**TO:** PLA Board of Directors

**RE:** PLA Advocacy and Awareness Report

**DATE:** April 13, 2020

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

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:** N/A

**DRAFT OF MOTION:** N/A

**PLA Strategic Plan Goal: Advocacy and Awareness**

* **PLA leads in public library advocacy and influencing perceptions of public libraries.**

**MEAC AND PLDS**

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

At the end of February, the Public Library Association’s Measurement, Evaluation and Assessment Committee (MEAC) met to discuss the future of its Public Library Data Service (PLDS) survey. Over the past year, the MEAC had decided to cancel FY19 survey collection efforts to focus its work instead on gathering input from library staff in town hall meetings and email discussions, as well as soliciting current PLDS subscribers. Library staff reported that they wanted less redundancy in data collection, better peer comparison data about library operations, improved data training related to community indicators, and a user-friendly interface for analysis and reporting*.* They have hosted 3 “town halls” where public library staff were asked about their data needs and the tools they use. The committee also collected email feedback from PLDS subscribers about their use of the tool and data. The summarized results are:

* PLDS Town Hall Discussion (just under 200 attendees):
  + Libraries need data about operations: these data were most consistently identified as salary and staffing data and how to allocate those resources most effectively. These types of data were typically cited along with needing benchmarking or peer comparison data.
  + Libraries need data about library value to the community: Attendees were less specific about the types of data they needed for this topic unless the comment was tied to a specific program and its relation to the community.  The comments were not as closely tied to needing benchmarking data.
  + Additionally, libraries want more support using data. Support should be tied to better national library data standards or related to collecting, reporting, and using data for decisions.
* PLDS subscriber email (114 total invitees; 15 respondents):
  + Run reports once or several times/year but users also reported that the interface is difficult to use.
  + Rely on a few key PLDS reports for budgeting purposes, primarily regarding circulation, reference, program attendance, visits, staffing, and budget.
  + Develop customized peer comparison reports to make budget change justifications to leadership/boards/communities.

These activities were intended to get a sense of demand for the PLDS as well as determine how valuable the data are to the field. The results indicate that there is significant potential for more users of a PLA data collection effort about libraries if 1) the reporting interface and resulting data visualizations are more user friendly and 2) the effort incorporated more data regarding libraries’ roles in their communities. *As a result of this work and other data collection efforts PLA has underway, the MEAC voted to sunset the PLDS survey.*

To that end, the MEAC and PLA are committing efforts toward:

* Focusing on future data collection work on trending activities, such as technology;
* developing a set of “typical libraries” that will help libraries better understand who their peers are and what key operational data points look like for those groups; and
* increasing training opportunities to help library staff gain confidence in their own data skills and build a better understanding of how to use existing tools and data sets to understand their community.

**PROJECT OUTCOME**

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

On April 1, ACRL and PLA hosted a joint webinar, “Project Outcome: Evaluation Online Library Learning.” Over 330 attendees joined the webinar which had a both an academic and public library presenter discussion their virtual programming work and how they evaluate its impact.  Additionally, ACRL and PLA staff have released a user experience survey to registered Project Outcome users. The results will be used to inform opportunities to adapt the model to be more cost efficient and update it to reflect more advanced outcome measurement needs in the field. Staff will update the board of the findings in the summer.

**2020 CENSUS**

*Submitted by Larra Clark, Deputy Director*

As with everything, the current pandemic also is disrupting 2020 Census operations. The Census Bureau is re-evaluating operations on a roughly biweekly basis and providing updates [here](https://2020census.gov/en/news-events/operational-adjustments-covid-19.html). The shared ALA-PLA home page ([www.ala.org/census](http://www.ala.org/census)) continues to be updated. Much later than expected, we also received outreach from funders seeking to invest in public library 2020 Census outreach. This will allow us to offer more mini-grants to libraries, in addition to the [original 59](http://www.ala.org/news/member-news/2019/12/ala-awards-more-100000-59-library-census-equity-fund-grantees) out of 500+ submitted applications, and do other Census-related work. Announcements related to these projects are currently in the works.

Obviously, public library programs have been cancelled, and our buildings are closed to people who might have used our computers to complete the online self-response. In a call with grantees in March, however, we heard that [outreach continues](https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/2020-census-covid-19/), and more than 60% of respondents to PLA’s survey report they are using social media to promote participation in the 2020 Census. Finally, before our current crisis, we had a standing-room-only attendance at our [2020 Census program at PLA 2020](https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/pla-2020-closing-in-census/) and a sold-out [American Libraries Live! webinar](https://alapublishing.webex.com/recordingservice/sites/alapublishing/recording/48c89c8452f24161aadc2ee137152760) on March 4. Thanks again to all members of the joint ALA/PLA 2020 Census Library Outreach and Education Task Force for their work.

**AWARDS**

*Submitted by Megan Stewart, Program Coordinator*

PLA opened its call for applications for the 2019-2020 awards cycle on Tuesday, September 10, 2019. The call for nominations closed on Friday, December 6, 2019. PLA accepted applications for ten (10) awards and grants during this awards cycle.

PLA announced the winners for the 2019-2020 awards cycle via press release on Tuesday, March 10, 2020. The press release is available at <http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2020/03/public-library-association-announces-2020-award-winners>. The award winners’ names have also been posted on the PLA awards webpage at this link: <http://www.ala.org/pla/awards/>.