**TO:** PLA Board of Directors

**RE:** Digital Literacy/Access Initiatives and Collaborations

**DATE:** May 24, 2019

**ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:**

Information

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:**

N/A

**DRAFT OF MOTION:**

N/A

**DIGITALLEARN.ORG**

*Submitted by Leighann Wood, Program Manager*

As equity and inclusion are priorities for PLA, DigitalLearn.org is a main priority for PLA’s Digital Literacy Committee. PLA has hired a new instructional designer to develop 2 new courses (topics TBD) and one template course that subsites can use to create their own content unique to their communities. Potential new course topics include: YouTube; saving, storing and sharing files; using online maps; what are apps?; technology etiquette for job seekers; internet safety; and more. Since January 1, 2019, DigitalLearn.org has had nearly 4,000 goal completions.

As of 2018, there are seven DigitalLearn.org subsites at public libraries, each working toward digital equity and inclusion. Some subsites are more active than others in promoting and utilizing DigitalLearn.org in their library programs and services, and others have taken a more passive approach to promoting it to patrons. There have been some challenges with convening the subsite “cohort” as the calls are not well attended, but there are clear needs to keeping up with the site functionality and content development. Subsite needs are varied, ranging from assessment and evaluations, to Google Analytics reporting help, to course bug fixes, and site customizations. There has been an increase in site maintenance and upkeep with browser and operating system updates, as well as special features. With equity at the forefront of PLA’s mission, site usage is predicted to see a great increase in usage this year by promoting its functions through the Libraries Lead with Digital Skills and DigitalLead projects.

**LIBRARIES LEAD WITH DIGITAL SKILLS (GROW WITH GOOGLE PARTNERSHIP)**

*Submitted by Leighann Wood, Program Manager*

*Libraries Lead with Digital Skills* is an initiative of ALA and PLA, sponsored by Google, to ensure that public libraries across the nation receive ongoing access to free tools and resources to help everyone across America grow their skills, careers, and businesses. In 2019, Google will bring workshops to libraries in all 50 states as a part of the [Grow with Google Tour](https://grow.google/), with input from ALA and PLA. Funding is available to libraries in states on a rolling basis, for libraries to run their own community events for job seekers, small businesses and/or entrepreneurs. There are two tiers of funding opportunities—“micro” grants ($1,000) for a large number of libraries to hold community events and “spotlight” grants ($3,000) for a small number of libraries to conduct more in-depth projects and reporting to serve as case studies to inform future partnership and project opportunities. As of this report, 56 libraries have been awarded in PA, CT, OH, VA, MD, and NM. There is a really diverse spread across the states in terms of geography, service populations and program audiences, and libraries in suburbs, rural areas and cities. We learned that overall, there is a great need for serving job seekers, and serving them well. 90% of awardees are hosting programs to assist job seekers through basic computer skills training, resume writing workshops, job fairs, data driven job searching strategies and more.

**MICROSOFT/RURAL LIBRARIES PROJECT**

*Submitted by Scott Allen, Deputy Director*

PLA received $388,416 from Microsoft Philanthropies in April 2019, from an employee giving campaign in late 2018. Funds will be used to provide at least 50 rural libraries in 6-12 states with either a hotspot lending program package (hotspots, data service) or public computer package (laptops, desktops and all-in-ones), in order to start or enhance their digital access and training programs. PLA and Microsoft announced the project to the library field in May 2019. In June 2019, the application process is opening for libraries meeting specified criteria and will remain open until late summer (August date TBD). During the summer, PLA will continue to promote the program and provide education to public libraries broadly through regular communications, at least two webinars (on hotspot lending and digital literacy training), and creation and promotion of compiled resources (policies, communication and sustainability resources, etc.), posted on the PLA web site, eventually to be produced into an electronic playbook. Applications will be reviewed and awards made in early September. Libraries receiving the awards will have approximately 4 weeks to work with TechSoup to secure and implement their new hardware. For the subsequent 6 months (October 2019 through March 2020), libraries will implement their new programs, collecting data as prescribed by PLA and participating in periodic check-in calls, webinars and other supports offered to the cohorts by PLA. By March 2020, participating libraries will submit final reports, which will contribute to a final project report and completion of the electronic playbook by PLA. While the number of libraries receiving funds and hardware is small, the education and tools provided are intended to serve all public libraries, and PLA may also receive continued funding from Microsoft or leverage new funding from other sources, such as banks who are required to invest in communities by the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA).

**PLA STRATEGIC GOAL LINK (check all that apply)**

[x]  TRANSFORMATION [ ]  LEADERSHIP [ ]  ADV. & AWARENESS [ ]  E.D.I.S.J. [ ]  ORG. EXCELLENCE