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Hartford Public Library is First Public Library in the Nation to Receive Bureau of Immigrant Appeals Recognition and Accreditation

Hartford, Connecticut (September 18, 2013) Hartford Public Library has received recognition and accreditation from the United States Department of Justice Bureau of Immigrant Appeals (BIA) which will enable it to expand immigrants' access to critical information and services in their path to Citizenship. Hartford Public Library is the first public library in the nation to receive this accreditation. The expanded services are expected to be offered in January, 2014.

The Library's The American Place (TAP) program has been in the forefront of welcoming new arrivals and facilitating their integration into the broader community since 2000 and is recognized nationally as a best practice. Although the program offers a comprehensive range of services it refers immigrants to area not-for-profit agencies recognized by the Bureau of Immigration Appeals for legal consultation. Now the Library, a long-standing resource to the immigrant community, is certified to offer these services directly.

An estimated 300 immigrants a month come to the Library to seek online access and assistance navigating the United States Citizenship & Immigration Services' (USCIS) portal. The Library's standing in the community as a center for immigrant educational services and computer access, along with its proximity to the USCIS Immigration Services field office (located across the street) are contributing factors to the steady flow of immigrants to the Library.

Looking towards the future and the strong possibility that comprehensive immigration reform will be passed, this demand is expected to increase significantly. "As a trusted source of information, as a center for technology and, a primary portal for immigrants – TAP will be more effective and efficient now that the immigrant needs will be met via a one-stop model", said Homa Naficy, chief adult learning officer and director of The American Place.

About [Hartford Public Library](#)

The Hartford Public Library traces its roots to 1774. It operates 10 locations and a Library-on-Wheels in the City of Hartford. The Library receives more than 833,500 visits per year. Services include access to a large collection of materials for reading and research, as well as music and video. Programs provide education, information

and enrichment to the people of Hartford in such areas as citizenship training, literacy, business skills and cultural awareness. The mission of Hartford Public Library is to provide free resources that inspire reading, guide learning, and encourage individual exploration. Visit hplct.org and the library's new blog at blogs.hplct.org

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