**TO:** PLA Board of Directors

**RE:** PLA Operations Report

**DATE:** June 11, 2021

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

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:**N/A

**DRAFT OF MOTION:**N/A

**FUNDRAISING**

*Submitted by Scott Allen, Deputy Director*

PLA continues to receive a significant amount of funding through **grants**. PLA ended FY19 with 8 grants totaling $872,631 and ended FY20 with 5 grants totaling $495,740. For FY21 to date, PLA confirmed 4 new grants totaling $761,310. These include an Institute of Museum & Library Services (IMLS) grant of $99,948 for a Latinx family engagement project; a $100,000 grant from Microsoft to promote digital skilling programs; a $100,000 funds transfer from the ALA Public Policy and Advocacy Office from a Facebook grant to do census data literacy education; and a $461,362 grant from AT&T to revise DigitalLearn materials and create an AT&T branded DigitalLearn site. In the final quarter of FY21, PLA still has potential to confirm an additional $150-200,000 from AT&T for specific work on digital citizenship and a renewal of the health insurance promotion grant, likely around $110,000. Discussions are ongoing with Microsoft (for continued funding), IBM and Comcast.

For **individual giving**, PLA has chosen not to actively solicit donations, so most gifts are small and received along with membership renewals. To date in FY21, PLA has received 52 donations totaling $2,120. However, PLA was surprised in February 2021 when the ALA Development Office sent a report from Benevity (a platform used by corporations to enable employee engagement and donations) showing about 50 individual donations from Microsoft employees to ALA from September 2020. PLA urged Development to catch up on reporting and by late April 2021, PLA staff analyzed reports to determine that ALA had received $65,591 in donations and corporate matches from at least 1,221 unique donors, during the period of June 2020 to January 2021, with all but $470 directed specifically to PLA.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

*Submitted by Scott Allen, Deputy Director*

In 2020, PLA issued 35 member news releases. To date in 2021, PLA has issued 11 member news releases, covering the new Benchmark Briefings and Census data literacy projects, election and Executive Director search results, new projects with AT&T and Microsoft, and the Build America’s Libraries Act. We continue to send e-news near the end of each month, and facilitate connections between the ALA Communications and Marketing Office and PLA leadership for media interviews, which have been less frequent than during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. PLA contributed to the State of America’s Libraries report, however it did not highlight much of what PLA submitted due to a change in format (which organized the report topically and not by library type).

**STAFFING**

*Submitted by Scott Allen, Deputy Director*

As of June 2021, PLA’s organizational chart includes 19 positions and two consultants. Of the 19 positions, the equivalent of 8 FTEs are supported by general PLA funds and 11 FTEs are supported by grant funds. Of the 19 positions, 11 are filled as of June 2021, due to open positions and family and medical leaves.

**MEMBERSHIP**

*Submitted by Scott Allen, Deputy Director*

The Membership Advisory Group continues to contact new members monthly to welcome them to PLA and promote upcoming events. They have planned and will execute a New Member Virtual Happy Hour on June 25, 2021, inviting members who joined PLA for the first time within the last three years. In terms of membership numbers, data for the first 5 months of recent fiscal years is below. PLA is running 200-500 members below the last Conference year (FY19), although we do not think we are seeing the 30% drop predicted and budgeted for by all of ALA. The loss and retention rates for FY21 are not out of line with previous years.

**Total Members**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Month** | **FY21** | **FY20** | **FY19** | **FY18** |
| **September** | 9162 | 8261 | 9341 | 7975 |
| **October** | 9079 | 8726 | 9328 | 8199 |
| **November** | 9003 | 9098 | 9260 | 8459 |
| **December** | 8823 | 9630 | 9178 | 8689 |
| **January** | 8489 | 9843 | 8977 | 9523 |

**Loss and Retention Rates**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FY21**  **To date** | **FY20** | **FY19** | **FY18** | **FY17** | **FY16** |
| **Average Monthly Loss Rate** | 29.2% | 28.5% | 35% | 25.9% | 31.9% | 22.9% |
| **Average Monthly Retention Rate** | 70.8% | 71.5% | 65% | 74.1% | 68.1% | 77.1% |

**TECHNOLOGY**

*Submitted by Steven Hofmann, Manager, Web Communications*

**Airtable Task Management Solution**

PLA staff continues to expand its use of Airtable, a cloud-based collaboration platform. We began using it back in 2019 to management tasks related to the planning, production, and promotion of webinars. We’re now using Airtable to manage diverse projects such as the recent Leadership Lab, the 2021 Inclusive Internship Initiative, Public Libraries magazine subscriptions, PLA 2022 Conference planning, and marketing/communications tasks across all projects and initiatives. The most recent call for PLA webinar proposals is the first managed entirely in Airtable, including the scoring process by members of the PLA Continuing Education Advisory Committee.

**PLA 2022 Conference**

Development of the full conference website is currently in progress, with a tentative launch date of August 18, 2021. The conference website is once again being developed by eShow. PLA is currently reviewing replacement platforms for both the PLA 2022 mobile app and virtual conference.

**ALA Store and eLearning Site**

Due to a change of fulfillment vendor, which will result in eLearning products no longer being sold and fulfilled through the current ALA Store, ALA has prioritized development of a new, centralized eLearning site to sell all eLearning products. Tentative launch date for this new eLearning site is August 9, 2021. However, current eLearning products (for PLA, these are primarily on-demand webinars) will be removed from the ALA Store as of June 21, 2021.

**PUBLICATIONS**

*Submitted by Kathleen Hughes, Manager, Publications*

*Public Libraries* Magazineis published bimonthly and sent to nearly 9,500 PLA members plus almost 500 subscribers.

In 2020-2021, to be more sustainable and in response to supply-line issues caused by the pandemic, *Public Libraries* introduced digital issues. Two issues in the 2020 volume year were available only in the digital format. In the 2021 volume year, three issues were or will be (Sept/Oct, May/June, and July/August). In 2020 we saw a cost savings of nearly $28,000 and in FY 2021 we will see a cost savings of approximately $54,000 as a result of moving to digital for those issues.

During the past twelve months, *Public Libraries* has addressed trending and challenging topics for public librarians through themed issues, listed below:

Issue Theme

May/June 2020 Design-Thinking  
 July/August 2020 Library as Third Place  
 September/October 2020 Civic Engagement  
 November/December 2020 Psychological Well-Being Staff and Patrons  
 January/February 2021 COVID-19 and Public Libraries  
 March/April 2021 Library Funding  
 May/June 2021 Partnerships

Two feature articles were chosen to receive the Public Libraries Advisory Committee’s Feature Article Award for the 2020 Volume Year: [Define & Design: The Bookstore Model of Customer Service](http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2021/05/define-design-the-bookstore-model-of-customer-service/) and [Learning from our Statistics](http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2021/05/learning-from-our-statistics/).

Like the print iteration, [PLOnline](http://publiclibrariesonline.org/) focuses on issues and topics that matter to public libraries and public librarianship. Updated several times per week, the site features selections from the print magazine and unique content and averages approximately 8,000-10,000 views per week. PLOnline continue to offer COVID-19 related articles among other important topics, including [Gaining Patron Cooperation on Mask-Wearing](http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2021/04/gaining-patron-cooperation-on-mask-wearing/) , and [Helping a Community Coping with Loss and Grief.](http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2021/03/helping-a-community-coping-with-loss-and-grief/) In 2016, PLA started [FYI: The *Public Libraries* Podcast](http://publiclibrariesonline.org/category/media/podcast/) as another way to explore a variety of library-world topics in‐depth. To date, To date we have recorded 49 podcasts. From June 4, 2020 to June 4, 2021 FYI podcasts had 9,805 individual plays. Since beginning the podcast, there have been over 55,000 individual plays. There are nearly 70,000 subscriptions via RSS and other apps.

**Products + Publications**

This year PLA released two publications:

Pivoting During the Pandemic  
Offering real-life examples of what it means to be a 24/7 library, this collection from the Public Library Association (PLA) and ALA Editions shares how several libraries transitioned to virtual and socially-distanced services. No matter your library’s current situation or outlook for the future, you’ll be inspired to adapt their ideas to suit the needs of your own organization. Among the initiatives and topics explored are

* homebound delivery;
* citizen science programs;
* virtual reference advice;
* services to small businesses;
* remote readers' advisory and book chats;
* early literacy storytimes;
* health services outreach;
* tech guidance for patrons;
* wifi hotspot lending; and
* tips for social media and marketing.

See more information here: [Pivoting during the Pandemic: Ideas for Serving Your Community Anytime, Anywhere](https://www.alastore.ala.org/content/247-library-ideas-serving-your-community-anytime-anywhere)

2021 Early Literacy Tips Calendar

Based on the Every Child Ready to Read practices of reading, writing, singing, talking, playing (and now counting), each download contains twelve months of learning activities, book lists, nursery rhymes, and more. On one side is a calendar with a fun skills-building activity for each day and the other contains supplementary content like nursery rhymes, early literacy tips, song lyrics, or suggested reading material. The calendar pages are also customizable with each containing a designated spot to add the library’s logo and contact information. See more information here: <https://www.alastore.ala.org/PLA2021calendar>.

**ADVOCACY & STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

*Submitted by Larra Clark, Deputy Director*

With increased demands and opportunities for libraries at the federal level in 2020-2021, the Advocacy and Strategic Partnerships Committee has focused more of its time on information sharing and legislative advocacy related to the [American Recovery Plan Act](http://www.ala.org/advocacy/american-rescue-plan-library-relief) (ARPA) and the [Build America’s Libraries Act](http://www.ala.org/advocacy/buildlibraries) in the past year. ARPA library advocacy resulted in unprecedented funding for IMLS, as well as $7.17 billion for the Emergency Connectivity Fund through the Federal Communications Commission. The Build Libraries effort would provide a one-time federal investment of $5 billion for library infrastructure, and advocacy is continuing through the summer of 2021.

Members have reached out to federal representatives, particularly those in leadership on key committees; assisted in drafting and placing op-eds; and provided library examples for advocacy campaigns in coordination with the ALA Public Policy & Advocacy office. Strategic partnership outreach has been disrupted during the pandemic, but key issue areas identified for advocacy and partnerships focus include digital equity, economic recovery and resilience (including workforce and career services), and collaborations with K12 schools to address learning loss related to the pandemic. City and county associations like the National League of Cities and National Association of Counties continue to be top partnership priorities.