



For Immediate Release

Urban Libraries Council Recognizes Los Angeles Public Library as a Top Innovator

Library's Immigrant Integration Initiative Demonstrates Value and Impact of Public Libraries in the Community

Los Angeles, July 10, 2013 – The Urban Libraries Council (ULC) recognized the Los Angeles Public Library as one of its ten Top Innovators for 2013 during the ULC Annual Forum, June 27-28, in Chicago. A panel of expert judges selected the Los Angeles Public Library's Immigrant Integration Initiative from more than 140 applications in the fourth annual ULC Innovations Initiative.

ULC is a membership organization made up of America's premier public library systems and the organizations that serve them. ULC's Innovations Initiative highlights members' programs, services and operating practices that demonstrate an ability to keep pace with change and expand opportunity for people of all ages. The Los Angeles Public Library won in the category of "Civic and Community Engagement."

The Los Angeles Public Library's Immigrant Integration Initiative educates people in the city's many immigrant communities about citizenship and establishes its libraries as local citizenship information centers. The project is a partnership among U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the City of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Public Library.

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Peter Persic, Public Relations & Marketing Director

The initiative provides training for library staff on the naturalization process and USCIS resources and establishes “citizenship corners” with a variety of citizenship materials in all 73 libraries. The initiative also offers a list of local service providers for referrals and provides a variety of workshops about citizenship issues held in libraries by community partners. Materials and programs are available in a variety of languages including Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, Farsi, Russian and Japanese.

As the second largest city in the country, Los Angeles is home to immigrants from more than 140 countries who speak a total of 244 languages. The state of California is home to nearly 3.4 million residents, 2.5 million of whom are estimated to be eligible to apply for naturalization.

Since the initiative was launched in September 2012, more than 17,000 people have participated and visited the Los Angeles Public Library to begin their citizenship journey.

“The Los Angeles Public Library’s is grateful to the ULC for its national recognition of our successful Immigrant Integration Initiative,” said City Librarian John F. Szabo. “Our 73 libraries are places that change people’s lives, whether it’s helping students succeed in school, helping the unemployed find jobs or helping adults overcome illiteracy. Now, with this initiative, the library is taking a leadership role in helping people take one of the most important steps in their lives: the first step on the path to becoming a citizen.”

In announcing the 2013 Top Innovators, ULC President and CEO Susan Benton said the winning libraries and libraries that submitted programs for the Innovations Awards this year demonstrate the amazing work that takes place in libraries every day.

“On behalf of the ULC community throughout North America, I congratulate the Los Angeles Public Library for being selected as a 2013 Top Innovator,” Benton said.

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“You and your library staff are commended for setting the pace for growth, change and innovation in the field. Each submission highlights exactly how public libraries create value and impact in local communities.”

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.

As a membership organization made up of America’s premier public library systems and the organizations that serve them, the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) has spent more than 40 years enriching urban communities by strengthening their public libraries. While ULC members primarily represent urban and suburban libraries, lessons from their work are widely used by all libraries. ULC serves as a forum for thought leaders sharing best and next practices resulting from targeted research, education, and emerging trends. Its programs are recognized for creating new frameworks that invigorate public libraries and their communities.

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