



RIPL/PLA SUMMIT

PRE-WORK FOR MARCH 2021 MEETING



GOALS OF OUR UPCOMING MEETING

The purpose of the meeting is to build from the discussion started in 2017 (and the findings of the subsequent working groups) and answer the following questions:

1. Do public library staff have needs for different data tools (or different functionality) than currently exist?
2. Do public library staff have needs for more or different training about data than currently exists?
3. How might we meet the data tools and training needs of public library staff?

APPROACH & AGENDA

Day 1 (Monday, March 8th)

Virtual | 12:30-2:30 ET / 11:30-1:30 CT / 10:30-12:30 MT / 9:30-11:30 PT

Goals:

- Develop a shared understanding of the current suite of data tools and trainings for public library professionals.
- Clarify our target “public library staff member” (I.e. Create and refine “user personas” to guide our needs assessment and design efforts.)
- Needs assessment: Identify the likely data tools and training needs of the target public library staff.
- Conduct an initial gap analysis – what needs do public library staff have for data tools and training that are not currently available?

Day 2: (Thursday, March 11th)

Virtual | 12:30-2:30 ET / 11:30-1:30 CT / 10:30-12:30 MT / 9:30-11:30 PT

Goals:

- Finalize the gap assessment started on the first day of the meeting.
- Ideation – How might we meet the data tools and training needs of our target public library staff members?
- Action planning – What concrete steps can we take to start to meet the data tools and training needs of the target public library staff?

Build from the information developed during the 2017 meeting and subsequent working groups.



APPENDIX – SUMMARY OF INFORMATION FROM 2017 MEETING

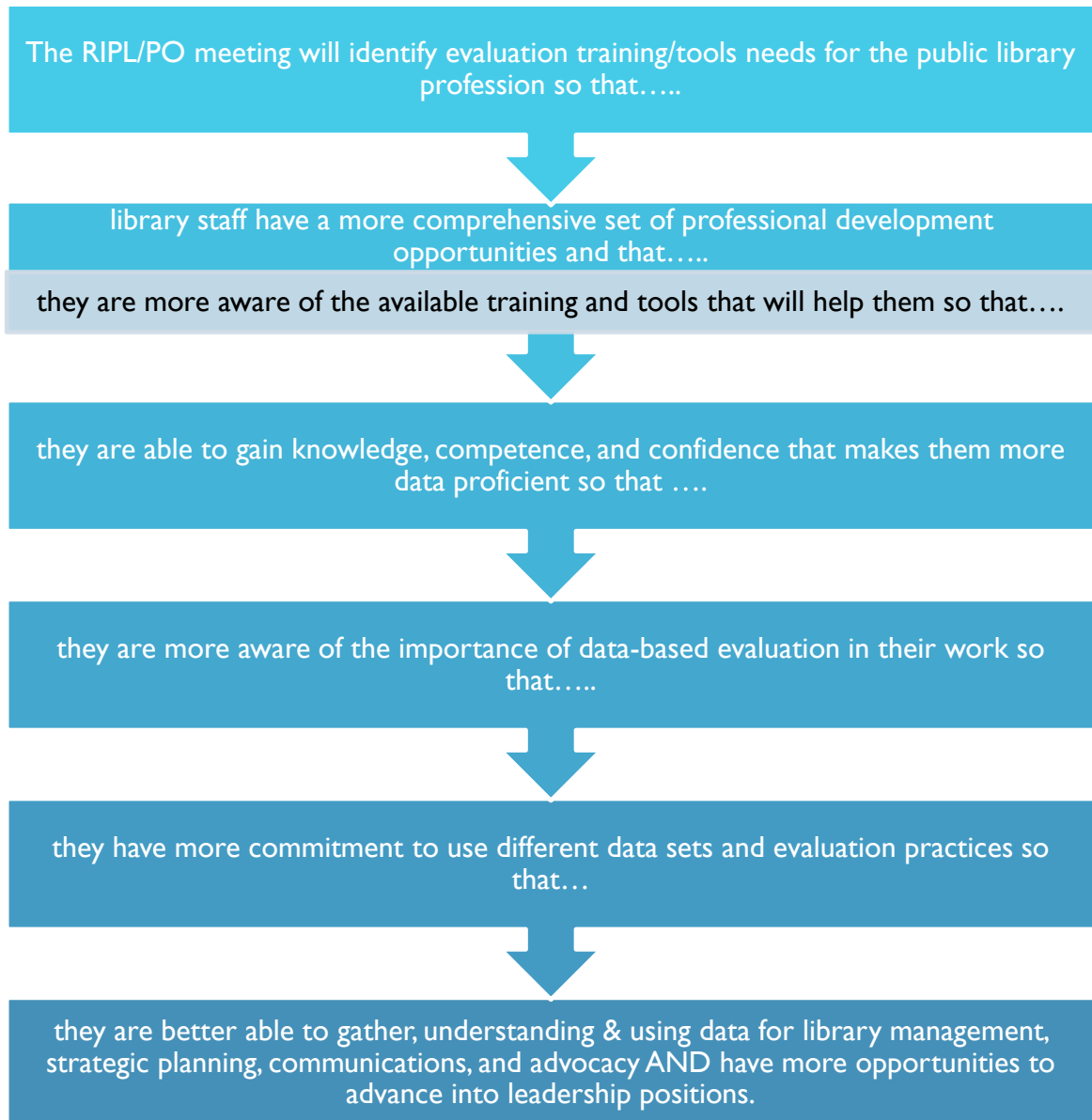
The following slides provide a summary of the meeting outcomes from the 2017 meeting. We will build from this information in our upcoming meeting.

In June 2017, RIPL and PLA staff convened 27 public library data stakeholders for a one-day meeting to discuss the public library landscape for data training and tools. It was guided by the Theory of Change to the right.

In order to achieve the meeting goals, meeting participants then engaged in four activities:

1. Developing a Data Skills Spectrum
2. Reviewing the Current Landscape of Public Library Data Training and Tools
3. Identifying Gaps Between Needed Skills and Available Training/Tools
4. Creating a Plan to Address Gaps

Meeting Theory of Change



DATA SKILLS SPECTRUM FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY STAFF

Participants developed a data skills spectrum for public library staff, ranging from “Data 101” to “Data Geek” to “Data Expert.” Examples of skills identified within each part of the spectrum include:

Data 101

- Determine what data to use to make a decision
- Interpret basic charts
- Administer a survey using templates such as Project Outcome
- Understand the difference between an anecdote and evidence

Data Geek

- Design a data collection instrument (survey, interview guide, etc.)
- Conduct a focus group or interview
- Understand the concepts of validity and reliability
- Demonstrate knowledge of government datasets

Data Expert

- Understand various statistical analyses such as regression
- Conduct statistical analysis using software such as SPSS or R
- Able to enable others to understand the results of statistical analyses
- Able to combine data from various sources to identify issues, assess trends, etc.

Low

Skills Continuum

High

NATIONAL LANDSCAPE OF PUBLIC LIBRARY DATA TOOLS AND TRAINING

Participants created a map of the **national-level** evaluation data training and tools available for public library staff. Below is a summary of this landscape, **updated for 2021**. A spreadsheet with more detailed information about each offering can be found at https://www.ripleffect.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/PL_Evaluation_Landscape_2021.xlsx.

Training	Tools	Both Training & Tool	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Infopeople• RIPL• WebJunction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Benchmark (new tool from PLA coming soon)• Impact Survey• Library Search & Compare	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Edge• Libraries Transform (Harwood)• Project Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Measures that Matter

PRELIMINARY GAP ANALYSIS BETWEEN NEEDED SKILLS AND AVAILABLE TRAINING/TOOLS

Participants engaged in a discussion to identify gaps between the needed skills and the types of training/tools currently available, as well as to propose potential solutions. The gaps fell into four categories: technical skills, management/leadership skills, communication/advocacy skills, and field-level coordination. The following table describes each category and possible solutions.

CATEGORY	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
<p>Technical skills: data collection strategies, statistical analysis, best practices for establishing benchmarks and metrics, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop online trainings for data collection strategies in conjunction with Measures that Matter • Use existing online resources for statistical software such as Lynda.com • Identify “best in class” data-driven curricula in existing institutes and trainings
<p>Management/leadership skills: gaining staff buy- in for evaluation, communicating data effectively with board, change management, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create trainings in various areas – board, management, strategic planning, community assessment • Develop consensus around benchmarks and metrics • Create self-assessment rubric • Develop guides to select evaluation tools
<p>Communication/advocacy skills: developing proactive strategies to communicate library impact, optimizing relationships with local media, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create communications plans that are connected to other strategic priorities • Offer PR instruction, possibly built around existing curricula (Toastmasters, Harwood, etc.) • Create trainings in storytelling with data
<p>Field-level coordination: common set of talking points about the purpose & value of data, coordinated exposure among projects/products, mapping data and reporting needs with trainings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a coordinating group at the national level • Establish data gurus as subject matter experts and champions • Raise awareness/value of data-driven organizations • Learn from international challenges and solutions

CREATING A PLAN TO ADDRESS GAPS

- At the end of the meeting, the following subgroups were formed to develop a plan for addressing gaps between needed skills and available training/tools:
 - Self-Assessment Rubric (See online assessment tool developed by this group below)
 - *Benchmarking and Metrics*
 - *Creating Mind Shift in Public Libraries*
 - *National-Level Coordination of Evaluation-Related Efforts*
- Note: The subgroups in grey text did not generate products or recommendations that we can build from.*
- The Self-Assessment Rubric group worked with an ALA Emerging Leaders team to create an online self-assessment tool: <https://www.ripleffect.org/data-pathways/>. In 2021, PLA's Measurement, Evaluation, and Assessment Committee (MEAC) created a simpler version of this tool: <https://www.ripleffect.org/pldpm/>.