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KETTERING FOUNDATION AND HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY CREATE A LEARNING EXCHANGE

STUDYING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CITIZENS AND GOVERNMENT THROUGH PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

Hartford, Connecticut (August 13, 2015) — Kettering Foundation and Hartford Public Library will establish a learning exchange that will build on the Foundation's ongoing study of ways that citizens can develop a stronger hand in determining the futures of their community, particularly through a Participatory Budgeting processes. The partnership is based on two insights:

1. A better alignment with democratic practices could improve the troubled relationships with institutions of government in ways that would strengthen democratic self-rule.
2. Reinforcement from the work of democratic citizens would serve governments' self-interest in greater effectiveness.

A coalition of organizations including Hartford 2000, City of Hartford, MetroHartford Alliance, and Leadership Greater Hartford plan to add deliberation to the Participatory Budgeting process at key points, including the discussion of community issues and identifying and developing project ideas, and project implementation and evaluation. By adding deliberation, Participatory Budgeting in Hartford will include an opportunity for people to work together, to talk through problems, explore tensions and common values, and weigh options in the process of identifying and developing project ideas that may be funded through this budgeting process.

Consequently, the projects supported by Participatory Budgeting will address community challenges more effectively and contribute to long-term solutions. The Kettering Foundation will learn with our coalition about what happens when deliberation is explicitly included in Participatory Budgeting, who it affects in the process, and the citizens' ability to solve the problems they face in complimentary ways with government.

“The Kettering Foundation study is important to 21st public library service and we are humbled by their confidence in our Library. By fostering equity, transparency and empowerment for Hartford residents, our democracy will be more inclusive and organic,” said Matthew K. Poland, chief executive officer of Hartford Public Library. “What could be better?”

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 a 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 833,000 visits per year from adults, children and families seeking early literacy opportunities, work skills training, civic engagement, arts enrichment, and so much more. Visit www.hplct.org.

ABOUT THE KETTERING FOUNDATION

The Kettering Foundation is a nonprofit, operating foundation rooted in the American tradition of cooperative research. Kettering's primary research question is, what makes democracy work as it should? Kettering's research is distinctive because it is conducted from the perspective of citizens and focuses on what people can do collectively to address problems affecting their lives, their communities, and their nation. The foundation seeks to identify and address the challenges to making democracy work as it should through interrelated program areas that focus on citizens, communities, and institutions. The foundation collaborates with an extensive network of community groups, professional associations, researchers, scholars, and citizens around the world. Established in 1927 by inventor Charles F. Kettering, the foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization that does not make grants but engages in joint research with others. For more information about KF research and publications, see the Kettering Foundation's website at www.kettering.org.

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