

TO: PLA Board of Directors
FROM: Melissa Johnson, Conference Manager, and Lian Drago, Program Officer
RE: PLA Immersive Experience, Next Steps, PLA 2020
DATE: January 4, 2019

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT: Report

ACTION REQUESTED BY: N/A

DRAFT OF MOTION: N/A

OVERVIEW

In November 2018, the PLA board attended an insight immersion experience in Nashville focused on equity, diversity, and inclusion. The idea for the immersion experience grew from the 2017 PLA conference guidelines (below) and the EDI goals of PLA's new strategic plan. The purpose of the insight immersion was to:

- Gather the Board's input on how we might use our conference to educate and inspire action based on conference guidelines and strategic plan.
- Help the Board become more familiar with our conference site and engage the Board in conference planning from the beginning.
- Provide board development by changing up the Board's traditional meeting structure and providing a thought-provoking and fun experience.

Four themes emerged from the immersion experience:

1. Community Matters
2. Educational Outreach
3. Diversity Commitment
4. Emotional Experiences

KEY CURRENT ACTIVITIES/METRICS

PLA staff are exploring how to create meaningful experiential learning opportunities at the conference that are also recognized to have the same library education content and quality as traditional PLA CE. Based on post-immersion discussions, staff are considering the following and welcome suggestions by the PLA board:

- Offering insight immersion sessions during the conference, facilitated by PLA leaders. Details TBD.
- Developing the call for educational content at the conference that we will prioritize EDISJ in the process.
- Identifying speakers from the Nashville insight immersion to speak at the conference in various formats.

- Working with our sponsorship manager at Corcoran to encourage vendors to partner with local organizations on giveaways and off-site events.
- Inviting local organizations to exhibit.
- Working with the Nashville Public Library and the PLA 2020 conference local arrangements subcommittee on best ways to integrate relevant local initiatives into the conference to address the four themes.
- Informing the ALA Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table on plans as they progress.

BUDGET

The cost these activities will be part of the PLA conference budget.

ASSESSMENT

PLA staff will assess the impact of the new activities through the PLA conference evaluation and decide if the activities will merit a permanent slot in future PLA conference schedules. In our conference planning process, we will continue to review the conference guidelines and communicate plans to membership as plans progress.

PLA STRATEGIC GOAL LINK (check all that apply)

☐ TRANSFORMATION ☒ LEADERSHIP ☐ ADV. & AWARENESS ☒ E.D.I.S.J. ☒ ORG. EXCELLENCE

Core Values and Conference Sites—PLA Guidelines*

The PLA Board discussed the issues associated with the PLA 2020 Nashville site at the ALA 2016 Annual Conference board meeting (see board documents 2016.81a and 2017.16). The discussion was the result of newly enacted legislation (Tennessee HB1840) that allows mental health counselors to refuse to treat patients based on the therapist's religious or personal beliefs.

The PLA Board considered these factors in voting to stay with the original site, Nashville. These will serve as guidelines for future conversations about meeting sites and will be shared with the PLA Conference Committee and other PLA/ALA groups that help develop our continuing education programs that support the core values of librarianship:

- No conference/meeting site is immune from future political actions or legislation contrary to our values;
- Conference planning cycles may begin as early as 10 years out; PLA can monitor but cannot predict what may happen in a host city or state;
- PLA uses and will continue to use language in our hotel/convention center contracts that specifically spells out our civil rights' values and principles and PLA will be proactive in seeking sites that best align with those values and principles;
- PLA is a national organization and our members, stakeholders and libraries live, work and serve communities in all 50 states;

- Through its conferences, PLA provides high quality education opportunities *and* seeks to educate and share with host communities our core values and principles;
- PLA conferences have been and will be inclusive as public libraries are community conveners on equity, inclusion, and diversity;
- Equity, diversity, inclusion and community engagement will be addressed at conferences going forward;
- PLA will communicate to its membership the thinking behind this decision and will plan an inclusive conference in Nashville and at future meetings and conferences;
- PLA will work with the ALA Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table and use the recommendations from the ALA Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to guide conference planning;
- An intended outcome of our conference will be to raise awareness and ultimately, to impact changes to policies and law that are discriminatory. PLA will use our presence to educate and inspire action.

Approved by the PLA Board of Directors, January 2017.

PLA 2020 Conference Program Planning Survey
Open January 15-23, 2019

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Building inclusive and welcoming institutions (e.g. equity, serving diverse populations)	30.82%	368
Community dialogues/community engagement	29.73%	355
Responding to patrons in crisis (e.g. homelessness, refugees)	20.35%	243
Staffing (e.g. hiring, training, management)	20.02%	239
Partnerships and collaboration	19.51%	233
Programming examples (e.g. media literacy, digital literacy, STEAM)	19.51%	233
Responding to popular trends	19.35%	231
Change management	18.26%	218
Core library functions (e.g. adult services, youth services, readers advisory)	17.76%	212
Removing barriers to access (e.g. fines and fees)	17.59%	210
Technology (e.g. infrastructure, digital content, user services)	16.83%	201
Facilities management (e.g. space planning, security)	13.32%	159
Advocacy (e.g. funding, policy, PR)	13.23%	158
Developing cultural competencies	12.56%	150
Evaluation and assessment	12.40%	148
Strategic planning	10.30%	123
Working with Friends and Foundations	6.45%	77
Total Respondents: 1,194		

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