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HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY HONORED WITH NORTH AMERICAN INNOVATION RECOGNITION

Empowering Immigrant Youth and Families is honored as one of the most innovative and transformative programs among public libraries in North America by the Urban Libraries Council.

[Hartford, CT] — Hartford Public Library (HPL) has been named as an Honorable Mention in the 2025 Innovations Initiative by the Urban Libraries Council (ULC), North America’s leading nonprofit for urban libraries. This recognition is in honor of HPL’s *Empowering Immigrant Youth and Families*, which empowers immigrant youth, first-generation college students, and underserved teens through integrated educational programs that combine literacy, college readiness, workforce skills, and mentorship.

“Hartford Public Library appreciates being recognized as an Honorable Mention in the 2025 Innovations Initiative for our work with immigrant youth, first-generation college students, and underserved teens through HPL’s *The American Place*,” said Bridget E. Quinn, HPL’s President and CEO. “The American Place marked its 25th anniversary in 2025, and we are grateful to the Urban Libraries Council for recognizing and elevating this important work.”

ULC’s [Innovations Initiative](#) is a yearly showcase of exemplary projects from its nearly 200 member libraries across the U.S. and Canada. It seeks to highlight how the library’s role as an essential public institution is evolving to meet the changing needs of communities. From initiatives that promote civic engagement and intellectual freedom to projects that enhance digital connectivity and economic mobility, libraries are at the forefront of addressing today’s challenges.

HPL’s *Empowering Immigrant Youth and Families* was selected as an Honorable Mention by a distinguished panel of judges. The project stood out in the category of Education: Children and Adults for its originality, measurable outcomes, and the potential for other libraries to replicate and implement this successful initiative. More than 180 library projects in six categories were submitted by ULC members from across the U.S. and Canada to be considered for the top awards.

Hartford Public Library joins world-class programs from peers across North America. Six public libraries in total received the “Top Innovator” designation, and six others received honorable mention recognition for their work.

AWARD CATEGORY	TOP INNOVATORS	HONORABLE MENTIONS
Advocacy and Awareness	Prince William Public Libraries (VA)	Halifax Public Libraries (NS)
Education: Children and Adults	Dayton Metro Library (OH)	Hartford Public Library (CT)
Equity and Inclusion	Gwinnett County Public Library (GA)	Kitchener Public Library (ON)
Health and Wellness	Pasadena Public Library (CA)	Sacramento Public Library (CA)
Library Operations and Management	DC Public Library (DC)	Saint Paul Public Library (MN)
Workforce and Economic Development	Pioneer Library System (OK)	Hennepin County Library (MN)



“The Innovations Initiative highlights the best of what libraries across North America offer their communities,” said Brooks Rainwater, President and CEO of the Urban Libraries Council. “In a year that has proved especially challenging for libraries, this year's winners, honorable mentions, and nominees all demonstrate our urban libraries are as important, resilient, and forward-thinking as ever.”

Information about the recognized project from HPL, other honorees, and a wealth of past submissions is available on the ULC website at www.urbanlibraries.org/innovations.

About Hartford Public Library:

Founded as the Library Company in 1774, Hartford Public Library has remained at the forefront of redefining the urban library experience in the 21st century throughout its more than 250 years of service. With seven locations throughout the city, the library provides education, intellectual enrichment, and cultural development for thousands of children, youth, and adults every year. Hartford Public Library has also gained local and national recognition for its wide range of new initiatives and partnerships designed to meet the needs of a diverse and dynamic city and region, including immigration services, employment assistance, and youth leadership training. For more information, visit hplct.org

About Urban Libraries Council

The Urban Libraries Council is an innovation and impact tank of North America’s leading public library systems. ULC drives cutting-edge research and strategic partnerships to elevate the power of libraries as essential, transformative institutions. Across the U.S. and Canada, nearly 200 member libraries rely on ULC to identify significant challenges facing today’s communities and provide new tools and techniques to help libraries achieve stronger outcomes in education, digital equity, workforce and economic development, and race and social equity. Learn more at urbanlibraries.org.

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