**TO:** PLA Board of Directors

**RE:** PLA Social Work Programs

**DATE:** February 7, 2020

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:**

Action Requested

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:**

PLA staff and Cindy Fesemyer, PLA Board of Directors

**DRAFT OF MOTION:**

The PLA Board votes to approve exploring a partnership between the COSLA Continuing Education Coordinators and PLA in order to develop a new training series focused on social work resources for public libraries.

**OVERVIEW**

PLA created a [Social Worker Task Force](http://www.ala.org/pla/about/people/committees/pla-tfsocwork) in 2018 in response to the needs of public libraries for social service expertise provided by social workers. Many public libraries have added social workers to their staffs or have contracted with social work agencies to support the library’s work. At the same time, professional development resources on the topic are limited and, in some cases, what is available is not of high quality nor focused on trauma-informed care. The PLA Social Worker Task Force has developed a range of programming including:

* Preconference programming at [ALA 2019](http://www.ala.org/pla/education/conferences/alaannual/19preconference) and [PLA 2020](https://www.placonference.org/profile.cfm?profile_name=session&master_key=4B910548-019C-064A-D2AC-08E5ABD1DBD2&page_key=963BA627-24CB-4C67-BFC6-3DFC7E60C1BC&xtemplate&userLGNKEY=0)
* Several webinars:
* [Why Trauma-Informed? A PLA Social Worker Task Force Webinar](http://www.ala.org/pla/education/onlinelearning/webinars/ondemand/whytraumainformed)
* [Understanding Trauma-Informed Approaches in Libraries](http://www.ala.org/pla/education/onlinelearning/webinars/ondemand/traumainformed)
* Applying Trauma-Informed Concepts to Reduce Harm offered December 18. Link to follow. This webinar—the third in the series—will address specific scenarios and help participants begin to use trauma-informed concepts to address concerns before they arise and when they arise. By incorporating concepts and research covered in the first two webinars, attendees will learn how to look through a trauma-informed lens and will gain ideas to consider when approaching an interaction.
* A column [Public Libraries online.](http://publiclibrariesonline.org/tag/social-work-column/)
* Various feature articles in Public Libraries magazine.
* [A regularly-scheduled virtual forum.](http://www.ala.org/pla/education/onlinelearning/socialworkforums)
* Two publications are in progress:

A Holistic Approach to Library Services (Scheduled late summer 2020).

Trauma-Informed Workbook (Trauma-Informed considerations for various library scenarios). (Scheduled by annual conference 2020).

* The SWTF, working with PLA staff, has begun collecting data from library directors to get baseline information on social workers in PLs. The data collected will help gain an understanding of how many libraries have social workers, why they were needed, and how they are funded. Data will be used to track trends; and to better understand/manage/target PLA’s response. Currently most information about social work in public libraries is anecdotal.
* PLA has set up a site on ALA Connect open to the public to post questions and share information. Additionally, PLA continues to develop resources for public libraries. PLA staff are working on an FAQ to be posted to PLA’s website.

As PLA considers how best to continue addressing needs, we have an opportunity to partner with state library agencies in order to develop new content through the work of PLA board member Cindy Fesemyer. COSLA CE Coordinators met in August and have started their own SW Task Force. They, too, are concerned about the limited resources for training available. Cindy is a member of the COSLA group and was asked about the possibility of PLA and COSLA partnering to create a series of deep-dive webinars on aspects of SW work. The webinars would be a series and would build over the course of several months. PLA and COSLA would work together to find funding to create the series. The webinars would dovetail with live trainings at the state level and offer opportunity for in-person work. The partnership would be a good opportunity for PLA to explore a blended training program (webinars and face-to-face), as well as creating new pathways to work with COSLA. If the board approves exploring partnership next steps, staff and Cindy will continue discussions with COSLA and research financial implications and timelines for training.