**TO:**  PLA Board of Directors

**RE:**  PLA Initiatives Combined Report

**DATE:**  November 2, 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*

672 new users signed up to Project Outcome between April 11 and October 12, 2023. Project Outcome currently has more than 14,000 registered users. The PLA and ACRL staff continue to work together to maximize impact and share updates with users. In August, PLA and ACRL hosted a joint webinar to introduce new users to Project Outcome. It had 858 registrants and 415 live attendees. 60% of the attendees were from public libraries.

PLA staff (Sara Goek and Katina Jones) delivered two in-person, half-day training workshops in the last six months. A pre-conference at ALA Annual Conference in June had 40 registered attendees. A regional training workshop in September organized by the Utah State Library Division as part of their annual Director’s Summit had 70 participants.

In conjunction with Project Outcome’s support of the ALA Public Programs Office’s current Libraries Transforming Communities grants, work to improve the accessibility of the toolkit is ongoing. The developers have used the [WCAG 2 Checklist](https://webaim.org/standards/wcag/WCAG2Checklist.pdf) to assess and update the accessibility of the Project Outcome website for library staff creating surveys and patrons participating in the surveys. Between April and June, this has included improvements to non-text content, relationships, reflow, page titling, language attribution, and status messages. Work to satisfy the remaining guidelines will continue in FY24.

Recipients of the PLA Digital Literacy Workshop Incentives, supported by AT&T, are using Project Outcome to evaluate their libraries’ grant-funded programs. Katina provided support by creating survey guides and delivering survey best practices in the kick-off webinars for the DigitalLearn and ACP Basics workshop cohorts. Support for the Teens Teach Tech cohort included survey data collection from workshop participants.

**BENCHMARK: LIBRARY METRICS & TRENDS**

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

The 2023 Public Library Technology Survey opened on September 19th and closes on December 16th. Developed in conjunction with the Measurement, Evaluation, and Assessment Committee, the survey focuses on technology resources, services, staff, and budgets. This survey was first administered in 2020 and the 2023 results will shed light on how the field has changed in the past three years. As of October 12, 379 public libraries have completed the survey, a response rate of 4.1%. We hope to reach a response rate of at least 13% (the same or higher than in 2022). PLA hosted a free information session about the survey on October 12, with presenters representing the national, state, and local library perspectives to speak to the value of this data for the library field. It had 361 registrants and 194 live attendees. We anticipate publishing the 2023 survey results in time for ALA Annual Conference in June 2024.

Benchmark has 163 active subscribers as of October 12, 2023. A primary focus of our work continues to be on marketing and promoting subscriptions. This summer, we worked with Info People (the training arm of Califa) to develop a series of short tutorial videos that highlight the subscriber features of the toolkit. The first 10 (of 12) are available [on Vimeo](https://vimeo.com/showcase/10468218), July with more than 125 views so far. PLA is offering a free “[Benchmark 101](https://www.ala.org/pla/education/onlinelearning/webinars/benchmark101)” webinar on November 13, which will delve into how subscribers can effectively use the toolkit. In December, in conjunction with ACRL, we will offer a free webinar for states/consortia on how they can make the most of the group features of both Benchmark and Project Outcome. PLA and ACRL have also launched a new subscription type that allows individual consultants/researchers to purchase one month of access. More information about Benchmark subscription types is available on [the PLA website](https://www.ala.org/pla/data/benchmark).

**DIGITAL LITERACY AND DIGITALLEARN.ORG**

*Mary Clare Bietila, Program Manager*

**Incentive Programs**

Since May 2023, PLA launched three DigitalLearn Workshop Incentive programs, supported by AT&T.

* PLA Digital Literacy Workshop Incentive, supported by AT&T
* ACP Basics Workshop Incentive, supported by AT&T
* Teens Teach Tech, powered by AT&T: PLA Incentive (Pilot Program)

**PLA Digital Literacy Workshop Incentive, supported by AT&T**

192 libraries from 46 states were selected from an applicant pool of 196 libraries to be part of the 2023 cohort of the PLA Digital Literacy Workshop Incentive, supported by AT&T. This program focuses on basic digital skilling and using the DigitalLearn workshop materials developed by AT&T and PLA. The $1,152,000 distributed awarded each library $6,000 in funding to support learning workshops.

This program will run through the end of 2023. So far 384 workshops have been conducted and another 437 workshops have been scheduled for later this year.

The value of these workshops to patrons and community members is evident in table below which shows survey results from Project Outcome survey data\* collected following DigitalLearn workshops:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *July 2023-September 2023*  *Total Respondents: 875* | *Agree or Strongly Agree* |
| You feel more **knowledgeable** about using digital resources | 92% |
| You feel more **confident** when using digital resources | 90% |
| You **intend to apply** what you just learned | 94% |
| You are **more aware** of resources and services provided by the library | 88.8% |

\*Surveys are optional

**ACP DigitalLearn Incentives**

Fifty-three libraries representing thirty-one states applicants were selected from a pool of 55 applicants. Supported by AT&T, this cohort will use the new DigitalLearn ACP (Affordable Connectivity Prog) Workshop Materials to help households apply for the federal ACP broadband and device benefits. Each library received $1,500 to support the work of conducting workshops to reach a minimum of 8 learners. This program will run through the end of 2023. So far 28 workshops have been conducted and another 50 workshops have been scheduled for later this year.

**Teens Teach Tech**

Nine libraries were selected to be part of the Teens Teach Tech, powered by AT&T: PLA Incentive. This small pilot program engaged young people and libraries to lead workshops using the Digital Connections materials developed by AT&T, Common Sense Education and PLA. This summer internship program enabled PLA to evaluate how best Digital Connections videos and materials can be used in a library setting. Each library received $10,000 to hire three or more high school summer interns to be trained and mentored in or to conduct workshops for their younger tween peers. The workshops focused on developing healthy, safe and reflective digital habits. PLA hopes to expand this work to engage more libraries in the future to use this curriculum and format.

**DigitalLearn Live Events**

To spotlight and celebrate libraries conducting DigitalLearn workshops, AT&T partnered with PLA to plan a series of library centered public events to take place in the fall of 2023. Three locations were selected, Loveland Public Library in Colorado, the Jenna and Laura Bush Public Library in Texas (part of El Paso Public Library), and the East Cleveland Public Library in Ohio.

One event was held, at Loveland Public Library, in early October of 2023. This public event included inspiring stories about the work Loveland Public Library is doing to combat the digital divide. Stories were shared by local stakeholders such as the mayor of Loveland, the AT&T Corporate Responsibly team and Mary Hirsh representing PLA. A demonstration of a DigitalLearn digital literacy workshop was held. Additionally, the day of celebration included a laptop giveaway from AT&T, local performances, a photobooth and cuisine from local small businesses. The event was well documented and PLA and AT&T will use the footage and photos to share these success stories with a larger audience.

The remaining two events will take place in November.

**GOOGLE SUPERSEARCHERS**

*Submitted by Mary Hirsh and Larra Clark, PLA Deputy Directors*

In early 2023, PLA entered into a partnership with Google to scale Supersearchers information literacy training across public libraries in North America. PLA received $138,000 from Google to support this effort. Supersearchers in a short virtual training that provide tools for patrons to engage online information more critically and search more efficiently. PLA agreed to host 4 training webinars (facilitated by past PLA board member Toby Greenwalt) and one additional discussion forum. The stated goal was to reach 1,000 library workers through these efforts. The first Supersearchers training webinar was held on September 19; over 500 registrants attended. The evaluation results of the webinar were positive, with over 80% reporting they learned something new, over 80% reporting they would use the Supersearchers materials, and over 70% reporting they will share what they learned with others. Additional [webinars are scheduled](https://www.ala.org/pla/initiatives/informationliteracy/supersearchers) through the end of the year.

**AUTHENIC FAMILY ENGAGEMENT FOR SPANISH-SPEAKING FAMILIES**

*Submitted by Mary Hirsh, PLA Deputy Director*

PLA was awarded an [IMLS National Leadership Grant](https://www.imls.gov/grants/awarded/lg-254862-ols-23) in the amount of $249,964 to support to develop new tools and training models to support authentic engagement of Spanish-speaking families. This two-year project, conducted in partnership with the National Center for Families Learning, will train public library staff from California, Georgia, and Massachusetts on best practices for collaborating with culturally diverse community members, and on using principles of co-design to improve library services for underserved communities. Project activities include:

* Training for staff at up to nine public libraries on best practices for reflecting on personal bias, effectively collaborating with culturally diverse community members, and using principles of co-design to improve library services for underserved communities.
* Creating and sharing resources to bolster understanding of family engagement, why it is important, and how to incorporate it when working with culturally diverse groups.
* Developing an evaluation framework to assess outcomes; and
* Disseminating all project-developed tools and information.

This project will benefit public libraries and the communities they serve by providing fresh approaches to practicing more inclusive family engagement.