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HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY RECEIVES *PROJECT CITIZENSHIP* GRANT

First institution in Connecticut to receive grant to help facilitate naturalization process



HARTFORD, CT (November 4, 2015) – Hartford Public Library (HPL) announced today that Boston-based Project Citizenship has selected the Library for a \$16,000 grant to cover the cost of providing free legal counseling for citizenship applicants and help combat immigration services scams. Hartford Public Library is the first and only institution in the State of Connecticut to receive such an award.

Project Citizenship began as the Greater Boston Citizenship Initiative, a collaboration of community partners in Massachusetts seeking to increase naturalization rates throughout the state. The Fish Family Foundation, a philanthropic organization with a long-standing commitment to serving immigrant communities, formed the Initiative in 2011. The goal of the Initiative was to educate immigrants about the benefits of citizenship, and to make the services and resources accessible to eligible legal permanent residents in order to overcome the barriers to naturalization.

Between 2011 and 2014, the Initiative grew not only in number of partners, but also in geographic scope to organizations in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island.

Project Citizenship funding will allow the library to expand its capacity to make a push for increased derivative citizenship (N-600) applications. Derivative citizenship is conveyed to children through the naturalization of parents before age 18. Presently, the library processes approximately 225 N-400 citizenship applications yearly.

In 2010, Hartford Public Library became the first public library in the nation to receive funding from the U.S. Citizenship and Integration Services (USCIS) to expand citizenship opportunities in Hartford. Then in response to the ever-growing volume of need for affordable and adequate legal assistance, the Library also became the first library to apply for and receive Board of Immigration Appeals recognition and staff accreditation in 2013 to provide much-needed legal help. For such accomplishments, chief adult learning officer, Homa Naficy, was named a White House Champion of Change in 2013.

“Hartford Public Library is the de facto immigration and citizenship center in Hartford,” said the Library’s CEO Matthew K. Poland. “This wonderful and timely award will help us deepen and broaden our reach within the immigrant community to facilitate naturalization and community integration.”

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 PROJECT CITIZENSHIP

Project Citizenship provides free assistance to legal permanent residents who seek to become U.S. citizens. Project Citizenship and its partner organizations offer regular citizenship workshops in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New Hampshire. In addition, Project Citizenship partner organizations civics and English instruction. www.projectcitizenship.org

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