**TO:** PLA Board of Directors

**RE:** PLA Initiatives Report

**DATE:** Sept. 25, 2019

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:**

Information

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:**

N/A

**DRAFT OF MOTION:**

N/A

**DIGITALLEARN.ORG**

*Submitted by Leighann Wood, Program Manager*

In 2019, digitallearn.org has seen a rapid increase in usage: 16% are returning visitors and 83% (55,424) are new users out of 56,767. Our most popular course modules are (in order of popularity): 1) Getting Started on a Computer; 2) Using a PC, Windows 10; 3) Navigating a Website; 4) Why Use a Computer; 5) Intro to Email. In FY20, DigitalLearn.org will see the addition of 4 new courses: How to Use YouTube; How to Prepare to Enroll in Health Insurance; the additional two course topics are TBD. We are preparing to sign on three additional digitallearn.org subsite contracts to the Cleveland Foundation, York Public Library and Cranston Public Library, which will grow our subsite cohort from 8 to 11.

**DATA INITIATIVES**

* **MEASURES THAT MATTER**

*Submitted by Larra Clark, Deputy Director*

COSLA is working to schedule the initial convening of the Public Library Data Alliance (PLDA) before the end of 2019. The concept behind the PLDA is that it will be an ongoing, independent group with representation from major library association leadership and stakeholders from the library and library-interested fields. Its purpose is to advance public library data gathering and use that aligns with community needs. The PLDA is not intended to duplicate existing bodies such as IMLS’s Library Statistics Working Group (LSWG) or PLA’s Measurement, Evaluation, and Assessment Committee (MEAC). Instead, it was conceived to provide thought leadership, propose strategic actions, and create a communications infrastructure for the field. The Measures that Matter group, led by COSLA, plans to issue a call for non-association seats on the PLDA sometime in the fall. PLA, along with ALA, COSLA, ARSL, NISO, and ULC are founding members of the PLDA. At this meeting, the board will be asked to approve a non-binding MOU related to our collaborative work.

IMLS awarded a new round of funding to COSLA to implement the next phase of its Measures that Matter work. The funded project includes a new evaluation component that will focus in on library activities relating to workforce development, a contributing factor to community wellbeing. The [press announcing the award release states](https://www.imls.gov/news/measures-matter-imls-cosla-explore-link-between-public-libraries-workforce-development-and): “Libraries across the U.S. offer services, training and information aimed at meeting the workforce needs in their communities.” Said Timothy Cherubini, Executive Director of COSLA. “The intention behind this pilot is to develop a meaningful approach to measurement of library-based workforce development activities and to assess whether this approach could be used to measure other library activities as they relate to different components of community wellbeing.”

* **PROJECT OUTCOME**

*Submitted by Emily Plagman, Manager, Impact and Advocacy*

In August, PLA and ACRL traveled to IFLA to present on Project Outcome and announce that it is now available worldwide for both public (as of August) and academic (as of April) libraries. The presentations were well received and eight international users have signed up since the presentation: Portugal, Zambia, Ireland, Algeria, Belgium, Croatia, New Zealand, and Australia but no survey responses have been collected yet.

During the Measurement, Evaluation and Assessment Committee meeting at Annual, the Public Programs Office presented its findings from the [National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment](https://nilppa.org/), a white paper developed in partnership using PLA Project Outcome data. The findings outline characteristics and categorizes of public programs and also outlines key competencies of staff in charge of public programming. Of note, the key competencies paper could be a useful tool for libraries hiring for programming positions.

* **PUBLIC LIBRARY DATA SERVICE SURVEY (PLDS)**

*Submitted by Emily Plagman, Manager, Impact and Advocacy*

The Measurement, Evaluation and Assessment Committee (MEAC) hosted three meetings in September to gather feedback about their data use and needs for decision-making and advocacy, as well as gather initial reactions to the three proposed draft models for changing the PLDS. One focus group was held at the Association for Rural and Small Libraries Conference and two online Town Hall meetings were held by PLA and moderated by MEAC members. Almost 200 library staff, primarily from public libraries, have contributed feedback to the meetings thus far. Of those contributors, about half are familiar with the PLDS and the other half were not. In general, the data collected points to the following conclusions:

* Libraries need more and better data that aligns with key operating decisions tied to staffing, salary, and programming allocations; benchmarking and/or peer comparison are critical elements in this kind of work and the current tools (PLDS and PLS) could be improved to help with this work.
* Staff believe there is a lack of good data that would help them with other non-operational activities, especially as it relates to communicating value of the library to the community.
* Resources, training and support will need to be incorporated into any new data collection tool to help support and increase its use.
* However, libraries, particularly the smaller ones, are concerned about the any new data collection and have concerns about the capacity to report into a new tool as well as lack the confidence or skills needed to report and use data tools effectively (or at all).

PLA staff will conduct a formal analysis of the feedback and work with the MEAC to develop an updated concept of a new PLDS model that could potentially address key data needs identified by respondents. PLA is in the process of hiring a consultant to help prioritize preferred vendors to develop the new site and data collection tool. The recordings and update information can be found here: <http://www.ala.org/pla/resources/publications/plds>.

* **IMPACT SURVEY**

*Submitted by Emily Plagman, Manager, Impact and Advocacy*

No updates from Annual. The text from the last meeting was as follows: “PLA has taken over management of University of Washington’s Impact Survey. At this time, the survey can be accessed via the PLA site: <http://www.ala.org/pla/initiatives/impactsurvey>. Over time, however, PLA will work to build a tool that allows for online administration of the survey. Timeline for planning and implementation of the survey tool are still TBD.”

**HEALTH INITIATIVES**

* **LIBRARIES CONNECTING YOU TO COVERAGE**

*Submitted by Leighann Wood, Program Manager*

PLA and Community Catalyst support libraries to promote awareness of health insurance enrollment. PLA was awarded a second round of funding from Community Catalyst (originally sourced from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation), along with several other national partners to disseminate information and resources to promote health insurance enrollment as a part of the Affordable Care Act. PLA will receive roughly $109,000 in grant funds from Community Catalyst to conduct outreach using our national platforms, and events and communication channels to promote strategies and resources for libraries to promote enrollment in the Marketplace, including offering libraries $500 to conduct their own outreach and educational activities. To augment efforts of libraries and others to teach members how to enroll online, PLA will develop 2 new courses on its DigitalLearn.org site to teach about the enrollment process, as well as develop additional resources for patrons and staff to learn more about enrolling in health insurance and to achieve better health outcomes.

* **BRINGING PUBLIC HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES TOGETHER**

*Submitted by Scott Allen, Deputy Director*

PLA is partnering with the National Network of Libraries of Medicine Greater Midwest Region and the University of Iowa Prevention Research Center (UIPRC) to provide resources and educational opportunities that highlight the benefits of collaboration between public health organizations and public libraries. The UIPRC has a small grant to fund this work. The three organizations have set up an advisory group (including three PLA members), and will conduct a thorough assessment including literature reviews, focus groups, and more. A second phase will focus on resource identification. This stage of the project will involve collecting existing materials and tools to feed into the development of practical toolkits that aid both public health and public library organizations in developing partnerships. Possible topics to cover include: Priorities in Public Health/Public Libraries; How to Create and Sustain Partnerships; Building Relationships into Strategy and Mission; Finding Funding; and Emerging Public Health Issues.

**REGIONAL TRAININGS**

* **SPACE PLANNING**

*Submitted by Symone Villasenor, Project Manager*

In an effort to expand its regional training and educational programs, PLA is offering three *Space Planning: Reinventing Your Library Space* workshops this year. Events will be held at the following dates and locations:

1. Palo Alto, California on Friday, November 8, 2019
2. Portland, Oregon on Friday, November 22, 2019
3. Jacksonville, Florida on Thursday, December 12, 2019

The all-day workshops will be facilitated by New York University professor and Forbes contributor David Vinjamuri. The workshop is recommended for all library staff and stakeholders that are interested in learning how to plan library space. It will benefit those libraries who are planning a renovation, building out a new space, looking to improve circulation, or endeavoring to enrich the use of their community spaces. Registration covers attendance, lunch, assorted handouts, and a copy of David Vinjamuri’s downloadable Space Planning Guide. Space is being generously donated by Palo Alto City Library, Multnomah County Library, and Jacksonville Public Library.

* **EQUITY STARTS WITH US**

*Submitted by Scott Allen, Deputy Director*

After the training planned for October at Chicago Public Library sold out in August, over two months before the event, the PLA Task Force on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice (EDISJ) worked quickly to plan a fourth training event for 2019, which will be held December 9-10, 2019 at the Toledo Public Library. About 400 people will have participated in the trainings in 2019. The Task Force is currently planning 5-6 events in 2020, starting by late spring, and has identified potential host libraries in different regions of the country

**STRATEGIC PLANNING**

*Submitted by Symone Villasenor, Project Manager*

PLA is expanding its strategic planning training to better address the needs of membership. Our membership has indicated that it would like to emerge from training sessions with an actionable and solid plan. Additionally, it wants modernized and updated training sessions and materials. PLA staff have examined existing strategic planning materials, including past Dynamic Planning Institute materials, and leveraged membership feedback to better understand what content PLA has and where gaps exists between what we have and what membership wants. Based on this information gathering, we envision creating a brand-new strategic planning toolkit publication. It will be a self-directed learning tool with lots of exercises and templates to get members started on their own strategic plans. We have created a Request for Proposal that was sent out to multiple library consultants and subject matter experts. To date, we have three proposals, and expect at least one more. In early October, members of the PLA team will review the proposals and select a consultant to develop this toolkit publication. Our projected timeline to complete this work is the end of the first quarter of 2020.

**INCLUSIVE INTERNSHIP INITIATIVE**

*Submitted by Mary Hirsh, Deputy Director*

The 2019 III cohort met in Washington D.C. the weekend of September 20-22 [for a wrap up event](https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/2019-inclusive-internship-initiative-concludes-dc/). The group met at the Library of Congress the first day, where they received greetings from ALA President-Elect Julius C. Jefferson, Jr. and LC Deputy Library Mark Sweeny. Following a tour of the Jefferson Building, each intern made a five-minute presentation. Interns were asked to describe the impact of the internship on themselves, the library, and the community. Presentations continued on the second day. The event concluded with career and college resource breakouts.

PLA received a fourth round of funding from IMLS to support III in 2020. IMLS awarded PLA $313,606 with a match of $356,109 from PLA. The [application to host an intern](http://www.ala.org/pla/initiatives/plinterns/alerts) will open in January.

**2020 CENSUS**

*Submitted by Larra Clark, Deputy Director*

A great deal of activity has occurred since our June 2019 report, most significantly that the US Supreme Court ruled against the Trump administration’s proposed addition of a question about citizenship status, and the White House abandoned further efforts. Since publishing the Libraries’ Guide to the 2020 Census, ALA/PLA has released downloadable artwork and a tip sheet on how public libraries can increase awareness of 2020 Census hiring. Resources will continue to be added at [www.ala.org/census](http://www.ala.org/census), including a customizable presentation template and additional tip sheets. Census Task Force Chair Tracy Strobel was one of two speakers that participated in a national tele-town hall meeting organized by the AARP about the census at the end of September. AARP estimated about 200,000 AARP members would join the two online sessions focused on educating listeners on the facts about Census, opportunities it presents from a part-time work perspective, how to avoid Census scams, and where to find more information/resources. PLA Deputy Director Larra Clark joined state legislators from Rhode Island, New York and Pennsylvania on a 2020 Census panel at the council of State Governments-Eastern Regional Conference in July, and with ALA-PLA Taskforce member Karen Mellor twice at the Association of Rural and Small Libraries. Both [ARSL sessions](https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/book-clubs-the-census-and-the-five-es/) were packed, and the Census Bureau Director Dr. Steven Dillingham attended the second session and recognized public libraries for their work in supporting a complete census count. All of these speaking opportunities have provided significant visibility and training for public libraries. PLA board member and Census Task Force member Kelvin Watson will speak at an ALA Midwinter Meeting program Saturday, January 25, entitled “2020 Census: How Libraries Can Support a Complete Count,” and a program also is planned for the PLA National Conference.

**FAMILY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES**

*Submitted by Scott Allen, Deputy Director*

* **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING**

The Task Force has new co-chairs (Jo Giudice, Dallas Public Library, and Ashley Brown, Auburn Public Library) and six new members, along with three continuing members. The Task Force continues to prioritize creating educational opportunities for library staff and partner organizations to learn about the public library role in FE. Two sessions are planned for the National Center on Families Learning conference (November, Louisville, KY) and a half-day preconference is planned for PLA 2020 in Nashville. Discussions are also underway for joint education and outreach work with Zero to Three, the Administration on Children and Families Head Start Bureau, Learning Heroes, K12 Learning Academy, and other partners.

* **PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT**

The Task Force’s primary focus in 2020 will be launching a 7-session online subscription series for libraries. We hope to recruit 30 libraries, paying $500-$600 each (tentative) for two seats in the series. Each cycle will consist of two FE framework topics (example: raise up and reach out) with 4-5 weeks between each session. Pre-work, likely exercises or assessments, will be sent to complete prior to each virtual session. At the virtual session, the instructor/presenter will facilitate a large group discussion surrounding the pre-work and present a handful of slides that hit upon the key points of each topic. Then during the sessions, participants will breakout into small groups to discuss their library’s work, the pre-work exercises, and plans for the future. PLA will collect data via an assessment included as prework or as a part of an application process. Additionally, we will have a networking component housed in ALA Connect. After the 7-part series, registrants will have 5 months to continue to access the ALA connect group and all its resources.

* **SCIENCE KITS FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Chicago Chapter was referred to PLA in the spring of 2019. IEEE-Chicago has provided ~$1,500 grants to public libraries, including all 80 branches of the Chicago Public Library, for many years to develop and circulate science kits. In 2019-202, they are doing a pilot program to expand this from the Chicago area to IEEE Region 4 (10 midwest and nearby states). Once the expansion is successful, they will expand nationally so all IEEE chapters/regions participate. PLA has agreed to a *collaboration* with IEEE and will help promote this work, eventually considering a *partnership* if the project goes national and is sustained over time. PLA will promote grant opportunities to public libraries and may use some of the funded libraries’ stories/examples in family engagement work. IEEE recruited Marilyn Genther, retired from the Mount Prospect Public Library where she served as Executive Director for 30 years, as a volunteer lead on this project, and also unveiled a new [SKPL - Science Kits for Public Libraries](http://www.sciencekitsforpubliclibraries.org) web site which includes PLA’s logo.

* **MISCELLANEOUS**

In June 2019, Jo Giudice represented ALA and PLA at an event for Congressional staff members entitled “Libraries Advance Literacy and Prevent the Summer Slide,” impressing attendees and Washington Office staff with her remarks about the breadth of public library support to families. A subcommittee of the Task Force is developing a white paper on computational thinking, which may lead to future product and educational program development. Finally, a preliminary proposal was submitted to IMLS for a joint PLA/NCFL project to explore how public libraries can best engage Latinx families in program development.