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PLA President’s Report, 2019 ALA Annual Conference Monique le Conge Zieshenne, PhD, 2018-2019

The Public Library Association (PLA) envisions a future where public libraries serve at the intersection of vibrant communities and a strong democracy. Our association works to strengthen public libraries and their contribution to communities. Our groundbreaking initiatives do more than develop new skills – they move our profession to ever more innovative places. And our continuing education opportunities don’t just improve public library services, they build public library leaders. We know that wherever public libraries are working, possibility lives.

PLA makes ALA a stronger organization by aligning our strategic priorities with ALA’s; by contributing to ALA’s bottom line through membership, overhead, and increased capacity; and by strengthening library networks. We’re stronger together.

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Organizational Excellence

PLA's 75th Anniversary

This year PLA will celebrate 75 years of success and the public library world is invited to join in PLA's Diamond Anniversary celebration. From now through the [PLA 2020 Conference](#), the association will recognize this milestone by reflecting on our storied history, honoring the many people who have contributed to our achievements, and preparing for an even brighter future. PLA came into being on Oct. 13, 1944 when the American Library Association's governing council approved the creation of a Division of Public Libraries. Since its inception, PLA has grown by leaps and bounds, from a small group of charter members to nearly 10,000 professionals representing public libraries large and small. PLA will commemorate the 75th Anniversary at several [events](#) over the coming months, including at the 2019 ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. and the PLA 2020 Conference in Nashville, Tenn. To learn more, please visit [PLA's 75th Anniversary website](#) and follow the hashtag #PLA75 on social media.

Strategic Plan Implementation

[PLA's 2018-2022 PLA Strategic Plan](#) was finalized and approved by the board of directors in June 2018. In less than a year's time, PLA has made great strides toward achieving our goals.

Goal 1 - Transformation: *PLA advances public libraries' transformation from a library focus to a community focus, to meet the specific needs of people and communities.*

PLA is working to increase digital skills at the community level, through public library facilities, programming and staff development. Through partnerships with [Google](#) and [Microsoft Philanthropies](#), as well as the ongoing work of the [Digital Literacy Committee](#), PLA is creating new tools to help public libraries do transformative work in the digital literacy space.

Goal 2 - Leadership: *PLA builds and supports leadership for public libraries that is reflective of the needs of each community and the profession.*

Established in 2013, the [PLA Leadership Academy](#) empowers public library professionals to become innovative and successful leaders of change, shifting their libraries from an internal approach, focused on organizational operations, to an external approach, focused on community needs. PLA hosted its fifth Academy Mar. 25-29 in Chicago, Ill. Twenty-eight public library professionals participated in the Spring 2019 Academy, which was the first using [PLA's new Leadership Model](#).

Goal 3 - Advocacy & Awareness: *PLA leads in public library advocacy and influencing perceptions of public libraries.*

Through its [performance-measurement initiative](#), PLA provides public libraries with the resources and training support needed to demonstrate their library's impact on the community and confidently advocate for its future. The cornerstone of this initiative is [Project Outcome](#), a free toolkit designed to help public libraries understand and share the impact of essential library services and programs by providing simple surveys and an easy-to-use process for measuring and analyzing outcomes. In 2019, Project Outcome has broadened its reach by releasing a customized version for use by academic libraries.

PLA staff and members have co-developed and promoted new tools to prepare and position public libraries relative to the [2020 U.S. Census](#). PLA and ALA are advocating for a fair, accurate, and inclusive Census that recognizes the roles libraries will play in this vital civic effort. Several PLA board members are serving on the 2020 Census Library Outreach and Education Task Force and PLA is actively partnering with ALA's Public Policy and Advocacy Office on communications.

Public library staff are also well-represented within the [ALA Policy Corps](#) program, which focuses on issues for which deep and sustained knowledge are necessary to advance ALA policy goals and library values among policymakers. A report on the Policy Corps' progress will be released and shared at the ALA Annual Conference.

Goal 4 - Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Social Justice (EDISJ): *PLA advocates for equity, diversity, inclusion and social justice in order to enable every member, library, and community group to fully and equally participate in a society mutually shaped to meet their needs.*

PLA is equipping its members with tools, coaching, learning opportunities and other resources to advocate and apply EDISJ principles in their libraries and communities. PLA is hosting regional symposia on equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice for public libraries throughout 2019. [Social Justice and Public Libraries: Equity Starts with Us](#) will be presented in Denver, Colo., Charleston, S.C., and Chicago, Ill., to as many as 100 public library professionals per location.

Goal 5 - Organizational Excellence: *PLA is entrepreneurial, resilient, and successful in the sustaining and growing of resources to advance its mission and work.*

PLA is taking steps to lend greater oversight and attention to financial matters. In the 2019 PLA Election, members approved a [ballot measure](#) to add a Fiscal Officer position to the board of directors. The PLA fiscal officer, to be appointed in July 2019, will serve as chair of the [PLA Budget & Finance Committee](#) and as liaison to the American Library Association ([ALA](#)) [Budget Analysis &](#)

[Review Committee](#). The first fiscal officer will be appointed by Immediate Past-President Pam Sandlian Smith to a three-year term beginning July 2019.

Making ALA Stronger

Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness

ALA's plans for reorganization and the work of the Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness (SCOE) will impact PLA. PLA leaders and staff are working hard to [keep PLA members informed](#) about the progress of ALA's reorganization. It is critical for ALA to be transparent and to solicit feedback and listen to the voices and experiences of public library staff and stakeholders throughout the reorganization process. PLA has encouraged SCOE to:

- Share its vision for where ALA is heading and how the proposed changes will get us there;
- Consider the pace of ALA's proposed timeline for reorganization, which calls for a final recommendation to the executive board by October 2019, and the pressure this places on the organization amidst several other streams of change including a proposed move to a new building and the hiring of a new executive director;
- Be transparent and align proposed models with their financial implications;
- Continue and strengthen communication to members and staff about the process, engaging them in ongoing discussions and reporting status regularly through channels including ALA Connect, but also beyond ALA Connect since not all members use the Connect space.

Council Outreach

PLA strives to engage with ALA Council members, particularly those who work in public libraries and/or are PLA members. As part of PLA's "Stronger Together" outreach effort, ALA Councilors are being provided opportunities to meet with PLA leaders, learn about public library issues and priorities, and discuss how PLA and ALA can best address areas of shared interest.

The inaugural "Stronger Together" Breakfast for ALA Councilors was held at the 2019 ALA Midwinter Meeting, and the majority of attendees said the event helped them better understand how PLA works with ALA. To make "Stronger Together" events a regular practice, PLA will host another [breakfast at the ALA Annual Conference](#) for ALA Councilors.

Executive Director Search

ALA is in the process of hiring a new Executive Director with the goal of bringing the new director on in January 2020. PLA leaders have expressed their concern to ALA that the composition of the Executive Director Search Committee does not reflect the association or the library field as there is only one public librarian on a committee of 14. PLA provided division representatives to the committee, Jim Neal and Steven Yates, with information about PLA and public librarianship to share with the committee in order to provide the public library perspective.

2019 Election

On Apr. 10, PLA announced [the results of its 2019 Election](#). The members elected [Michelle Jeske](#), city librarian and executive director of Denver (Colo.) Public Library, to the office of 2020-2021 PLA president. Originally elected to PLA's Board of Directors in 2017, Jeske will serve a three-year term beginning this June and including one-year stints as president-elect (2019-2020), president (2020-2021), and immediate past-president (2021-2022). Also elected to three-year terms on the PLA Board, as directors-at-large, were [Amita Lonial](#), assistant library director of the Tacoma (Wash.) Public Library and [Toby Greenwalt](#), director of digital strategy at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (Penn.). The [ballot measure](#), which proposed adding a fiscal officer's position to the PLA Board, was approved by an overwhelming 97% majority.

Supporters

PLA is grateful for the financial support it has received during the past year from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Capital One, Community Catalyst, Google, Institute of Museum & Library Services, the John L. and James S. Knight Foundation, Microsoft, the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, the National Science Foundation/Califa Group, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and individual members, as well as the following companies:

Baker & Taylor	Ingram Content Group	OCLC
BiblioCommons	LibraryReads	Rakuten OverDrive
BookPage	Marcive, Inc.	Romance Writers of America
Brainfuse	Mergent	<i>The New York Times</i>
Demco	National Endowment for	The Singer Group
Disney Book Group	Financial Education	Tutor.com
EBSCO Information Services	National Library of Medicine	Unique Patron Service Solutions
Harlequin	Niche Academy	Upstart, A Demco Company

Partnerships

For 20 years, the [Global Libraries \(GL\) Initiative](#) of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation collaborated with libraries and organizations like PLA, investing more than \$1 billion globally to enhance the power of libraries to improve lives. In May 2016, the Gates Foundation made a \$10 million investment in PLA. To exit the field in a catalytic way, leaving the field strong, GL invited three organizations to apply for funding as legacy partners: PLA, the Technology and Social Change Group at the University of Washington's Information School (TASCHA), and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). PLA continues to use the opportunity presented by the grant and partnerships to deepen, expand, and transform its engagement with public libraries across the country.

As part of the Legacy Partnership work, PLA President Monique le Conge Ziesenhenne, PhD, travelled to Antalya, Turkey, last October, to participate in the Life After LIFE International Forum. The purpose of the LIFE Program was to stimulate radical transformation and advancement at selected municipal public libraries so that these institutions become “centers of attraction” for the citizens residing in their service areas. Ziesenhenne’s keynote speech outlined PLA’s framework for strengthening U.S. public libraries and supporting a globally connected field. PLA staff have also participated in several international events in support of the Legacy Partners, including the 2018 IFLA World Congress in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

In addition to the Gates Foundation and Global Libraries Legacy Partners, PLA has partnered with a wide variety of organizations on select projects over the past twelve months. They include African Library and Information Association and Institutions, Capital One, Community Catalyst, Google, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Microsoft Philanthropies, OCLC, the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Short Édition and various ALA offices and divisions. Additional information on each project can be found in this report.

Leadership

New Leadership Model

In September, PLA unveiled a new model for its [Leadership Development Initiative](#). Developed by 21 select library leaders with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the PLA Leadership Model describes the work, methods, and core values of leadership in a public library context. In alignment with the Association’s [strategic goals](#) of Leadership and Transformation, this model advances public libraries’ shift from an organizational focus to a community focus and supports leadership that reflects the needs of the community. The new model lists library leaders’ core areas of responsibility as Learning and Literacy, and Stewardship and Integrity. Library leaders are also encouraged to practice the paired values of Respect and Civility; Inclusion and Equity; Service and Privacy; and Information and Truth, while embracing a spirit of caring, integrity, and optimism. It envisions these leaders helping individuals, neighborhoods and communities to thrive by making the library a trusted, helpful resource to all people.

Leadership Academy

Twenty-eight public library leaders participated in the fifth [PLA Leadership Academy](#), which was held Mar. 25-29 in Chicago, Ill. The PLA Leadership Academy empowers public library professionals to become innovative and successful leaders of change, shifting their libraries from an internal approach—focused on organizational operations—to an external approach—focused on community needs. Since the program’s inception in 2013, a total of five academies have been held and 142 leaders have been trained.

AfLIA Leadership Exchange

This March, in tandem with the Spring 2019 [Leadership Academy](#), PLA hosted twelve librarians from Africa for an international leadership learning exchange and immersion experience. It also served as the capstone event for the first graduating class of the [African Library and Information Associations and Institutions](#) (AfLIA) Leadership Academy. With funding and support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, PLA had partnered with AfLIA to develop an academy for African public librarians. The kickoff event for the inaugural AfLIA Leadership Academy (AfLAc) cohort was held Nairobi, Kenya, in January 2018. Eleven librarians from seven countries participated in the first cohort, and nine of them made the trip to the U.S.—accompanied by three AfLIA leadership coaches—for the capstone event.

The AfLIA leaders spent the first part of their week-long trip attending PLA Leadership Academy sessions in Chicago, IL. There, they learned about PLA's new Leadership Model and heard illustrative stories from the field. For the rest of the week, the AfLIA cohort split from the U.S. librarians to tour four public libraries in Illinois and Wisconsin. They visited Madison (WI) Public Library, Columbus (WI) Public Library, Skokie (IL) Public Library, and the Chicago Public Library's Chinatown branch. The goal of the tours was to explore leadership models in different contexts, as well as the role of leadership in developing innovative services.

Support of Emerging Leaders program

PLA, a long-time supporter of the ALA's [Emerging Leaders](#) (EL) program, sponsored the participation of two library professionals in the 2019 EL class. PLA provided funding for Megan Glidden, senior librarian at ImagineIF Libraries (Flathead County, Mont.) and Mimosa Shah, adult program coordinator at Skokie (Ill.) Public Library, to participate in the program. The 2019 Emerging Leaders will showcase the results of their work at the [ALA 2019 Annual Conference](#) in Washington, D.C.

Advocacy & Awareness

2019 Award Winners

PLA offers a variety of awards designed to highlight the best in public library service and to honor those bringing innovation, creativity, and dedication to public libraries. The 2019 PLA Awards recognized the following 11 individuals and public libraries:

Allie Beth Martin Award

Sondra Eklund, Youth Services Manager, City of Fairfax (VA) Regional Library

Baker & Taylor Entertainment Audio Music/Video Product

Ivan O. Davis – Liberty (ME) Library

Charlie Robinson Award

Clyde Scoles, Director, Toledo Lucas County (OH) Public Library

EBSCO Excellence in Rural Library Service Award

Copper Queen Library (Bisbee, AZ)

Gordon M. Conable Award

Fairfax County (VA) Public Library

John Iliff Award

Mark Williams, Chief Librarian & CEO, Milton (ON, Canada) Public Library

Library Innovation Award

Southern Adirondack Library System (Saratoga Springs, NY)

New Leaders Travel Grant

Leah Dudak, Reference Librarian
Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County (OH)

Jessica Robertson, Cataloging Librarian – Collection Services
Central Rappahannock Regional Library (Fredericksburg, VA)

Romance Writers of America Library Grant

Suffolk (VA) Public Library

The Singer Group Helping Communities Come Together Award

Sonoma County (CA) Library

Public Libraries Feature Article Contest (1st prize)

“[Constructive Confrontation: Being Decisive Rather Than Nice](#)” – July-August 2018 issue
Jane Holt, manager, Centennial Library (Midland, Texas)

Public Libraries Feature Article Contest (Readers’ Choice)

“[Ransomware at the Library: Time To Boost Your Cybersecurity](#)” – July-August 2018 issue
Karen Pundsack, executive director, Great River Regional Library (St. Cloud, Minn.)

2020 Census Project

To best position libraries to support their communities in the [2020 Census](#), PLA and ALA are engaging with the U.S. Census Bureau and other stakeholders to ensure that libraries are informed and represented in the policy discussions and planning process. PLA and ALA are advocating for a fair, accurate, and inclusive Census that recognizes the roles libraries will play in this vital civic effort.

As part of this work, the 2020 Census Library Outreach & Education Task Force, a joint effort of PLA and the ALA Washington Office, has released a policy brief titled [Libraries and the 2020 Census](#). This document explains how decision makers, including state and local policymakers, can partner with libraries as they work to ensure their communities are fully represented in the 2020 Census. This May, with support from the task force and the [Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality](#), they also released the [Libraries' Guide to the 2020 Census](#), a new resource to prepare libraries for the decennial count of every person living in the U.S.

Performance Measurement

While many public libraries collect data about their programs and services, they often lack the data to indicate the benefits libraries provide their communities. To address this need, PLA created [Project Outcome](#), a free toolkit designed to help libraries understand and share the impact of essential services and programs through simple surveys and a user-friendly process for measuring and analyzing outcomes.

In March, PLA partnered with the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) to release a version of Project Outcome customized for use by academic libraries. The full toolkit was launched at the ACRL 2019 Conference in Cleveland, Ohio.

In April, PLA launched a new Project Outcome survey intended to measure the effectiveness of public libraries' consumer health programming. Funding for the creation of new survey was provided by three of National Network of Libraries of Medicine's eight regional medical libraries: MidContinental, Pacific Southwest, and South Central.

In June, a white paper highlighting PLA's performance measurement program was released. The publication, [Project Outcome: Insights for Adopting the Model](#), was created to share insights into the development and evolution of Project Outcome to aid others in adopting similar field-driven models. Like Project Outcome, this paper is part of the legacy of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Libraries initiative.

Transformation

Digital Literacy

Libraries Lead with Digital Skills

An exciting new digital literacy project was launched in 2019, aimed at supporting workforce development in communities across the U.S. through public libraries. [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. ALA and Google are holding free, one-day events at libraries across the country, where Grow with Google experts will deliver in-person workshops for job seekers, small businesses, and library staff. Recognizing the critical role libraries play in supporting workforce development in communities across the country, Google is also investing \$1 million in libraries. Following each state's Grow with Google workshops, PLA has begun accepting applications for micro-funding to libraries to provide programming, outreach, and education in their own libraries, to address the digital skills gaps of job seekers and small businesses.

DigitalLearn.org

Over the past twelve months, PLA has added two new courses to its digital literacy training website, [DigitalLearn.org](#). The site offers a collection of narrated, video-based learning modules developed to help learners practice basic digital literacy skills. The newly added courses focus on [locating reliable health information](#) and [applying for jobs online](#).

DigitalLead: Rural Libraries Creating New Possibilities

In May, PLA announced a new partnership with [Microsoft Philanthropies](#), the philanthropic arm of the Microsoft Corporation, to increase digital literacy programming and access to technology in rural communities. Using nearly \$400,000 generously donated by Microsoft employees, PLA and Microsoft Philanthropies will provide technology to increase broadband access as well as other resources for deployment to select rural public libraries, through an application process to be administered by PLA. Staff at the selected libraries will also receive tools and digital skills training to increase their capacity to support the needs of their patrons. Under this new program, *DigitalLead: Rural Libraries Creating New Possibilities*, PLA will accept applications from libraries in select rural counties to help them establish mobile hotspot lending programs and to initiate or expand digital skills training programs and patron access to computers. At least 50 libraries will be approved to receive new computers and other hardware, training and more. Libraries nationwide will benefit from training and tools collated by the project and released for use by PLA members and others.

Early Childhood Literacy

PLA developed a new product for 2019 designed to boost early childhood literacy programming in libraries, schools and daycare centers. PLA's [2019 Early Childhood Literacy Activity Calendar](#) includes twelve

months of learning activities, book lists and nursery rhymes. One side of each page has a calendar with a fun skills-building activity for every day of the month, and the other contains supplementary content like nursery rhymes, early literacy tips, song lyrics and suggested reading material. Based on the core practices of [Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library](#), PLA's parent-education initiative, the publication emphasizes activities involving reading, writing, singing, talking, playing and counting.

Family Engagement

In July 2018, PLA released a free promotional toolkit designed to help libraries raise awareness of [family engagement](#) through libraries. The term “family engagement” describes a shared responsibility among families, educators and communities to support children’s learning and development. Building upon the early-childhood literacy success of [Every Child Ready to Read@ your library®](#), PLA established a Family Engagement Initiative in 2015 to help libraries serve families of all types with children of all ages.

The Family Engagement Toolkit was developed as part of ALA’s [Libraries Transform](#) public awareness campaign. The Toolkit offers both strategy and tactics for family engagement advocates, including message points, customizable graphics, promotional ideas, and program examples from [IDEABOOK: Libraries for Families](#), a family engagement publication released in 2017 by PLA and the Global Family Research Project. This resource can be used to supplement libraries’ marketing, fundraising, community relations and political advocacy work.

Financial Literacy

In March, PLA announced a collaboration with [Capital One Financial Corporation](#) to bring innovative financial literacy resources to public libraries across the U.S. Through this project, PLA and the American Library Association will help public libraries nationwide learn about [Capital One’s Ready, Set, Bank program](#), which teaches consumers basic mobile banking skills. Ready, Set, Bank is designed specifically for older adults, and offers numerous, unbranded videos to guide learners through every step of the process, with overviews and step-by-step tutorials to help them manage their finances online—regardless of where they bank.

PLA will share Ready, Set, Bank information with libraries throughout 2019, including through an [educational program](#) at the 2019 ALA Annual Conference. The financial literacy resources on Ready, Set, Bank will also supplement the existing courses on PLA’s [DigitalLearn.org](#) website with helpful videos on online banking matters. ALA has also recognized Capital One for its financial support by naming the company as a [Library Champion](#) at the \$25,000 (Sustainer) level.

Fostering Creative Community Connections

At the PLA 2018 Conference, PLA announced a partnership with community publisher Short Édition to promote reading and literary joy through public libraries in four U.S. communities. With funding from the [John S. and James L. Knight Foundation](#), the two organizations launched [Fostering Creative Community Connections](#) (FCCC), an ongoing effort to promote literary expression, community engagement, library programs and services, and creative expression. Through FCCC, PLA and Short Édition supported four libraries in [Knight Foundation communities](#) to bring short stories to unexpected places via Short Story Dispensers connected to Short Édition’s digital publishing platform.

In the fall, PLA held a [National Short Fiction Contest](#) as part of the FCCC project. More than 600 writers across the U.S. entered the contest by submitting short stories on the theme of *courage*. The contest jury awarded the \$1,000 first prize to Mim Eichmann from Wheaton, IL, for her story “[Slomp](#)” and \$500 Honorable Mentions to R.L. Burke from Snellville, GA, for “[The Invitation](#)” and Donald Ryan from Auburn GA for “[Call It What You Will](#).” All 606 qualifying short story submissions can be viewed [on the contest site](#).

Health Literacy, Reference and Programming

Health Insurance Enrollment & Education

As part of its ongoing work to support the public library’s role in creating healthy communities, PLA is offering new resources for libraries to help more Americans enroll in affordable health insurance. Beginning in fall 2018, PLA began partnering with the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#) and [Community Catalyst](#) to address a shortened period for enrolling in the [Affordable Care Act](#) (ACA) marketplace and reduced funding for enrollment Navigators. Through its initiative, [Promoting Health Communities: Libraries Connecting You to Coverage](#), PLA provided funding to 110 public libraries across the U.S. to encourage health insurance enrollment.

[66 libraries](#) were given \$300 mini grants to disseminate, offer education, and encourage their communities to enroll in the ACA Health Insurance Marketplace during the 2018 Open Enrollment period. According to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, almost 8.5 million people in the 39 HealthCare.gov-participating states enrolled in coverage during the six-week open enrollment period. This represents a 4% decrease compared to last year’s open enrollment numbers. Thanks to the hard work of enrollment advocates, including public libraries, the drop was much smaller than anticipated. Another [44 libraries](#) received \$500 mini-grants to implement consumer outreach and education activities around health insurance and health information. PLA also is providing all libraries with tips and tools to make educating communities easy, including resources and communication assets.

Health Literacy Toolkit

As part of the Libraries Transform public awareness campaign, ALA and NNLM updated a promotional [Health Literacy Toolkit](#) with new resources to help library professionals raise awareness of how libraries

provide trusted health information to their communities. Originally launched in 2017, the free toolkit includes key messages, program ideas, and downloadable marketing materials (such as bookmarks and social media graphics) for libraries to use in promoting consumer health information and health reference services. The newly expanded toolkit covers a wide array of health topics including aging, nutrition, chronic illnesses, genetics, family history, and student well-being.

Health Website

PLA and the National Network of Libraries of Medicine created a new website to help public libraries better serve their patrons' health information needs. The site, located at <https://publiclibrary.health>, features a wide variety of resources including health-related news, programming ideas, data sources, glossaries of terms, training materials and information on funding opportunities.

Opioid Crisis Response

In October, PLA announced a collaboration with OCLC on [new project](#) to collect and share knowledge and resources to support public libraries and their community partners in addressing the opioid crisis. OCLC was awarded a \$249,714 National Leadership Grant from the [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) (IMLS) to perform this work. Together, the two organizations will complete the following deliverables:

- Produce eight case studies of varied communities in which the public library is an active partner in response to the opioid crisis;
- Through virtual discussion sessions, gather additional insights and resources from government agencies, public health and human services organizations, philanthropic and community organizations, and library leaders;
- Synthesize the research and cross-sector perspectives into a call-to-action white paper that offers resources and recommendations for how libraries might respond to the opioid epidemic in their local communities; and
- Broadly share the information with public library directors and their staff so that they can more confidently make better-informed decisions about their libraries' strategies, policies, and activities regarding the opioid crisis.

This project builds on past work, including the [Opioid Crisis Townhall](#), [“Libraries and the Opioid Crisis” Facebook discussion group](#), and related conference library programming and published articles.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Social Justice

Inclusive Internship Initiative

One of PLA's highest-profile programs, the [Inclusive Internship Initiative](#) (III), is now entering its third year. III offers paid, summer-long internships to high school students at their local public library. Over the course of the summer, each intern works with his or her library mentor on a community-based learning project. Through III, students from diverse backgrounds are introduced to careers in librarianship, library mentors practice leadership skills, and host libraries grow new audiences through outreach and programming. In alignment with PLA's strategic goal of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice, III was piloted in 2017 as a pathway program to increase diversity in public librarianship. Since its inception, more than 100 high school students at 80 libraries have learned about careers in librarianship. Applications for 2019 have closed and the participating libraries for the summer cohort will be announced in the spring.

Celebrating learning and library values at PLA 2020 in Nashville

In 2011, PLA selected Nashville, Tennessee as the host site for its [2020 Conference](#). PLA 2020 will be an inclusive convening that highlights innovative work and ideas that address the challenges facing public libraries and their communities today. PLA leadership understands that no meeting site is immune from political actions or legislation contrary to our values and some Tennessee laws do not align with [PLA's commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice](#) or the [core values of librarianship](#). Recognizing this, we have made a commitment to use our presence in 2020 to educate and inspire. PLA 2020 will provide outstanding educational experiences for everyone and serve to raise awareness through new and innovative learning opportunities. PLA leadership began exploring how we might achieve our goals last fall when the PLA Board participated in an insight immersion experience in Nashville focused on equity, diversity, inclusion and social justice. The idea for the experience grew from our decision to meet in Nashville and the EDISJ goals of [PLA's Strategic Plan](#). The purpose of the insight immersion was to begin to gather input on how to use our conference to educate and inspire action. [Read more from our Statement on Core Values and Conference Sites](#).

Regional EDISJ Symposium

PLA is presenting regional symposia on equity, diversity, inclusion and social justice in libraries throughout 2019. The symposium, [Social Justice and Public Libraries: Equity Starts with Us](#), is led by Mia Henry, a facilitator and educator who teaches self-reflection, relationship-building, and understanding social movement history. Henry has served as executive director of the Arcus Center for Social Justice at Kalamazoo (Mich.) College and founder and principal of Freedom Lifted, which provides Civil Rights tours of the U.S. Deep South and social justice trainings through a historical lens. Members of the [PLA Task Force on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) will also speak and facilitate discussion during each session.

Approximately 90 library professionals and students participated in the inaugural symposium in Denver, Colo., Feb. 25-26. Participants explored how power and privilege operate interpersonally and institutionally; identified how oppression shows up in our communities and libraries; and learned about historical and contemporary social justice movements. The EDISJ symposium will be offered twice more in 2019: Aug. 12-13 in Charleston, S.C. and Oct. 28-29 Chicago, Ill.

Support for NIH *All of Us* Research Program

PLA and the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NNLM) are partnering to raise awareness of the National Institute of Health's [All of Us Research Program](#), a historic effort to gather data from one million or more people living in the U.S., to accelerate research and improve health. By considering individual differences in lifestyle, environment, and biology, researchers will uncover paths toward delivering precision medicine.

At the heart of *All of Us* is a drive to address inequity in the health care system, which compelled the PLA Board of Directors to approve a formal partnership in late 2018. This work aligns with the recent addition of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice as a goal in [PLA's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan](#). Public libraries can help improve health outcomes for all populations within their community, particularly those who have been historically underrepresented in biomedical research and medical advancements, through health outreach, programming, and partnership.

Over the next year, PLA and NNLM will work together to support public libraries to increase health literacy, address health research inequities, and strengthen community partnerships with health advocates and providers. The partnership will support community engagement around *All of Us* by elevating the role of public libraries in locating reliable health information and creating connections through library spaces and technology.

Social Work in Public Libraries

In July 2018, PLA launched its [Social Worker Task Force](#), a volunteer group formed to develop and recommend a strategic and coordinated approach for how public libraries address the social service needs of customers. The task force will identify best practices and will consider resources to be developed that will allow PLA to offer guidance and technical support to libraries.

Recently, members of the task force have used the new Hollywood film, "The Public," as an opportunity to raise awareness about library service to the homeless. "The Public" is a fictional drama about a group of homeless men who take over the Cincinnati Main Library one winter night to avoid freezing to death. The film was released nationally Apr. 5, 2019. During a viewing tour for the film at public libraries, members of the Social Work Task Force participated in panel sessions and discussions. The task force also sent a letter to the film's director, Emilio Estevez, advancing the principle of trauma-informed care in offering service to

persons experiencing homelessness. To facilitate member discussions around social work in libraries, PLA has added a [Social Work Interest Group](#) to its online community offerings in ALA Connect.

Conferences

PLA @ 2019 ALA Midwinter Meeting

PLA offered a robust lineup of programs and events at the 2019 ALA Midwinter Meeting, Jan. 25-29, in Seattle, Wash. During the Opening Session, PLA and ALA presented a Resolution of Recognition & Appreciation to the keynote speaker, Melinda Gates of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Programming began on Jan. 25 with two equity-focused preconference Institutes, [Advancing Racial Equity in Public Libraries: Normalizing, Organizing & Operationalizing](#), in partnership with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) and [Implicit Bias, Health Disparities & Health Literacy: Intersections in Health Equity](#), in partnership with the National Network of Libraries of Medicine Pacific Northwest Region and the ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services. Later that evening, public library professionals gathered at the Pike Brewing Company for a Happy Hour hosted by PLA and its Membership Advisory Group.

Over the next few days, the PLA Board of Directors and various committees, task forces, advisory groups, working groups and award juries met. PLA also hosted a breakfast to facilitate a dialogue between its leaders and public librarians who serve on ALA Council. PLA held a forum on legal issues in public libraries and educational sessions about the [PLAmetrics program](#), [Inclusive Internships](#), [Performance Measurement](#), and [Healthcare Enrollment](#) initiatives. Members of the [PLA Task Force on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Social Justice](#) also presented a program called Racial Equity: Libraries Organizing to Transform Institutions as part of the Symposium on the Future of Libraries.

PLA @ 2019 ALA Annual Conference

PLA has planned a robust [slate of programming at the 2019 ALA Annual Conference](#), June 20-25 in Washington, D.C. In addition to numerous business meetings, PLA will offer one preconference, 19 open programs, five “News You Can Use” sessions, and a Member Welcome Breakfast. Highlights include:

- PLA’s half-day preconference on Fri., June 21 will focus on social work in public libraries. [Librarians and Social Workers: Partnerships that Work for Connecting People in Need](#) will highlight best practices and provide resources to better equip libraries to serve patrons experiencing life challenges.

- PLA President Monique le Conge Ziesenhenné will host an exclusive breakfast for PLA members on Sat., June 22. The [PLA Member Welcome Breakfast](#) will feature author Ann Patchett as a guest speaker and a ceremony recognizing the recipients of [PLA's 2019 Awards](#).
- In partnership with the Association of Library Collections & Technical Services (ALCTS), PLA is co-sponsoring the program the [Preservation Week 101](#) on Sat., June 22. This program will introduce the history and purpose of [ALCTS Preservation Week](#), provide an orientation to resources and events related to it, and prepare participants to plan and host Preservation Week 2020 events at their libraries.
- As part of a [collaboration with Capital One Financial Corporation](#) to bring innovative financial literacy resources to public libraries across the U.S., PLA will host [Ready, Set, Bank @ Your Public Library](#) on Sun., June 23. Joined by a representative from Capital One, staff from Houston (Texas) Public Library and Queens (N.Y.) Public Library will discuss how they implemented the program at their libraries.
- Also on June 23, PLA will sponsor a “News You Can Use” session called [The Digital Literacy Frontier: From Broadband Access to Skill Development](#). A diverse panel of experts will share tools, resources, and partnership strategies to help libraries enhance digital skill development in their communities.

PLA 2020 Conference

Offered biennially, the [PLA Conference](#) is the premier event for public libraries, drawing thousands of librarians, library support staff, trustees, friends and library vendors from across the country and around the world. The 2020 Conference will be held Feb. 25-29 in downtown Nashville, TN, with most events taking place at The Music City Center. The PLA 2020 Conference will be packed with extraordinary educational content, inspirational speakers, and memorable entertainment. There will be distinctive networking events, opportunities to mingle with authors, a bustling exhibit hall and more than 100 educational programs carefully curated for public library professionals. Registration opens fall 2019.

Publications and Media

PLA works hard to cover concepts in its publications that align with the organization's strategic goals of Organizational Excellence; Leadership; Advocacy & Awareness; Transformation; and Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Social Justice.

Public Libraries Magazine

Public Libraries Magazine is the flagship print publication of the Public Library Association and is published bimonthly. During the past twelve months, *Public Libraries* has addressed trending and challenging topics

for public librarians through articles such as “[Librarians Respond to Humanitarian Crisis at the Border](#),” “[We Are All Welcome in the Library: An Interview with Eric Klinenberg](#),” and “[If You Want to Figure Out What America Is Go To A Library: An Interview with Jose Antonio Vargas](#).” The magazine also covered practical, management-directed issues with such articles as “[The Mission-Informed Library](#),” “[A Fresh Approach to Job Rotation](#),” “[PLA Leadership Development Programs Offer Lessons For a Lifetime](#),” and many more.

Public Libraries Online

Like the print iteration, [Public Libraries Online](#) focuses on issues and topics that matter to public libraries and public librarianship. Updated frequently, the site features selections from the print magazine as well as unique content. Public Libraries Online offers hundreds of articles on library-related topics in addition to author interviews and book reviews, and more. PL Online covers a wide variety of library world topics - a sample of articles published this year includes: “[Defining the Relevance Narrative in Library Media Coverage](#),” “[Basic Literacy A Crucial Aspect of Public Library Service](#),” “[Health Literacy: The Librarian’s Tool to Address Health Disparities](#),” and “[Incident Report Writing: A Person-In-Incident Approach](#).” The site attracts nearly 40,000 viewers per month.

FYI: The Public Libraries Podcast

PLA launched its podcast series, FYI: The *Public Libraries* Podcast, in 2015. These short, information-packed segments offer an easy way to explore initiatives or hear more about current ideas in the public library world. Listeners can stream the episodes directly from the PL Online site or subscribe via iTunes. During the past twelve months, the podcast has featured topics including [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#); [Social Workers in Public Libraries](#); [Serving Children of Incarcerated Parents](#), and more.

Quick Reads for Busy Librarians

PLA offers a series of publications called Quick Reads for Busy Librarians. At no more than 100 pages, these short books cover both emerging and essential topics in public librarianship with style, clarity, and above all, brevity. All books published after September 1, 2016 have been made available free of charge to PLA members. In the past twelve months, PLA released three new editions: [PLA 2018: Ten Essential Programs](#), [Teaching Early Literacy to Teen Parents](#), and [Taking Care of Business in the 21st Century: A New Library Service Model](#). These books are available for download via the [PLA Member Library](#). PLA has decided to cease publication of the series as of May 2018 and is working on introducing a new publication series.