

2021



URBAN
LIBRARIES
COUNCIL

INNOVATIONS

SUBMISSION CATEGORIES

SUBMISSIONS OPEN 10/1/21-11/1/21
AT [URBANLIBRARIES.ORG](https://urbanlibraries.org)



2021
INNOVATIONS

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The annual Innovations Initiative celebrates and showcases the transformational leadership of ULC libraries in addressing race and social equity in our communities, furthering education for people of all ages, building digital equity for tomorrow's workforce and enhancing civic engagement for a strong democracy.

Entries will be accepted from October 1-November 1. Approved submissions will be posted live to the ULC website within a week of their submission.

This document provides an overview of the 2021 Innovations submission categories. An independent panel of judges will select Top Innovator and Honorable Mention award winners in each category, and winners will be announced during a virtual event this fall.

[CLICK HERE TO PREVIEW THE 2021 INNOVATIONS SUBMISSION FORM](#)

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Anti-Racism, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Share your library's innovations that directly address structural racism, systemic inequity and social injustice within the library and across the community, including:

- Anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion embedded in strategic planning.
- Organizing for anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion outcomes.
- Anti-racist audits of library operations.
- Community initiatives, partnerships and conversations regarding systemic racism and social justice.

Need inspiration?

Check out these entries from past years.

2020 Top Innovator
Community Street Sheet
Kansas City Public Library

[VIEW](#)

2020 Honorable Mention
Pride at PGCMLS
Prince George's County Memorial
Library System

[VIEW](#)

Civic and Community Engagement

Share your library's innovations that empower and motivate community members to address public concerns and exercise their civil rights and liberties, including:

- Initiatives to support democracy.
- Civics and voter education and services.
- Programming to support civility, kindness and communities working together.
- Social activism forums.

Need inspiration?

Check out these entries from past years.

2020 Top Innovator
**Climate of Art: Reimagine
the Environment**

Miami-Dade Public Library System

[VIEW](#)

2020 Honorable Mention
DeKalb Votes Challenge

DeKalb County Public Library

[VIEW](#)



Communicating the Library's Value

Share your library's innovations that increase the awareness and perceived value of the library's programs, resources and community role, including:

- "Welcome Back" reopening campaigns.
- Partnerships to enhance the library's reach to under-resourced audiences.
- Strategic brand extensions and rebranding initiatives.
- "Fine Free" policy change messaging.

Need inspiration?

Check out these entries from past years.

2020 Top Innovator

Be Inspired

Milton Public Library

[VIEW](#)

2020 Honorable Mention

**Building a Data Warehouse and
Protecting Privacy**

Salt Lake County Library

[VIEW](#)



Customer Experience

Share your library's innovations that make interactions with library representatives, resources and spaces more enjoyable, efficient or useful for customers, including:

- Facilities configured for safer in-person use and programming.
- Special attention and support to promote emotional well-being.
- Hotlines, tele-services, tele-townhalls and phone outreach.
- Accessibility improvements for library websites and apps.

Need inspiration?

Check out these entries from past years.

2020 Top Innovator

APL+

Austin Public Library

[VIEW](#)

2020 Honorable Mention

Expanded Access to Technology:

Courtyard Upgrade

Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library

[VIEW](#)



Digital Equity and Citizenship

Share your library's innovations that aim to ensure all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity and support needed for full participation in 21st-century life, including:

- Partnerships to bring high-speed broadband directly to all households.
- One-on-one tech support and mentorship.
- Education on robotics, AI, emerging technologies, online privacy, cybersecurity.
- PSA campaigns to engage the public and/or local leaders in digital equity conversations.

Need inspiration? Check out these entries from past years.

2020 Top Innovator

MeckTech – Leveraging CARES for Digital Equity

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library

[VIEW](#)

2020 Honorable Mention

Beyond Branches: NNPL Mobile Wi-Fi Hotspot Program

Newport News Public Library

[VIEW](#)

Education: Adults

Share your library's innovations that help adults advance personal and family learning goals and develop literacies of all kinds, including:

- Education partnerships.
- Caregiver workshops and learning circles.
- Trauma-informed programming.
- Adult education for reading, media, digital, financial and other literacies.

Need inspiration? Check out these entries from past years.

2020 Top Innovator
Grand Family Fundamentals Class
Queens Public Library

[VIEW](#)

2020 Honorable Mention
The Podcast on Natural Dallas
Dallas Public Library

[VIEW](#)



Education: Birth Thru Teens

Share your library's innovations that strengthen local education ecosystems and increase access to high-quality learning opportunities for all children and teens, including:

- Youth mentorship, internship and leadership initiatives.
- Summer learning programs.
- Partnerships with K-12 school leaders.
- Comprehensive distribution of library cards to all local students.

Need inspiration?

Check out these entries from past years.

2020 Top Innovator
Liftoff to Learning
Houston Public Library

[VIEW](#)

2020 Honorable Mention
STEM Challenge
San Francisco Public Library

[VIEW](#)



Institutional Change and Strategic Management

Share your library's innovations that shift internal culture and rethink positions, processes and team structures to drive greater equity, productivity and leadership at all staff levels, including:

- Leadership and organization benchmarking and strategic planning with [Edge](#).
- Programming for staff well-being.
- Internal/crisis communications systems and tools.
- Professional development programs for library staff.

Need inspiration?

Check out these entries from past years.

2020 Top Innovator

A Design Thinking Approach to Crisis Response

Calgary Public Library

[VIEW](#)

2020 Honorable Mention

Know the Need, Deploy the Solution — Learning Pods

Chesterfield County Public Library

[VIEW](#)

Wellness, Safety and Sustainability

Share your library's innovations that help library staff and customers better understand and make informed decisions about personal and public health issues, as well as environmental concerns, including:

- Climate change education and programming.
- Programs and partnerships to address public health and public safety.
- Mental health resources and support groups.
- Facility changes to reduce carbon emissions and enhance energy efficiencies.

Need inspiration?

Check out these entries from past years.

2020 Top Innovator
Drive-Thru Services
St. Louis County Library

[VIEW](#)

2020 Honorable Mention
3-D PPE Printing Program
Contra Costa County Library

[VIEW](#)

Workforce and Economic Development

Share your library's innovations that promote equitable economic mobility and opportunity for all local workers, jobseekers, entrepreneurs and businesses owners, including:

- Entrepreneurship and advanced digital skill-building.
- STEM as a career path.
- Professional coaching and certification programs.
- Business challenges and fellowships.

Need inspiration?

Check out these entries from past years.

2020 Top Innovator
Find Financial Assistance
King County Library System

[VIEW](#)

2020 Honorable Mention
Carlson Center for Intellectual Property
Rochester Public Library

[VIEW](#)

