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Los Angeles Public Library's New Americans Initiative Wins Innovation Award from Urban Libraries Council

LOS ANGELES (Sept. 10, 2018)— The Los Angeles Public Library's New Americans Initiative was recognized by the Urban Libraries Council as one of 10 Top Innovators in 2018. Winners were selected in 10 categories, with the New Americans Initiative taking the honors for Civic and Community Engagement.

The New Americans Initiative provides centers in six libraries staffed with immigration specialists and Department of Justice (DOJ) certified library and contract staff. Features include assistance in preparing naturalization applications, Know Your Rights cards in 19 languages, financial coaching, tenant legal services and worker rights information.

"The New Americans Initiative boldly moves beyond the ground-breaking work in citizenship information and services the Los Angeles Public Library has provided for years," stated City Librarian John F. Szabo. "Every one of our 73 libraries features a New Americans Welcome Station. Our six New Americans Centers provide access to professional, qualified experts in citizenship and immigrant rights who offer assistance with the naturalization process; and a wide range of services for the diverse immigrant communities in Los Angeles. We're proud to be a welcoming place where individuals can build a new life and find opportunity."

The New Americans Initiative is built on the success of the LAPL's Path to Citizenship program, founded in 2012, which helped more than 50,000 Angelenos toward

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Peter Persic, Public Relations & Marketing Director

achieving citizenship by way of citizenship classes and materials. In 2015, the LAPL became the first municipal library in the nation to secure DOJ-accreditation and recognition.

“Today’s public libraries are bold and pioneering community leaders that play many roles, from educational institutions to technology centers and entrepreneurial hubs,” said Urban Libraries Council President and CEO Susan Benton. “I congratulate Los Angeles Public Library for illustrating a persistent commitment to realizing a groundbreaking initiative that has transformed their community.

A recipient of the nation’s highest honor for library service—the National Medal from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Los Angeles Public Library serves the largest and most diverse urban population of any library in the nation. Its Central Library, 72 branch libraries, collection of more than 6 million books, state-of-the-art technology accessible at www.lapl.org, and more than 18,000 programs a year provide everyone with free and easy access to information and the opportunity for life-long learning.

Urban Libraries Council (ULC), founded in 1971, is the voice for public libraries and the force that inspires them to evolve. ULC creates the tools, techniques, and ideas to make ongoing improvements and upgrades in services and technology. ULC also speaks loudly and clearly about the value public libraries bring to communities, and secures funding for research that results in the development of new programs and services. And by serving as a forum for library leadership, ULC produces innovative ideas and best practices that ensure community impact.

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