**TO:**  PLA Board of Directors

**RE:**  PLA Initiatives Combined Report

**DATE:**  April 20, 2023

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

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:**N/A

**DRAFT OF MOTION:**N/A

**PROJECT OUTCOME**

*Submitted by Sara Goek, Project Manager, Data and Research*

611 new users signed up to Project Outcome between October 12, 2022 and April 11, 2023. PLA and ACRL continue to work together to maximize impact and share updates with users. In March, PLA and ACRL hosted a free joint webinar to introduce new users to Project Outcome to an audience of 436 live attendees (1,015 registrants).

In March PLA launched new Project Outcome features focused on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Public libraries can now tag any of their surveys with one or more of the SDGs and view results by SDG. With guidance from the PLA Measurement, Evaluation and Assessment Committee (MEAC), we created [a resource](https://www.projectoutcome.org/surveys-resources/sustainable-development-goals) and hosted a free webinar on April 5th. The webinar, featuring two speakers from public libraries in the US and Serbia, had 341 registrants and 130 live attendees.

In April we will administer a Project Outcome user survey (with ACRL). The results will inform a comprehensive evaluation of the toolkit in the coming months.

**BENCHMARK: LIBRARY METRICS & TRENDS**

*Submitted by Sara Goek, Project Manager, Data and Research*

In fall 2022, PLA administered the third in our series of annual topical surveys, the Public Library Services for Strong Communities Survey. Developed in conjunction with the MEAC, the survey focuses on how libraries utilize their unique programs, services, partnerships, and facilities to support community needs. The survey opened on September 16 and closed December 17, 2022. In total, 1,167 public libraries participated, for a response rate of 12.6% (higher than in 2021). We are currently in the process of analyzing the results and preparing the report, which we anticipate launching the results in time for ALA Annual Conference in June 2023.

Benchmark has 163 active subscribers as of April 11, 2023. A primary focus of our work in FY23 continues to be on marketing and promoting subscriptions. We are working with InfoPeople (the training arm of Califa) to develop a series of tutorial videos that will highlight the subscriber features of the toolkit. The videos will be completed by the end of August 2023. In addition, we continue to work closely with staff at ACRL and Choice to develop effective marketing strategies.

**DIGITAL LITERACY AND DIGITALLEARN.ORG**

*Submitted by Mary Clare Bietila, Program Manager, Programming Initiatives*

The PLA Digital Literacy Workshop Incentive, supported by AT&T was launched in 2022. With a contribution of over $1.1 million from AT&T, PLA designed this program to support library adoption of the new and revamped [DigitalLearn](https://training.digitallearn.org/) online courses and training materials. The curriculum was developed with support from AT&T and is freely available at DigitalLearn.org. More than 150 libraries were selected to take part in the program. They used the funds to support and promote the use of DigitalLearn in their communities.

This program supported individuals in learning to use computers and mobile devices, navigate the internet and commonly used apps, and participate safely and responsibly in today’s increasingly connected world. These are crucial skills for eliminating living in our connected world and eliminating the digital divide.

The incentive program’s success exceeded expectations. Cohort libraries hosted 1,544 basic digital skilling workshops which reached over 8,132 participants throughout all regions of the US.

The survey data from participants was compelling evidence that our DigitalLearn is accessible and meets the needs of the target population – individuals with low or no experience with computers.

When asked “Do you feel more knowledgeable about using digital resources,” 95.5% of participants responded yes. And when asked “Do you feel more confident when using digital resources,” 94.6% of respondents answered yes.

The cohort of library incentive recipients was also effusive in their praise of the program and DigitalLearn resources:

“Our DigitalLearn in-person workshops worked out better than we could have imagined. Our patrons were very engaged with each of the topics presented, and our class on Cloud Storage and How to Use an iPhone were maxed out in terms of available space. Our patrons have been clamoring for more classes presented by DigitalLearn, and our staff is trying our best to keep up with the demand. Often these programs have led to some of the students coming back and wanting one on one time with a librarian to go over what was taught in the class. However, when we have a number of students returning, it places a great strain on the limited number of librarians we have. We are hoping to create more courses using the resources and foundations provided by DigitalLearn and DigitalLearn Training to reach more patrons and not limit it to the number who can be helped by the librarians we have available.” -- reported Fred Grimshaw, Community Outreach Coordinator of Hillside Public Library, Hyde Park, NY.

The success of this work has cemented PLA’s partnership with AT&T which will be continuing in 2023-24.