

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Hartford Public Library Receives \$248,000 Federal Grant to Expand Citizenship Services for Immigrant Residents**

HARTFORD, Connecticut (September 19, 2014) – U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, announced Thursday that **Hartford Public Library (HPL) is a recipient of its Citizenship and Integration Grant** in support of services that help permanent residents prepare and apply for U.S. Citizenship. **HPL is one of 40 organizations in 24 states to receive the award, the only recipient in Connecticut, and the only public library in the country.** The grant, in the amount of \$248,842, will allow HPL to serve a larger immigrant population by expanding existing citizenship instruction programs to its Albany Avenue Branch in Hartford’s North End.

“We are absolutely thrilled to receive this exciting award that will allow us to help even more of Hartford’s immigrant residents transform their lives,” said Matt Poland, CEO of Hartford Public Library. “Under the leadership of the Library’s Chief Adult Learning Officer Homa Naficy, we have significantly increased our impact serving the immigrant community, and garnered a national reputation for excellence. We’re ready to continue to expand our role and help our neighbors make their way along the path to American citizenship.”

Through its [The American Place](#) program, HPL has offered citizenship instruction to permanent residents since 2000, and received a grant from USCIS in 2010 in support of its services. In 2013, HPL became the first public library in the nation to receive recognition and staff accreditation from the Department of Justice Board of Immigrant Appeals. **With the new grant funds, the Library aims to provide 410 permanent residents with citizenship instruction and 225 permanent residents with naturalization application services over the next two years.** The funds will support the expansion of citizenship services to the Library’s Albany Branch, along with the addition of a literacy outreach specialist, instructors, staff training, and program equipment.



*New American Citizens Participate in a Naturalization Ceremony Held at Hartford Public Library in 2014.*

Since it began in 2009, the USCIS Citizenship and Integration Grant Program has awarded a total of \$43 million through 222 competitive grants to immigrant-serving organizations in 35 states and D.C. Now in its sixth year, the program has helped more than 93,000 permanent residents prepare for citizenship. USCIS anticipates that an additional 32,000 permanent residents will receive citizenship preparation services by Sept. 30, 2016, as a result of the [grant program](#).

#### **ABOUT [HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY](#)**

As a finalist for the 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 where people can learn and discover, explore their passions, and find a rich array of resources that contribute to a full life. Hartford Public Library provides free resources that inspire reading, guide learning, and encourage individual exploration. Serving the residents of Hartford and beyond at its nine branches and Downtown location, Hartford Public Library receives more than 860,000 visits per year from adults, children and families seeking early literacy opportunities, work skills training, civic engagement, arts enrichment, and so much more. Visit [hplct.org](http://hplct.org).

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