**TO:** PLA Board of Directors

**RE:** PLA Operations Combined Report

**DATE:** November 2, 2023

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

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:**N/A

**DRAFT OF MOTION:**N/A

**MEMBERSHIP**

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

*Submitted by Samantha Lopez, Manager, Marketing & Membership*

**Membership Statistics**

The total ALA membership count as of August 2023 was 48,008, down by 3% from the count of 49,705 at the end of FY22. Per ALA MRS, during single division conference fiscal years, ALA membership counts are historically lower than years with two division conferences.

The total PLA membership count as of August 2023 was 7,001, down by 16% from the count of 8,375 at the end of August 2022. The table below compares membership statistics since FY20, with odd numbered fiscal years representing non-conference years. The table below shows the difference from the first month to the last month of the past four fiscal years. The drop off in membership during FY21 and FY22 is typical of membership loss patters during non-conference years. Note: 16% drop off between August 2022 and August 2023 is less extreme than the 21% drop off between August 2020 and August 2021.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Month** | **FY23** | **FY22** | **FY21** | **FY20** |
| September | 8,330 | 7,319 | 9,162 | 8,261 |
| August | 7,001 | 8,375 | 7,284 | 9,261 |
| **Change from start of FY** | **(-1,329)** | **+1,056** | **(-1,878)** | **+1,000** |

**FY24 Membership Activities**

Drip Campaign

During FY23, in November 2022, in collaboration with ALA MRS, PLA launched its first “automatic drip” campaign utilizing ALA’s email platform. The goal of the drip campaign was to onboard new members, increase awareness of PLA resources and engagement opportunities, and increase member retention. This campaign was targeted to new members only, and did a monthly introduction to PLA activities, resources, and benefits over the course of six months, concluding in a survey during the seventh month. Since launching, 451 members have completed the campaign and 366 are currently in progress. PLA will continue to run this campaign in FY24 to determine whether results vary in a conference year, and see the percentage of members that renewed.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Subject** | **Recipients** | **Unique Opens** | **Unique Clicks** |
| 7: Follow-up Survey | How Is Your First Year with PLA Going? | 409 | 198 | 19 |
| 6: Get Involved with PLA | Get Involved with PLA | 450 | 204 | 17 |
| 5: Library Resources | Unlock Library Resources | 508 | 280 | 22 |
| 4: Professional Development | Professional Development Opportunities Await You | 561 | 287 | 28 |
| 3: News & Trends | Discover the Latest in Public Library News & Trends | 647 | 310 | 28 |
| 2: Grow Your Connections | Meet Your New Community of Library People | 768 | 444 | 38 |
| 1: Welcome to PLA! | Welcome to the Public Library Association! | 814 | 555 | 156 |

The drip campaign includes evaluations, with very few completing the final follow-up survey. The New Member Survey (response total: 297) shows:

* Almost half of respondents reported being in the library profession for 5 years or less
* 50% identify as serving medium, medium/large, or large service areas, with 18% serving small to very small
* An almost even split on who pays for membership (51% self-paid; 44% employer-paid)
* Top three priorities for new members:
  + staying up to date on the latest library issues and trends
  + access to library resources & tools
  + professional development
* Issues/topics members would like to see PLA provide professional development around, include: intellectual freedom, management/leadership, disability services, community engagement, and EDI. These topic priorities align with the Fall/Winter webinar and PLA 2024 Conference program selections.

PLA 2024 Conference

PLA 2024 Conference registration kicked off October 12, 2024. We hope the $294 savings with the Early Bird member discount will entice conference attendees to join PLA in addition to registering for the conference. We know this is a challenge given the 5% increase in ALA/PLA dues and conference registration fees. PLA gained around 1,500 new and reinstated members in 2022 and we hope to match or increase this number based on the conference’s accessible/affordable location (Columbus, OH) and the lack of restrictions/complications the pandemic caused for PLA 2022.

PLA is also increasing our scholarship program this year and will be giving away 50 scholarships in five categories—Early-career or Un/Under Employed Library Staff; Small/Rural Library Staff; Library School Students; Current or Past Spectrum Scholars Working in a Public Library; and ALA Ethnic Affiliate Members. Scholarships will cover conference registration fees, up to $750 travel stipend, and one free year of ALA/PLA membership.

The PLA Membership Advisory Group will continue to reach out to new members via email, welcoming them to PLA, and create member engagement activities during the PLA Conference.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

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

*Submitted by Samantha Lopez, Manager, Marketing & Membership, and Eliana Kleiman, Communications Associate*

Social Media

In FY23, PLA posted consistent content and engaged with audiences across Instagram, Twitter (now X), and Facebook. PLA also prioritized focusing on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice (EDISJ) across our communications channels, with a total of 144 EDISJ-related social media posts. The table below reflects the total impressions, potential reach, and engagement totals for FY23. This was

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Instagram** | **Twitter (X)** | **Facebook** |
| **Impressions** | 86,833 | 103,407 | 240,725 |
| **Potential Reach** | 80,124 | 6,387,838 | 170,449 |
| **Engagements** | 4,600 | 2,372 | 5,643 |

PLA occasionally spends marketing on paid social media ads. This year, we ran two paid social media ads on Facebook and Instagram to promote the call for PLA 2024 Conference proposal and the PLA Digital Literacy Workshop Incentives, supported by AT&T. The digital literacy incentive ad spent $327.04 and received: 448 link clicks; 31,641 reaches; and 58,17 impressions. The conference proposal ad spent $245.70 and received: 581 link clicks; 37,056 reaches; and 86,943 impressions. These results are significantly (up to thousands) more than what we typically receive on a non-paid post. For example, a single paid ad gained 86k impressions, while the total for the year in non-paid Instagram impressions was 86k.

Email

PLA sent a total of 123 e-blasts throughout FY23, promoting webinars, volunteer opportunities, news and updates, grants, and sponsored content. According to the 2022 Email Benchmarking Report from Higher Logic, ALA’s email and online community platform, the association industry in the U.S. had an average open rate of 31% and average click rate of 1.49%. PLA’s FY23 emails were delivered to an average audience size of 14,846, with an average open rate of 34%, click rate of 8.27%, and unsubscribe of 4. Starting in January 2023, PLA also changed the process and delivery of our members-only e-newsletter, rebranded *PLA Insider*, from monthly to biweekly. This change was designed to make content more digestible to members, promote PLA opportunities more frequently, and increase ad/sponsorship sales opportunities. *PLA Insider* continues to see good engagement with an average open rate of 37%, click rate of 17%, and forward rate of 592.

PLA continues to see an increase in sponsorship revenue, with 19 sponsored e-blasts sent in FY23, a yearly record. This figure does not include e-news that included sponsored ads.

Member Spotlight

PLA launched its new "Member Spotlight" series, featuring the stories and professional journeys of PLA members. Eight members were featured as Member Spotlights since launching this series in January 2023. Stories were featured in e-news, on social media, and on Public Libraries Online. A compilation of the stories can be found here: <https://publiclibrariesonline.org/2023/09/pla-member-spotlights/>. Recently featured members utilized the spotlight to uplift projects at their libraries—from Richland Library's Let's Talk Race Curriculum (PLA Board’s own Tamara King) to Brooklyn Public Library's Books Unbanned initiative (Amy Mikel).

Press Releases

PLA also published [16 press releases](https://www.ala.org/news/taxonomy/term/583) in FY23. PLA kicked off FY23 with a refresh of its strategic goals, which position Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice (EDISJ) at the center. PLA responded to emergent concerns in the library field, such as with the announcement of the free virtual town hall with ARSL and ULC that addressed safety and threats in public libraries. Several releases throughout the year highlighted PLA's ongoing commitment to digital literacy, such as the launch of the Super Searchers training program and the announcement of $1.27 million that PLA awarded to more than 200 public libraries for this year's expanded Digital Literacy Workshop Incentive and ACP Workshop Incentive, supported by AT&T.