**Statement regarding the MLS/MLIS Degree in American Public Libraries**

After years of discussion among library professionals, we feel it is necessary to issue a statement regarding the limited scope of the traditional MLS/MLIS degree as it pertains to daily work in modern public libraries. Employees at all levels have long been frustrated by outdated curriculum that lacks focus on many of the competencies necessary to advance in public libraries today. These competencies include but are not limited to business administration, financial management, fundraising, board management, facilities and maintenance, human resources, design thinking, strategic planning, leadership, and collective impact. Additionally, the requirement for the MLS/MLIS degree in hiring practices excludes many high-quality individuals from the profession thus hindering the growth and development of public libraries as a whole.

We would like the board of directors of the Public Library Association to consider making the following recommendations to the library community:

**Recommendation #1:** We encourage public library administrators to re-visit hiring practices in such a way that the skills discussed above are highlighted and prioritized, acknowledging that such skills can be acquired through a variety of pathways, not all of which require the MLS/MLIS degree.

**Recommendation #2:** We encourage MLS/MLIS programs to work to ensure that these skills are better integrated into the curricula, particularly for students seeking employment in public libraries. We encourage MLS/MLIS programs to make these skills mandatory parts of the public library curricula, rather than optional electives.

**Recommendation #3:** We encourage state libraries to re-visit state standards for public libraries and public librarians in such a way that these skills are more central to the certification process for libraries and librarians, acknowledging that such skills can be acquired through a variety of pathways, not all of which require the MLS/MLIS degree.

These recommendations, if adopted, will pave the way for a more innovative, diverse, inclusive, and sustainable profession.

Thank you for your consideration.