

Hartford Public Library: NextGen @ Swift: FACT SHEET

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS:

- A partnership between Hartford Public Library (HPL) and Community Solutions to build a new library and innovative learning center inside the Swift Factory in North Hartford, CT.
- Provide a one-of-its-kind, one-stop, multigenerational hub for education, career training and skills building to prepare North Hartford residents for 21st century jobs.
- Strengthen connectivity and easy access between library services and the robust small business incubator and workforce development services of the Swift Factory.
- Create a complete pipeline from learning and skills training to meaningful employment in a community that has long suffered from a history of disinvestments, disproportionately low household income and high unemployment rates.

FAST FACTS

- As the anchor tenant, [Hartford Public Library](#) will occupy 15,000 feet on two floors of the 82,000-square-foot [Swift Factory](#), a former gold leaf manufacturing plant being redeveloped into an economic and workforce development hub on a 2.6-acre campus in North Hartford, CT
- The first floor will be occupied by a neighborhood library branch; the second floor will host HPL NextGen @ Swift, the learning and skills training center.
- The overall redevelopment of the Swift Factory (including the new Library and NextGen Learning Center) represents a \$41M investment in North Hartford
- The anticipated cost to build out, equip and open Next Gen @ Swift is \$8M; funded by a combination of public and private funding, including a significant \$5.5M investment by the City of Hartford.
- Construction is expected to be completed within 18 months; with a target groundbreaking in Fall of 2022
- Hartford is a majority minority city of 121,054 people; North Hartford is one of 22 federally designated Promise Zone neighborhoods in the country and is among the most economically disadvantaged neighborhoods of any American City. Between Sept. 2019-Sept. 2021, Hartford experienced a 12.3% unemployment rate (versus a national average of 6.5% over the same period). In the North Hartford Promise Zone, median household income is just \$12,099.

NextGen @ Swift: PROGRAMMING & SERVICES

- Courses and training offered will focus on foundational literacy as well as vocational skills training and preparedness for jobs in high-demand industries such as restaurants and hospitality, health care, manufacturing and IT. The facility will include an intake office, two 25-seat classrooms, a 1,400-square-foot fully networked computer lab and a light manufacturing simulation lab. Specific services offered include:

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- Health care skills training includes home health aide, nursing, speech and physical therapy and vaccine administration and telehealth (in collaboration with Swift tenant Harriot Home Health Services).
- Technology training provided in a dedicated computer lab space.
- Certifications in ServSafe Food Handling and ServSafe Food Managers in collaboration with the National Restaurant Association.
- Light manufacturing such as welding, specific equipment training (such as mills and lathes), Certified Production Technician and Certified Logistics Technician (in collaboration with Goodwin University).
- Small business classes (how to start, grow, expand and manage a small business) by the Hartford Chamber of Commerce and Small Business Administration.
- Wraparound services that include referrals and coordination with other Library programs or with outside agencies to address obstacles to employment such as child care, housing, or residency status.

WHY THIS PARTNERSHIP?

- The [Swift Factory](#) is an adaptive reuse project of [Community Solutions](#), a longtime player in North Hartford dedicated to improving economic conditions in the neighborhood. The overall project’s goals include job growth, economic development, community health, youth engagement and community revitalization. The Swift Factory provides a dynamic environment in which to locate critical learning and skills of the public library.
- The Swift Factory revitalization project has won accolades for its innovative approach including:
 - Building Design + Construction | 2021 Reconstruction Award – Silver Winner
 - Built Environment Plus | 2021 Green Building Showcase Market Leader Award – Equity + Inclusion
 - It was a centerpiece of Hartford’s successful application for federal Promise Zone status for North Hartford.
 - In 2021, Community Solutions won the MacArthur prize to work to help end homelessness in neighborhoods like North Hartford across the nation.
- Hartford Public Library, which serves the City of Hartford at a central library and seven neighborhood libraries, is an industry leader in providing adult education, career and workforce readiness services and is known for its leadership in several areas including:
 - Digital Literacy: In 2019 the Urban Library Council awarded HPL with an Innovator of the Year Award for its digital literacy and career readiness work.
 - Services for New Immigrants: HPL’s The American Place was the 2021 winner of the Partners in International Education award from the Council on Social Work Education’s Commission on Global Social Work Education; it was also a 2021 awardee of a Federal USCIS grant for Citizenship and Integration work, the the only library to win this award in 2021.
 - HPL has also been recognized for its work by the Connecticut League of History Organizations (CLHO) (2021 Award of Merit) and the Roberts Foundation with the “Creation of New Work” Award as well as

the Empowering Communities Award from the Connecticut Fair Housing Center; the Bank of America's highly competitive Neighborhood Builders Award for its innovative Digital Library Lab; and the Hartford Business Journal Partnership Award, for the partnership between Hartford Public Library, the City of Hartford, Aetna, Travelers Insurance, and The Hartford.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY

- North Hartford is both a federally designated [Promise Zone](#) and was recently designated a Federal [Promise Neighborhood](#). There is an incredible untapped potential in North Hartford to create long term economic growth, build generational wealth and catalyze transformative change with this investment.
 - There are over 38,000 unemployed individuals in the Hartford region, including youth and adults many of whom are veterans, not English language proficient, disabled, or foreign-born.
 - The Hartford population is 44% Hispanic/Latinx and 36% Black/African American.
 - Median household income in Hartford is well below (just about half) the national average and in the North Hartford Promise zone is just \$12,099.
 - 87% of children born low income in this community remain low income into adulthood.