

TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: *Public Library Public Access Technology Benchmarks Project*

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:

The Public Library Association and the ALA Office for Information Technology Policy are partners in a new effort funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to develop and support the adoption of public access technology benchmarks.

ACTION REQUESTED BY:

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DRAFT OF MOTION:

N/A

DATE: *12-14-10*

BACKGROUND:

In May 2010, the U.S. Libraries Program of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation convened a meeting of its partners – those organizations that have received funding from the foundation (including the Public Library Association, the ALA Office for Information Technology Policy and the ALA Office for Research & Statistics). At the meeting, the Libraries Program announced future grant funding would shift from direct investment in public library infrastructure to focus on capacity building and advocacy.

With library stakeholders, the Foundation looks to support:

- Development of public access technology benchmarks
- Creation of a sustainable professional development program to help library leaders improve public technology access using benchmarks
- Creation of incentives for broad adoption of the benchmarks by the field, and evolve these standards via a pool of public access innovation grants

Collaborators in the benchmarks effort currently include PLA and OITP, as well as the Urban Libraries Council; the International City/County Management Association; Lyrasis; WebJunction; TechSoup; state libraries in California, Oklahoma and Texas; and researchers from the University of Washington and University of Maryland, College Park.

The Foundation solicited and is reviewing grant applications now, and an announcement is likely to be made in February 2011. PLA and OITP plan to communicate regularly with ALA stakeholders throughout the process.

Attachments: N/A