TO: PLA Board of Directors

RE: Social Work Task Force

DATE: April 8, 2020

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:

Action Requested

ACTION REQUESTED BY:

Jean Badalamenti, Leah Esguerra, and Elissa Hardy, current co-chairs, Social Work Task Force

DRAFT OF MOTION:

1) The PLA Board of Directors hereby approves the PLA Social Work Task Force to continue for another two-year term, from July 2020 to June 2022, with reappointments and new appointments to occur in the spring of 2020 by incoming President Michelle Jeske.

BACKGROUND

The PLA Social Work Task Force is currently co-chaired by Jean Badalamenti, DC Public Library; Leah Esguerra, San Francisco Public Library; and Elissa Hardy, Denver Public Library. The Task Force was created in fall of 2018. The Current Task Force plans to transition to new co-chairs and will discuss the opportunity with potential candidates from among members of the task force and provide recommendations for these appointments by June 1, 2020.

MISSION

The Social Work in Public Libraries task force will 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.).

Work In-Progress or Completed:

* 2019-2020 Webinar Series on Trauma-Informed Library Service
* Covid-19 Webinar on Managing Stress
* Created a document “Trauma-Informed Care” to combat misinformation in the field.
* Social Work in Public Libraries Virtual Forum Series
* ALA Annual Conference 2019 Preconference Program
* One Hour Programming at 2019 Annual Conference-Social Work in Public Libraries: Lessons Learned
* Initial Data Collection Efforts
* Monitor and add content and documents to the Social Work Interest Group on ALA Connect
* Contributed feature articles to Public Libraries magazine and Public Libraries Online.
* Recorded podcast episodes.
* Working on two publications: “A Holistic Approach to Library Social Services” and an untitled (for now) workbook of social worker-tested and researched methods for responding to various public library scenarios.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BOARD ACTION

Task Force co-chairs and members believe there is substantial work needed to continue to share SW-approved and researched methods with public librarians. In addition, as the field of social work in public libraries continues to grow, there is a need for a cohesive voice. We’ve outlined an ambitious program of publications and education, which will educate and inform this evolving field. Therefore, we are recommending the PLA Board of Directors approve the Task Force to continue for another two-year term.

New Initiatives to be completed in the next two-year term:

Obtain support and technical assistance from NASW and other mental health professional organizations.

Build partnerships with other national organizations such as National Healthcare for the Homeless, National Alliance to End Homelessness, Harm Reduction Coalition, American Public Health Association, etc.

Develop training for statewide library systems.

In addition to these new initiatives, the group will continue to:

Identify social work/library world issues and topics and develop publications and/or training to meet those needs.

Work on publications in progress.

Strengthen the Social Work Interest Group on ALA connect.

Further data collection efforts.