TO: ALA Executive Board

RE: Edge public access technology benchmarks

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT:
No action requested. Update of current activities related to the Edge public access technology benchmarks.

ACTION REQUESTED BY:
Barbara Macikas, Director, Public Library Association
Larra Clark, Program Director, ALA Office for Information Technology Policy

CONTACT PERSON:
Barbara Macikas, 312-280-5028, bmacikas@ala.org
Larra Clark, 202-628-8410 x8213, lclark@alawash.org

DRAFT OF MOTION:
N/A

DATE:
June 11, 2013

BACKGROUND:
PLA and OITP have been active participants in Edge, a national coalition formed to design and pilot a series of public access technology benchmarks, with $2.8 million in funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Since PLA and OITP submitted their last report to the ALA Executive Board at the ALA 2013 Midwinter Meeting, the Version 1.0 Benchmarks were publically released, and the coalition made significant gains on planning the field-wide launch of the Edge Initiative.

Attachments:
PLA-OITP Edge Initiative Update
PLA-OITP Edge Initiative Update

Draft Edge benchmarks tested, revised and V1.0 approved
Since PLA and OITP submitted their last report to the ALA Executive Board at the ALA 2013 Midwinter Meeting, the Version 1.0 Benchmarks were publically released, and the coalition made significant gains on planning the field-wide launch of the Edge Initiative.

Soft Launch and Second Pilot Plans
In order to test the processes and procedures of Edge implementation at the library level, seven states have been selected as Soft Launch sites, with the number of participating libraries per state ranging between 15 and 30.

The Urban Library Council (ULC) and Lyrasis have been working with the selected state libraries on their specific plans. Initially, the state libraries will provide outreach and marketing support. Most are planning in-person meetings for their participating libraries and designating library development staff to serve as points of contact as their libraries work through the assessment process. In August, state libraries will provide input for planning the national roll-out of Edge, based largely on the soft-launch experience, at an in-person meeting at the Lyrasis offices in Atlanta.

The seven states are: California, Oklahoma, Texas, Illinois, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Information has been shared with the state chapters so they are aware of the soft launch.

Libraries selected to participate in the soft launch will have access to the online Edge assessment survey beginning in mid-June. At the completion of the survey, participants will have access to numerous resources including:

- A results report.
- A custom Action Plan identifying critical areas to address immediately.
- Case studies, tools, and templates supporting each benchmark and indicator.
- A suite of customizable communications tools to assist libraries in making presentations. These templates will help libraries demonstrate the ties between their services and community priorities and more actively engage decision makers in meeting these needs.
- PLA-designed training.

Four additional sites will be incorporated into the Soft Launch, but will receive hands-on support from ICMA and ULC. Goals of this intensive engagement include gaining a more in-depth understanding of the participation process, as well as developing detailed case studies to share with the library field.

Program partner Organizational Research Services (ORS) will evaluate the entire Soft Launch, including a protocol dedicated to the training.
PLA-Designed Training
PLA is managing the development of four two-hour courses to be delivered via synchronous webinars. Course topics are: Advocacy and Outreach; Community Assessment; Technology Management; and Library Leadership. Although the courses are interconnected, participants may choose which to take and are not required to take all four. Libraries must complete the Edge assessment prior to training. Any staff member from an assessed library is eligible to register for training.

Training is not designed to address the specific activities described in the benchmarks. Rather, library staff will be guided in using assessment results to make strategic decisions, develop action plans, and craft compelling messages about public access technology.

During the Soft Launch phase, training will be available on a very limited schedule for six weeks in August and September. Subject matter experts currently working on several aspects of Edge will serve as the facilitators.

ORS will provide feedback to PLA based on the overall evaluation. Facilitator scripts and participant materials will be tweaked as necessary; however due to time limitations between the Soft and National Launches, no major changes will be made to the content. PLA will make any necessary procedural updates, with regard to the logistics of accessing trainings. Training will be broadly available to all participating libraries at the National Launch level.

Next Steps and Sustainability
Edge will be launched nationally in January 2014. The coalition will make improvements to the Edge Toolkit and processes based on Soft Launch feedback between October and December 2013. Following the national launch, a larger data set will be collected to inform peer reports.

Finally, the coalition continues to map long-term governance, operations and sustainability plans for the Edge Initiative. OITP has provided research to inform this work, and PLA and OITP will continue to be engaged in supporting planning efforts.

For more information:
There will be an Edge Information session on Saturday, June 29, at 10:30am in McCormick N226.