

TO: PLA Board of Directors
FROM: Vailey Oehlke, Chair, PLA Nominating Committee
RE: **2018 slate of candidates for PLA election**
DATE: August 16, 2017

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT: ACTION

Action Requested: Approval of the draft motion regarding a PLA board position to represent a small/rural library

ACTION REQUESTED BY:

Vailey Oehlke

DRAFT OF MOTION:

In order for PLA to better represent the needs and interests of library staff from public libraries of all sizes, the 2018 slate of candidates for the PLA board shall include two candidates from small/rural libraries* who will run opposite each other to insure one PLA board member represents that constituency. Further, for the elected board member representing a small/rural library, PLA will, upon request, support travel and housing expenses for all PLA board meetings for the three years of the board member's term. In 2020, PLA will evaluate the results of this change and determine whether to continue the practice for the 2021 slate and beyond.

*Nominating Committee will use [these IMLS guidelines](#) to inform selection of small-rural library representatives.

BACKGROUND:

PLA seeks a diverse membership and has struggled with finding ways to more fully engage library staff from small and rural libraries. While the majority of US public libraries are located in smaller communities, PLA membership and board composition skew heavily toward urban and suburban libraries. Main barriers to participation for library staff from smaller libraries are time and money.

Recently, as part of a conversation about expanding PLA's reach, increasing engagement, and better representing all US libraries, the board discussed removing the financial barrier to board participation by creating a small/rural library representative position on the board. It would include reimbursement for travel to all PLA board meetings. Currently PLA supports travel for two board meetings while expenses for board meetings held at the ALA Midwinter and Annual Conferences are not supported by PLA. The recommendation from the Nominating Committee for the small/rural library position and for support of expenses is the result of those board discussions. Future board discussion could focus on board reimbursement in general.

Finally, as PLA continues to assess governance practices and works to assure an effective and positive board experience, the Nominating Committee supports efforts to provide nominees with resources that will help them understand the role and responsibilities of the board. A first step in that direction is development of the attached nomination acceptance forms. Other resources are under development.

Attachment: Nomination Acceptation Form