

As we all contend with the highly challenging circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, your WLA Board and staff continues to work to support the daily operation and manage our presence as your state association. I have put together this update to ensure that you have full understanding of the decisions being made to manage the association during these turbulent times.

Disaster Recovery

For the last several weeks the WLA Board and I have focused on a two-part strategy, significantly reduce expenses, while continuing to research COVID-19 related, emergency funding. My confidence in this strategy comes from having managed associations through 9/11 and the 2008 recession. During a crisis, it's essential that the board, Finance Committee and office administration act as one. I can assure you that your association leadership has never been more in-synch.

On the expense containment side of the budget, immediate actions included a. the termination of existing "work-for-hire" contracts, b. cancellation of office equipment leases and c. office staff reductions. Our effort to reduce overhead resulted in the elimination of the Conference Liaison position. All indications are that 2021 will be another tight budget year for all of us. Therefore, we do not anticipate having the ability to fill the position soon. However, if necessary, outsourcing aspects of our meeting planning needs is an option. The Finance Officer and I are also part of the staff expense reduction. We have both adjusted our weekly work hours to 60% under the Wisconsin Work-Shares program. Our plan is to remain at 40% through the summer. We will post new staff hours on the WLA website.

Another expense saving decision is the permanent transition of our operations to a virtual work environment. In the coming weeks we will continue to implement the necessary technology infrastructure to allow staff to operate remotely. Our goal is to make this transition with minimal impact on our membership. This change also means that WLA will no longer have access to meeting room space. Those committee's requiring in-person meetings will need to make use of public facilities.

When faced with a crisis of this magnitude, expense saving alone will not ensure survival. For that reason we have continued to dedicate countless hours to reviewing all available COVID-19 related emergency funding. To date we have explored the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program, Cares Act Relief, Pandemic Support Program, Payroll Protection Program, Employment Retention Credit and a traditional business line of credit. I am happy (and relieved)

to report that our application for the Economic Injury Disaster Loan was approved and those funds have been received. This low-interest loan will serve as a financial bridge and allow us to avoid depleting our reserve account while the investment market is low.

WLA Conference & Leadership Development Institute (LDI)

After much consideration the WLA Board at its June 12th meeting made the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 annual conference. The inability of the hotel to provide an estimated date for reopening eliminated our ability to discuss postponing the event to a later date. Additionally, some exhibitors informed us that their respective companies had imposed travel bans until 2021. When all of the factors were taken into consideration, the board and I agreed that risk of a failed attempt was far too great. I would like to thank every member of the fall conference committee for their commitment and hard work leading up to this decision. Your effort has not gone unnoticed. A work group is being created to explore alternative ways to provide professional development opportunities to our members yet this year.

Planning for the 2020 Leadership Development Institute is still on-track. For obvious reasons, the live event will be postponed to a later date. The new date is December 8-10. More details and application information will be shared in the coming weeks.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding our COVID-19 response or the impact to any WLA services, please reach out to me, the Board President or any of the staff. We thank you for your continued support. We will continue to update you as new developments occur.

Stay safe and be well,

Plumer Lovelace
WLA Executive Director

Sherry Machones
WLA President