



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Los Angeles Public Library Creates Public Librarian Residency Fellowship

***Grant-funded “Innovation Leadership Program”
will benefit librarianship in California and the nation***

LOS ANGELES (October 5, 2011) – The Los Angeles Public Library has received a planning grant to create one of the nation’s first librarian residency fellowships in a public library. The project, “The Los Angeles Public Library Innovation Leadership Program,” is funded by a \$143,000 grant from the BayTree Fund secured by the Library Foundation of Los Angeles, a non-profit organization that raises funds to support the Los Angeles Public Library.

The Los Angeles Public Library Innovation Leadership Program is designed to provide several long-term benefits for librarianship in California and across the nation. It will provide recent Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) graduates with mentoring skills and real-world experience in a major urban public library. It also will create strong executive leadership experience for mid-level librarians who will be the next generation of city librarians throughout North America.

The heart of the program will be the relationship between the new graduate and the experienced librarian. Together, they will address the needs of the 21st century public library and its librarians through everyday experiences and special projects at the Los Angeles Public Library.

“As the public library with the largest and most diverse constituency in the U.S., the Los Angeles Public Library should be the leader in public librarianship and at the

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Peter Persic, Public Relations & Marketing Director

vanguard of 21st century technologically-integrated skills,” said City Librarian Martín Gómez. “One way to do this is to adapt for public libraries the proven model of the residency fellowship used in academic and research libraries.”

Citing the need for the fellowship program, Gómez notes, “We are caught in an uncommon period in which many people are earning master’s degrees from California’s library schools and who are dedicated to being public librarians, but find there are no positions in cities and towns due to hiring freezes and staff reductions. These new graduates are faced with the tough choices of being a librarian elsewhere—whether another state or for a corporation—or leaving the discipline.”

According to the grant proposal, if the situation continues, California could lose a generation of young librarians who have been taught the cutting edge of library science and technology. As a greater proportion of the present staff at public libraries across the state near retirement age, their extra duties do not allow for continuing education and soon California’s public libraries could be mired in the 20th century and increasingly fail to meet the needs of their patrons.

Dr. Cindy Mediavilla, part-time lecturer with the UCLA Department of Information Studies, has been selected as the project director for the Los Angeles Public Library Fellowship & Leadership Succession Program. Over the course of the year-long grant, she will plan the structure and content of both the residency fellowship and the leadership development for mid-career mentors. The grant provides funding to hire three new MLIS graduates as fellows, pair them with librarian mentors, and allow them to address projects related to the twenty-first-century public library.

“This is an excellent opportunity to not only continue the education and training of recent library school graduates,” Mediavilla explained, “but also to create the next generation of library leaders. This project is unique in that it expands the abilities of both new and seasoned professionals.”

The Library Foundation of Los Angeles provides critical support to the Los Angeles Public Library resulting in free programs, resources and services available to thousands of adults, children and youth in Los Angeles. It accomplishes this mission

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through fundraising, advocacy and innovative programs that strengthen the Library and promote greater awareness of its valuable resources.

The Los Angeles Public Library serves the largest and most diverse population of any library in the nation. Its Central Library, 72 branch libraries, more than six million books, and state-of-the-art technology accessible at www.lapl.org, provide everyone with free and easy access to information and the opportunity for life-long learning.

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