**TO:** PLA Board of Directors

**RE:** PLA Initiatives Report

**DATE:** September 28, 2021

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

**ACTION REQUESTED BY:**N/A

**DRAFT OF MOTION:**N/A

**IMLS LATINX FAMILY ENGAGEMENT GRANT**

*Submitted by Symone Villasenor, Project Manager*

PLA was awarded $99,948 under the IMLS National Leadership Planning Grant: Community Catalyst category for a September 2020-August 2021 project, entitled “Exploring a program co‐design approach to better serve and engage low‐income, Latinx communities. PLA has completed a membership survey, literature review, and collection of examples from some library systems and partner organizations. The focus groups that will be held by three libraries of different sizes (the Dallas (TX) Public Library, Arapahoe Libraries in Sheridan, CO, and the Forest Grove (OR) City Library) are behind schedule with the exception of Arapahoe Libraries. Arapahoe Libraries has already completed two community conversations or focus groups with their local Latinx families. Anecdotally, the focus groups were a big success and received support from Emily Sedgwick of National Center for Families Learning (NCFL). PLA plans to have Arapahoe Libraries share its focus group successes, challenges, and tips with the other two pilot libraries as they plan their community conversations.

Because the focus groups are slightly behind schedule, PLA requested and received a no cost extension for this project, through August 2022. By summer 2022, the project will produce a white paper and potentially a toolkit.

**AT&T DIGITAL LITERACY COLLABORATION**

*Submitted by Symone Villasenor, Project Manager*

In April 2021, PLA entered into a partnership with AT&T to improve digital literacy and promote broadband adoption among families and communities, particularly those who are newly connected and struggling with home schooling, employment and other challenges due to the COVID-19 crisis. AT&T provided PLA with a grant of about $626,000. PLA and AT&T will offer a specially curated collection of DigitalLearn courses so parents and families can build the skills and confidence they need to help children navigate distance learning and participate effectively and safely in today’s digital world. PLA will also update classroom training materials from DigitalLearn so that AT&T employee volunteers can teach families in their communities. Later in the project, mini-grants will go to public libraries to support digital literacy training activity.

As a second piece to this project, PLA will work with AT&T on a digital citizenship piece. This digital citizenship piece will be lead by Common Sense Media (CSM) who will create five new modules (Introduction, Connecting with Balance, Connecting with Kindness, Connecting with Vigilance, and Connecting with Purpose). PLA and three public and school librarian experts will provide feedback to CSM as these modules are developed. As with the digital literacy piece, this project piece will also offer mini-grants to public libraries to support their work in this areas as well as a contest. This contest, guidelines, application systems, and scoring procedures will be determined by a small leadership group of public librarians in early 2022.

**ADVANCING FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN LIBRARIES SERIES**

*Submitted by Symone Villaseñor, Project Manager*

PLA rolled out its first ever virtual classroom series, [*Advancing Family Engagement in Libraries*](http://www.ala.org/pla/education/onlinelearning/feseries)*,* in April 2020. Cohort 1 consisted of 30 public libraries (60 participants) who participated in 8 live and highly interactive sessions which always included breakout room sessions in which participants shared, discussed, and brainstormed together. These breakout rooms continued to be highly valuable to our cohort 2, another 60 participants from 29 libraries . While participants from cohort 1 were offered a closed ALA Connect Community to engage with each other beyond the hour-long sessions as well as a platform to store all series documents, this community was removed for cohorts 2-3. To date, cohort 3 which consists of 99 participants from 55 different libraries, engage via shared and ongoing Google Jam Boards and program materials are stored on a password protected site. Evaluations for both cohort 1 and 2 indicate that registrants are most interested in breakout room discussions, example programs, and practical and tangible tips for their programs and services. Sessions are based upon PLAs family engagement (FE) framework and [the Ideabook](https://globalfrp.org/content/download/73/436/file/IdeaBook.pdf) and are taught almost exclusively by PLAs Family Engagement Committee members.

PLA staff is now beginning to plan for cohort 4 in 2022 and beyond. Staff will take recommendations from our 2-hour planning session held in the summer of 2021 and current participant evaluation recommendations.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING TRAINING/SUPPORT**

*Submitted by Symone Villaseñor, Project Manager*

In the fourth quarter of 2019, PLA staff began working with Joy Fuller, an independent consultant who is no stranger to libraries or PLA. Joy was contracted to develop a new strategic planning publication for PLA and its members. As of September 2021, the publication is ready for sale both as an [e-book](https://www.alastore.ala.org/content/strategic-planning-public-libraries%E2%80%94eeditions-pdf-e-book) and as a [print copy/e-book bundle](https://www.alastore.ala.org/content/strategic-planning-public-libraries%E2%80%94printe-book-bundle). Sales have already started coming in for the publication which integrates both ALA and PLA resources including the Theory of Change, Libraries Transforming Communities’ Community Conversation Workbook, and Project Outcome materials. The publication focuses on the following content areas: preparing for strategic planning, assessing your library’s current state, developing the strategic plan, implementing and measuring a strategic plan, and communications and change management as it relates to strategic planning.

**SOCIAL WORKER TASK FORCE**

*Submitted by Kathleen Hughes, Manager Publications*

The Social Worker Task Force continues its work. This year the group continued working on a new book, loosely titled The Scenarios Workbook, which will allow readers to work through various scenarios using social worker tried and tested techniques. The book is planned to be released this Fall. In addition to writing this book, the group is planning a PLA 2022 preconference program entitled “Social Work-Inspired Best Practices to Support Patrons” (https://www.placonference.org/preconferences.cfm). They have also made available a one-pager to address questions about the library social worker position. In addition, they continue facilitating conversation in the PLA Social Work Interest Group and writing a regular column for *Public Libraries* Online.

**INCLUSIVE INTERNSHIP INITIATIVE**

*Submitted by Mary Hirsh, Deputy Director*

PLA hosted the fourth cohort if the Inclusive Internship Initiative over summer 2021. 40 libraries from across the country participated. Each received a $3,500 stipend to support a paid, mentored internship for a local high school student. The group gathered in June for a virtual kick-off. At this event, select mentors presented master classes on programs and services and shared their paths to librarianship. Over the summer, mentor-intern pairs worked on a community-facing project at the library. Project this year included two feminist book clubs, a partnership with the local community college targeted at new arrivals and providing resources to support mental health. The group gathered again in late September for a virtual wrap up, where each intern made a brief presentation about their III experience. This is the final year of IMLS funding for the program. PLA continues to explore future models and opportunities for sustaining III. There is anecdotal evidence that local systems are adopting the program model, as well.

**PROJECT OUTCOME**

*Submitted by Sara Goek, Program Manager*

Project Outcome continues to see user growth and engagement. 458 new users have signed up since June 1, 2021. The PLA and ACRL Project Outcome team have worked 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 was our first ever sponsored webinar, sponsored by OverDrive Professional, and brought in $2,500 in revenue each for PLA and ACRL (less costs). More than 1000 people registered, 362 attended live, and the recording has been watched an additional 529 times. In addition, a new case study was added in connection with PLA’s Advancing Family Engagement initiative.

**CENSUS DATA LITERACY PROJECT**

*Submitted by Sara Goek, Program Manager*

The Census Data Literacy project is an initiative of PLA in partnership with ALA’s Public Policy and Advocacy Office. It aims to build data literacy skills among library staff to enhance their services, programs, and initiatives with the overall goal of promoting awareness and use of Census data in their communities. This will include free webinars and complementary online resources. The second webinar in the series, “Building Business Know-How through Data Literacy,” was held on June 16; it had 530 registrants and 201 live attendees. The third webinar, “Data Literacy for Youth: Using Census Data in Public Library Programming” had 909 registrants and 355 live attendees. The next webinar in the series will be held on November 1. This project was originally planned to be completed by the end of December 2021. However, it has been extended into 2022 due to webinar scheduling challenges and limited staff capacity.

**PUBLIC LIBRARIES & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

*Submitted by Larra Clark, Deputy Director*

The Public Libraries & Workforce Development initiative launched in August 2021 with a new [landing page](https://www.ala.org/pla/initiatives/workforce) and [webinar series](https://www.ala.org/pla/education/onlinelearning/webinars#workforce). The initiative falls within the Transformation area of the PLA strategic plan, particularly related to increasing opportunities to explore and share effective emerging best practices that are addressing community priorities. It also addresses priorities raised in the 2021 PLA member survey, which found that building community partnerships was the top topic identified for building professional competencies, closely followed by EDI. Similarly, economic recovery, closely followed by EDI, were the top areas for community partnership work. The initiative is squarely focused on public library collaboration and the larger workforce and career development ecosystem. Co-developed by PLA and Libswork, a national networking group on workforce and small business development in libraries, each webinar tackles a different topic related to workforce development and provide practical tools and resources for libraries to plan, deliver, partner, and advocate for these services to advance equitable economic opportunity. Eight webinars featuring public and state libraries with workforce partners at the local, state, and national level are scheduled in 2021, and discussions are ongoing in terms of future programming and resource development. To date each webinar has seen more than 500 registrants, and more than 200 live participants. Finally, this initiative dovetails with the potential reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and legislative advocacy to better integrate and support public libraries in this service area.