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For Immediate Release**Hartford Public Library and Schools Awarded \$595,000 IMLS Grant**

Sept. 29, 2016 — Hartford Public Library has been awarded a three-year grant of \$595,000 by the Institute of Museum and Library Services for its “Linking Learning, Belonging and Community” program in partnership with Hartford Public Schools.

Immigrants and English Language Learners (ELLs) are among the fastest growing segment of the population in U.S. public schools. Many are youth that enter the school system at the high school level with limited time and resources to acquire the English language proficiency necessary to make the successful transition to college and a career.

The Library and Hartford Public Schools will work with other community partners to develop an interdisciplinary curriculum for immigrant and refugee youth, ages 17 to 21, which focuses on English language acquisition, digital information literacy skills, leadership development, cultural competency, and social action. It is expected that the program will serve 180 youths who will participate over nine cycles and may earn academic credit.

“We appreciate having IMLS recognize HPL as a leader in the field of digital inclusion, language learning and social engagement, says Bridget Quinn-Carey, CEO of Hartford Public Library. “We look forward to enhancing and expanding the services that we offer for young people in Hartford, and creating a model that can be replicated in other libraries throughout the United States.”

Students will work on their projects collaboratively with peers and one-on-one with English proficient and culturally competent mentors. The student-led activities will provoke students to explore, ask questions, and take risks in their learning while offering opportunities for reflection and dialogue. Students will identify issues to which they relate and then arrive at solutions. This approach incorporates the sociocultural values and perspectives of the students and their own ethnic/cultural backgrounds and brings them awareness of their new environment and culture.

“We are thrilled to collaborate with Hartford Public Library through the “Linking Learning, Belonging, and Community” project funded through the Institute of Museum and Library Services,” says Hartford Public Schools Superintendent Beth Schiavino-Narvaez. “ This initiative will provide much-needed resources for our immigrant and refugee high school students who are English Language Learners. At Hartford Public Schools we are focused on engaging all of our students in meaningful and personalized ways that match their needs and meet their interests. Through this project, which will provide credit-bearing, after school programming in a blended learning format, Hartford Public Library is bringing valuable resources to our students. We are thankful for their partnership and look forward to working together on behalf of our immigrant and refugee students.”

Information about the project will be documented and accessible through a dedicated website. It will include all tangible products that result from the project to facilitate adoption by other libraries, notably: *Curriculum Model* (scope and sequence, pedagogical framework, and design of the learning tasks and projects); *Creative Commons*: where youth can share their project based writings, art, and podcasts; *Mentor Resources*; the *Leadership Training Toolkit* for practitioners working with immigrant youth; *Outreach Resources* strategies for recruiting program participants; and *Professional Development Resources* Power Points and recorded webinar trainings.

The program begins Oct. 1 and will run through Sept. 20, 2019.

The grant is one of 44 awarded by IMLS, which gave out \$10.5 million in three programs: National Leadership Grants for Museums Program, the National Leadership Grants for Libraries Program, and the Sparks! Ignition Grants for Libraries Program. Hartford Public Library is the only public library that received a full implementation award under the National Leadership Grants for Libraries.

"These recipients represent the best of the best," said IMLS Director Dr. Kathryn K. Matthew. "The grantees' projects were selected from competitive pool of proposals and rose to the top of our rigorous peer-review process. Their leading-edge work will provide fresh ideas for the museum and library fields and will lead to better programs and services for all served by these valued institutions."

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 35,000 museums.

ABOUT HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

As a finalist for the 2013 and 2014 National Medal from the Institute for Museum and Library Services, Hartford Public Library has been recognized as national leader in redefining the urban public library in the 21st century as an innovative and stimulating place that provides free resources that inspire reading, guide learning, and encourage individual exploration. In 2015-16, the 10 locations of the Hartford Public Library counted 850,000 visits, circulated 408,972 items and had 71,059 registered borrowers. We serve adults, children and families seeking early literacy opportunities, work skills training, civic engagement, arts enrichment, and so much more. Please visit www.hplct.org.

