


nationwide trends in library programs and services, partnerships with other organizations, and the state of library facilities. The 2022 survey is the third in a rotating series of three national surveys exploring public library roles, services, and resources to provide actionable data for decision-making and advocacy.

All that we accomplished this year is due to our dedicated members, leaders, staff, and supporters. As we look ahead to next year, we are fueled by the unity and support our library community has shown in the face of challenges and intolerance, and we will continue to serve and fight as an indispensable ally to our members and all library workers.

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Transformation



Digital Literacy

Through PLA's partnership with AT&T we have continued to develop new courses and training materials available for free at DigitalLearn.org, including the latest course that helps patrons understand how to use and apply for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) benefit. With support from AT&T, PLA has awarded over \$1 million to public libraries to conduct digital literacy workshops through the incentive program launched in 2022. In 2023, [over \\$1 million more will be distributed](#) to hundreds of libraries to conduct basic skills training and specific training around the ACP.

The first Digital Literacy Workshop Incentive, supported by AT&T, was a huge success. As one participating library shared, "The partnership was the most effective aspect. We were able to reach members of the community who don't often visit the library, and the response was overwhelmingly positive. We are planning to continue the partnership moving forward, continuing to offer programs at the Maine Township town hall. DigitalLearn is a great resource for presenting programs and not having to reinvent the wheel. It saves so much staff time to be able to modify an existing template rather than starting to plan a lesson from scratch."

PLA has also partnered with Heartland Forward to develop new DigitalLearn courses to support library patrons with telehealth, entrepreneurship, and career pathways. These courses are scheduled to launch in late summer 2023.

Data-driven Librarianship

In August 2022, PLA [released the first Staff and Diversity Survey report](#)¹⁽⁾Tj1



Through Benchmark, all public libraries have free access that allows them to view and complete open surveys; see past survey response data; view select peer comparisons; and access data-related resources. ALA and PLA also use data in federal policy advocacy, media outreach, and planning for member programs and services.



PLA 2024 Conference

The next [PLA Conference](#) will take place April 3–5, 2024, in Columbus, OH. PLA opened its call for proposals in March 2023 and received a total of 562 proposals upon closing May 1. While presenters were given the option to select in-person, virtual, or both, most organizers still preferred to present in-person. The PLA Conference Program Subcommittee will review the proposals this summer and organizers will be notified in August.

Advocacy and Awareness

In the media

PLA president Dr. Maria Taesil Hudson McCauley has been busy this year as the face of PLA, responding to media requests, guest speaking on an [episode of PLA's FYI: The Public Libraries Podcast](#), as well as facilitating the Spotlight on Safety town hall discussion and the first-ever [PLA presidential candidates virtual forum](#).

In March 2023, the ALA hosted a congressional fly-in event that coincided with the release of the White House budget proposal. PLA president McCauley participated in this event, meeting with senators and other library representatives to push ALA's [#FundLibraries campaign](#).

The following month, PLA and Google [announced a new joint effort](#) to boost information literacy at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library in Washington, D.C. PLA president McCauley and Google Product Manager Nidhi Hebbar—along with policymakers, researchers, public library leaders, and NGOs—convened at the library for “Navigating the Noise: Tackling Misinformation with Information Literacy.” The event focused on emerging challenges and collaborative ways to address this growing challenge, with a particular focus on the role of libraries in this work.

PLA received the most media attention with the launch of the PLA Digital Literacy Workshop Incentive, supported by AT&T, in 2022 and the announcement of an [expanded incentive program](#) and new DigitalLearn course on how to apply for the Affordable Connectivity Program in 2023.

I Love My Librarian Award

In January, ALA announced the 10 winners of this year's [I Love My Librarian Award](#), nominated by patrons for their expertise, dedication, and profound impact in their communities. Out of



Public Libraries Online is a dynamic website that caters to the needs and interests of public librarians and libraries. With an average of approximately 35,000 individual users per month, the website features a combination of curated content from the print magazine as well as unique articles. It serves as a valuable online resource for public library professionals seeking to stay informed and engaged with the latest trends and practices in the field.



subscribers and has been accessed nearly 80,000 times. It is available on major hosting platforms, including Spotify, Apple Media, and iTunes.

Based on plays, the top three episodes of FYI: The Public Libraries Podcast from the past year were:

- FYI 55 – [Library Directors Dialogue](#) (1,359 plays);
- FYI 56 – [Hosting an Expungement Clinic at the Library](#) (1,004 plays)



In the summer of 2022, PLA contracted with ACRL's Program Director for Advertising, Sponsorships & Underwriting, to take over PLA non-conference sponsorship and advertisement sales. Since August 2022, PLA's non-conference sponsorship and ad sales have increased significantly. New projects include sponsored webinars and podcasts. The PLA 2024 Conference committee also has a subgroup focus on increasing sponsorships for the upcoming national conference.

PLA Staff

With the launch of a refreshed strategic plan, PLA staff participated in a facilitated training with consultants from PIE Org in Chicago to better understand the strategic plan, set goals that reflect the strategic focus areas, and center EDISJ in every aspect of our work.

PLA was thrilled to welcome four new staff members to our team this year. As the program coordinator of continuing education, Alison Armstead supported PLA's growing continuing education portfolio, including webinars and PLA Conference, before her departure from PLA in Spring 2023. Mary-Clare Bietila, program manager of programming initiatives, has been busy taking over PLA's partnership with AT&T, managing the incentive programs and coordinating the development of new DigitalLearn courses and training materials.

PLA's latest data and research team member is Katina Jones, program manager of evaluation and assessment, who comes to us from Mid-Continent Public Library in Missouri where she was the Statistical Research Analyst. Katina served on PLA's Measurement, Evaluation, and Assessment Committee for four years and spearheaded this year's national PLA survey—Public Library Services for Strong Communities. Eliana ("Ellie") Tang Kleiman has been supporting PLA's marketing, communications, and membership activities as the new communications associate since June 2022. Ellie has strong non-profit and digital content experience as a former communications associate for the HANA Center, a non-profit service and advocacy organization that serves Chicago's Korean, Asian American, and multi-ethnic immigrant communities. Temporary program coordinators Abigail Gadowski and Talaiasha Whitaker were hired in Spring 2023 to support administration and continuing education.

Looking Ahead



PLA is excited for the year ahead and looks forward to hosting another successful PLA Conference in April 2024. Sonia Alcántara-Antoine, director of the Baltimore County (MD) Public Library, will assume the PLA presidency on July 1, 2023. Alcántara-Antoine has served extensively in PLA, the ALA, and the Urban Libraries Council (ULC). Highlights include serving as a coach for PLA's Leadership Academy, as a member of PLA's National Conference Program Subcommittee, as an ALA Councilor-at-Large, and as a member of ULC's Antiracism and Digital Equity action teams. She looks forward to working alongside innovative leaders to support libraries and library workers.

This summer, the next cohorts of the PLA Digital Literacy Workshop Incentives, supported by AT&T, will be kicking off their workshops to help communities across the country get access to broadband internet and increase their digital skillsets.

PLA will be very busy planning for the [PLA 2024 Conference](#), April 3–5, in Columbus, OH, where our goal is to exceed registration and revenue from the PLA 2022 Conference. To accomplish this, PLA is working closely with the city's tourism team to promote the convenience and affordability of the city, opening our Virtual Conference registration as early as possible, and conducting outreach with affiliate groups to diversify our speakers and attendees. Stay tuned for more when registration opens this October!