**TO:** PLA Board of Directors

**FROM:** PLA Staff

**RE:** PLA Initiatives Report, combined

**DATE:** October 9, 2018

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:** Report

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:**

**DRAFT OF MOTION:**  N/A

**OVERVIEW**

This report contains updates on a number of PLA special initiatives.

**Opioids**

PLA and OCLC received confirmation in late August that we’d received IMLS [funding](https://www.oclc.org/en/news/releases/2018/20181002-oclc-awarded-imls-grant.html) to support the “Public Libraries Respond to the Opioid Epidemic with Their Community” project. The total grant amount is $249,714. OCLC will handle project management, contractors and more, and PLA will receive a subcontract of $13,500 primarily to manage the steering committee. The 16-month effort will (1) produce eight case studies that explore a diverse set of communities in which the library is an active partner in response to the opioid epidemic; (2) through virtual discussion sessions, gather additional insights and resources from government agencies, public health and human services organizations, philanthropic and community organizations, and library leaders; (3) synthesize the research and cross-sector perspectives into a call-to-action white paper that offers resources and recommendations for how libraries might respond to the opioid epidemic in their local communities; and (4) broadly share the information with public library directors and their staff so that they can more confidently make better-informed decisions about their libraries’ strategies, policies, and activities in relation to the opioid epidemic in their communities.

Work already is well underway, including the recruitment and orientation of the steering committee, which includes PLA Board Member Michelle Jeske, as well as representatives from the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. The first priority is to finalize the case study methodology and interview questions so they can be reviewed by an Independent Review Board (IRB), pre-tested and used on site visits. It is anticipated that research will be complete by the end of January or early February 2019*. (Allen & Clark)*

**2020 Census**

The 2020 Census Library Outreach and Education Task Force jointly formed by PLA and the ALA Washington Office began meeting at the 2018 Annual Conference and has had one conference call since then. Preliminary activities have included:

* developing program proposals for the ALA Midwinter and Annual Conferences,
* developing a briefing document that outlines the roles that libraries can and do play to support an accurate and inclusive Census (available at <https://bit.ly/CountOnLibraries>),
* outreach and engagement with Census advocates and the Census Bureau directly,
* opposing the addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 Census,
* encouraging libraries to participate in state and local Complete Count Committees, and
* coordinating public library participation in an October 24 Census Solutions Workshop in Chicago.

An overall focus for the task force is to identify library needs to support an inclusive Census and work to meet these needs. Key areas that have been identified include accurate information and resources for library staff to plan and meet patron needs, promotional information to increase awareness and engagement with the Census, and appropriate technology to serve patrons—including secure networks and adequate devices. We are currently exploring ways to address these needs.

The Census Bureau has committed to being visible at library conferences to engage library staff and answer questions. They have exhibited at the ALA Annual Conference, the Joint Conference of Librarians of Color and the New England Library Association conference in 2018. *(Clark)*

**Engaging federal agencies and national associations**

Several national associations were recently prioritized by the PLA Advocacy & Strategic Partnerships Committee: National Association of Counties (NACo), National League of Cities (NLC), International City-County Management Association (ICMA) and the US Chamber of Commerce. Since June, there has been significant engagement with NACo, including PLA member and staff presentations at their [July conference](http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2018/07/pla-at-national-association-of-counties-conference/), and follow-up meetings and conversations touching on the Census, the opioid crisis, mapping county assets (including libraries), family engagement and early learning.

We also have been in touch with NLC related to the Census, and NLC staff have been part of discussions about updating the PLA Leadership Academy model. And, we’ve definitely increased our profile with the Census Bureau. In addition to groups prioritized by the committee, PLA is advancing relationships with many other organizations as part of specific initiatives, including our health work (National Library of Medicine and its regions), family engagement work (via presentations at the Institute for Educational Leadership, National Center for Families learning, and National Head Start Association conferences), and EDI work (Government Alliance on Race and Equity). *(Allen & Clark)*

**Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

PLA’s EDI Task Force will be contracting with Mia Henry, from the Arcus Center for Social Justice, to conduct 3 trainings in 2019. The first day will focus on understanding power and oppression generally and personally, and teach a shared language of EDI terms and concepts, equity tools and frameworks that support institutional change, and historical/systemic inequality. The second, half day will be led by our Task Force members and be focused on practical applications to libraries and concrete examples, in part building off of the GARE Advancing Racial Equity in Libraries report. Events are planned for Denver (February 2019), Charleston (August 2019), and Chicago (October 2019) and will be capped at 60-75 people. Details such as budget and registration fee, locations, and how to connect learners together in some type of cohort are being determined now. The Task Force has also worked on a webinar and Midwinter Institute for PLA. Otherwise, the Task Force wrapped up input to the PLA strategic plan, weighed in on the ALA meetings rooms policy, started advising on PLA 2020 community immersion plans, and continued its e-mail newsletter. *(Allen)*

**Digital Literacy**

The Digital Literacy Committee continues to work on its many ideas, including expanding educational content around digital literacy instruction, instructional design, and more and also building out content for DigitalLearn.org using library school students and other strategies. Staff is also attempting to secure resources for additional translations of the site (about $60,000 is needed to launch all of the current content in a new language). We are responding to significant interest from library leaders in Germany and working with PLA volunteers to identify other sources of support, such as large employers of low-skilled, potentially immigrant workers who could benefit from computer skills. Discussions are also continuing with Microsoft Philanthropies about a potential 3-year joint initiative to provide hardware and digital literacy training to small and rural libraries (see Board email sent on September 24, 2018). The Microsoft employee auction is confirmed and in process and will provide PLA with $250,000-$400,000 for hardware, however the larger umbrella initiative is still under discussion. *(Allen & Wood)*

**Health**

* Libraries Connecting You to Coverage: This new, August 2018 – May 2019 grant funded project is underway. PLA has created a page of resources for public libraries, including links to a wealth of communication materials about the Affordable Care Act and its enrollment periods. By the time of the board meeting, we will have opened up our call for $300 mini grant applications, inviting PLA members to apply and then use the funds to do simple things – distribute materials, promote in social media, link on web site, etc. – to promote insurance enrollment. We hope these resources will help public libraries actively promote the ACA during the open enrollment period, November 1-December 15, 2018. After that, PLA will use the remaining time and funding to collect information on how public libraries can promote enrollment, provide tools related to special enrollment periods, do webinars and articles about public library work in this area, and help libraries plan for 2019.
* National Library of Medicine (NLM) and related partnerships: PLA continues to work with NLM in three capacities. 1) A subset of regional medical libraries seems likely to fund Project Outcome (to develop a new set of health programming/health literacy questions; to help set up groups for NLM/NNLM staff and for public libraries getting NNLM grants to do programs; and to provide related training to NLM staff and public libraries). 2) The NNLM Pacific Northwest Regional Medical Library is providing PLA with about $20,000 to support a 2019 Midwinter Meeting Institute on health equity along with related activity (a webinar, podcast or article, etc.) to help extend the educational content beyond Midwinter attendees. 3) Staff continue to participate in regular calls with NNLM and all the regional medical libraries to discuss a longer-term partnership with NLM and the All of Us Initiative. *(Allen & Wood)*

**Inclusive Internship Initiative**

The 2018 Inclusive Internship Initiative cohort gathered in Chicago for the wrap-up Sept. 28-30. This second iteration of the program realized similar successful results as the 2017 pilot. At least six interns continue to work in libraries (paid, volunteer, or work study). Two libraries have been able to add paid interns to their budgets. Others are working to amend HR policies to do so. A full evaluation is in progress; PLA staff will share relevant results as available.

IMLS has extended a third round of funding to support III in 2019. IMLS will prove $313,606 against PLA’s $332,228 cost share. The application will open in early January. PLA will use this extended lead time to build in more deliberate EDI and mentor training for participating libraries. ALA’s Development Office is research possible funders for beyond 2019. The additional year of IMLS funding will enable PLA to secure long-term support for the initiative. *(Hirsh)*

**Strategic Planning for Public Libraries**

PLA is currently convening a small, informal group on strategic planning, bringing together experienced public librarians for some conversations about what an ideal strategic planning resource or resources from PLA might look like. With input from the Board, PLA selected a group of 8 public librarians who come from a variety of library types, sizes, and locations to participate in these discussions. We hosted the first discussion in September and anticipate holding 2 additional conversations this fall. This activity connects directly with PLA’s goal areas of Transformation and Leadership. The feedback from these conversations will inform next steps in developing new, or updating existing, PLA resources on strategic planning. There are no current evaluation plans or budget implications, but the ultimate outcome of this activity will be recommendations for new revenue-generating content streams. *(Maycock)*

**Project Outcome**

Project Outcome continues to see registration growth despite a planned reduction in webinars and conference presentation over the past 10 months. As of October, there are over 186,000 patron surveys stored in the system, which includes an estimated 22,000 summer reading survey responses collected for summer 2018. A cohort of University of Michigan students studying statistics will spend the fall semester examining the raw data of all the survey results and will share any insights into data trends from the library or patron perspectives. Staff continue to explore opportunities to engage libraries and share their experiences measuring outcomes, including hosting a successful summer reading survey panel with 8 library staff sharing. We were then able to leverage that information to develop new content for upcoming webinars. *(Plagman)*

**Social Work in Public Libraries**

PLA recognizes the hiring of social work professionals in public libraries as an emerging trend as well as the growing need to share related resources to better inform and support the public library field, who often provide social services without the benefit of a social worker on staff. To that end, we have created a [Social Workers in Public Libraries Task Force](http://www.ala.org/pla/about/people/committees/pla-tfsocwork) and plan to use their valuable knowledge to develop and recommend a strategic and coordinated approach to help public libraries address the social service needs of their communities. Recognizing that most public libraries will be unable to afford or secure support for hiring a dedicated social worker, PLA aims to use this group to provide resources to better equip libraries to serve patrons experiencing life-challenges.

To begin this work, we held an Ideas Exchange event in September, 2018, with 13 library social workers. This in-person, daylong event helped us to identify the most important topics, philosophies, and methods, and also to plan and shape the content, provision, and delivery of professional development materials in this arena. A report of the event is forthcoming. (*Hughes & O’Keefe*)