TO: PLA Board of Directors

FROM: PLA Staff

RE: **eBook Advocacy Plan**

DATE: September 3, 2019

This document provides an overview of eBook advocacy planning underway with coordination across several ALA units (including PLA, the ALA Public Policy & Advocacy Office, and the ALA Communications and Marketing Office).

**Background**

On July 25, 2019, Macmillan Publishers announced it was changing its library eBook licensing terms to embargo all but one copy per library of new titles for two months. It is the first of the Big Five publishers to do this. While this is one of many issues related to libraries’ ability to provide access to digital content without arbitrary restrictions, it marks a “red line” that demands a strong collective response to influence Macmillan and other publishers who may be considering a similar move. Legal, regulatory and legislative responses are being explored, but focused communications, media and marketing strategy and tactics can immediately bring pressure. This short-term advocacy plan is intended to focus only on the Macmillan embargo for the coming three months and to leverage ALA and PLA assets and expertise in coordination with other library organizations and advocates.

**Goals**

* Pressure Macmillan to reverse embargo decision
* Discourage other publishers from doing the same
* Demonstrate ALA/PLA leadership by effectively and positively leveraging ALA members (and public library field more broadly) in shared action at all levels (local, state and national)
* Increase public awareness of the challenge and need to preserve libraries’ ability to broker access to digital content to serve our communities

**Audiences**

* Internal: Library staff and their patrons
* External: Traditional and social media (as conduit to influence publishers) + authors who are sympathetic to our cause + publishers

**Key strategies**

* Develop and leverage one-click advocacy action (e.g., online petition) to drive patron engagement
* Social and traditional media outreach and paid/earned placements
* Develop tools and resources for local libraries to easily engage and expand reach

**ALA/PLA assets**

* ALA advocacy landing page: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/e-books>
* PLA advocacy landing page: <http://www.ala.org/pla/issues>
* Consumer splash page domain: [www.ebooksforall.org](http://www.ebooksforall.org) (in development)
* Hashtag: #EbooksForAll
* ALA and PLA communications channels, including *American Libraries*, *Public Libraries* and e-newsletters, blogs, and social media

**Timeline and benchmarks**

*September*

Library Card Sign-up Month, September

Digital Book World Conference, September 10-12

Read an E-book Day, September 18

Banned Books Week, September 22-28

* Discuss/confirm with PLA Board overall plan and investments to add capacity and execute plan
* Launch #EbooksForAll campaign with microsite and petition, including social and traditional media outreach and placement
* Continue gathering data and stories to inform and strengthen advocacy
* Continue developing and sharing tools for local libraries to engage in campaign
* Continue to update information via PLA web page and communications channels
* Continue to coordinate with other organizations informally, as well as formally through the creation and launch of the Digital Content Working Group (ALA coordinated)
* Engage authors and others as allies

*October*

Ebook initiative with OverDrive, October 7-21 (in development)

* Continue and expand campaign activities above

*November*

* Deliver petition (or other similar event), November 1

**Assessment/metrics** (in development)

* Media placements
* Social media activity
* Library shares and social/traditional media engagement
* Macmillan reverses course
* Other publishers don’t follow Macmillan’s path