-new-steering-committee-examine-tomorrow-s)” group that ALA has convened to make recommendations related to realign ALA’s structure. PLA past presidents Felton Thomas and Vailey Oehlke serve on this group.
* In the long term, PLA needs to determine strategies to get more PLA members onto ALA bodies to represent PLA. Those members need to be educated regularly about the conversations and concerns of the PLA board. Supporting PLA members to run, getting them elected, and encouraging them to stay on Council and be vocal are difficult challenges; however, we need to start somewhere.

**BUDGET**

Budget implications will depend upon what/how we communicate and what the Board sees as priorities. PLA has both the fund balance and grant funding earmarked from the Gates grant to building a stronger association that can be tapped.

**ASSESSMENT**

PLA should assess the impact of communication and outreach after one year and revise plans accordingly.

**PLA STRATEGIC GOAL LINK (check all that apply)**

[ ]  TRANSFORMATION [ ]  LEADERSHIP [ ]  ADV. & AWARENESS [ ]  E.D.I.S.J. [x]  ORG. EXCELLENCE