MEMOrandum

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| to: | Emily Plagman |
| from: | Eytan Kaplan |
| subject: | PLA Conference Program Survey Analysis |
| date: | August 7, 2019 |

This memo summarizes the data collected from post-program surveys administered to attendants of the PLA programs at ALA Annual in summer 2019. These programs spanned 4 days, from Friday, June 21st to Monday, June 24th. During this time, there were 17 programs covering a wide range of topics, as well as a preconference program. The total attendance to the non-preconference programs was 2,445 people. The total number of attendees including the preconference program was 2,517. Other than response rates, the analysis below does not include the preconference results.

**Survey Format**

Paper surveys were administered at the conclusion of each program and included 4 5-point Likert Scale questions, in which respondents circled a response from strongly agree to strongly disagree: “you learned something that is helpful,” “you feel more confident about what you just learned,” “you intend to apply what you just learned,” and “you are more aware of resources and services provided by the library”. In addition to these 4 questions, there were 2 open-response questions: “what did you like most about the program?” and “what could the library do to better assist you in learning more?” The response rates to these surveys varied highly between programs from about 5% to over 85%. The overall response rate for all programs was 28%. Refer to *figure 1* for a more detailed breakdown of program response rates.

*Figure 1. Response rate breakdown by program*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Program** | **Attendance** | **Responses** | **Response Rate** |
| Preconference Program | 72 | 61 | 84.72% |
| Building Equity From the Ground Up | 150 | 31 | 20.67% |
| Co-Creating Library / Social Services Partnerships: A Statewide Collaboration | 120 | 19 | 15.83% |
| Code for America and Your Public Library: How to Harness the Awesome Power of the Collective Will | 50 | 16 | 32.00% |
| Confidently Negotiating Political and Financial Support for your Library | 100 | 27 | 27.00% |
| Creating a Community Profile to Learn More about Your Current and Potential Patrons | 130 | 21 | 16.15% |
| Empowering Digital Citizens: Public Programming to Fight Fake News | 160 | 7 | 4.38% |
| Ensuring Everyone Counts (and is Counted) in the 2020 Census | 170 | 73 | 42.94% |
| Establishing a Culture of Civility in the Library Workplace | 250 | 87 | 34.80% |
| Food for Thought: Nourishing the Mind and Body at Public Libraries | 180 | 61 | 33.89% |
| Going Deskless: Moving from Fort Reference to Point-of-Need Service | 180 | 30 | 16.67% |
| Libraries and the Opioid Epidemic: Community-based Responses | 170 | 35 | 20.59% |
| Performance Acceleration: A 21st Century Evidence-Based Approach to Managing Employees | 200 | 56 | 28.00% |
| Ready, Set, Bank @ Your Public Library | 80 | 33 | 41.25% |
| Safer Libraries: Building Staff Resiliency and Library Safety Branch by Branch | 180 | 42 | 23.33% |
| Social Workers in Public Libraries: Lessons Learned | 240 | 38 | 15.83% |
| What Makes a Successful Conference Proposal? Tips from PLA Experts | 35 | 26 | 74.29% |
| XR (Augmented, Mixed, and Virtual Reality) Programming in Libraries | 50 | 35 | 70.00% |
| **Total** | 2517 | 698 | 27.73% |

**Likert Scale Questions**

For each response, the answers to the Likert Scale questions were converted to numerical values, with 5.00 being strongly agree and 1.00 being strongly disagree. Then, the average value for each question was calculated for each program. This average calculation did not include answers for which nothing was circled. From the averages to each of these questions, an average score was calculated for each program. The average score for all programs was 4.29 out of 5, about a third of the way between agree and strongly agree. Using this as a benchmark for examining the other programs’ scores, it is possible to determine which of the programs performed the best and the worst according to responses. The two best overall programs were “Creating a Community Profile to Learn More about Your Current and Potential Patrons,” “Ensuring Everyone Counts (and is Counted) in the 2020 Census.” When examining the answers to the open-ended questions, the main reasons attendants liked these two programs were strong presenters and resources, and a wide variety of information and panelists, respectively. The two worst overall programs rated at 3.82 and 4.02 and, according to the open-ended questions, the main complaints from attendants were too general information and weak presentation, and the presentation mainly felt like an advertisement for XR programming, respectively

**Open-ended Questions**

The open-ended comments for each response were coded and analyzed. For the first question, “what did you like most about the program?” the largest category was information, in which participants responded that they liked *the information presented to them* in the program the most. E.g. “so much useful info - I am pumped to bring this back to my community!” The second largest category for this question was *program*. This included all responses in which participants said that they enjoyed the activities that they did, or information covered within the program itself the most. E.g. “nice mix of lecturing + interaction at tables.”

For the second question, “what could the library do to better assist you in learning more?” the largest category was *more resources*, which covered all responses in which participants stated that more resources would be beneficial to their learning. E.g. “provide materials / info about how to make a strong case to city officials about getting rid of annual reviews.” The second largest category for this question was *specific program*, which participants wanted to see specific programs in the future. The vast majority of these programs were webinars on the topics covered within the program.

*Figure 3. “What did you like most about the program?”*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Responses** | **Percentage of Total** |
| Program contents |  177  | 31.27% |
| Program format |  125  | 22.08% |
| Speakers |  85  | 15.02% |
| Other |  41  | 7.24% |
| Resources |  36  | 6.36% |
| New Perspectives / Ideas |  36  | 6.36% |
| Applicable to Their Library / Community |  25  | 4.42% |
| Discussion / Interaction |  15  | 2.65% |
| Negative Answer |  13  | 2.30% |
| No answer |  8  | 1.41% |
| Everything |  5  | 0.88% |

*Figure 4. “What could the library do to better assist you in learning more?”*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Responses** | **Percentage of Total** |
| More Resources | 64 | 25.30% |
| Additional Programs | 63 | 24.90% |
| No Answer | 40 | 15.81% |
| More Information | 38 | 15.02% |
| Other | 21 | 8.30% |
| Improve Program | 12 | 4.74% |
| Nothing | 10 | 3.95% |
| Improve Speakers / More Speakers | 5 | 1.98% |