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Urban Libraries Council Names 2023 Top Innovators

WASHINGTON – Today, the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) recognized 16 North American public libraries as Top Innovators for transformative programs that enhance the library field to further equity, education and civic engagement for all. ULC announced the 2023 Top Innovators and Honorable Mentions during the live, virtual 2023 Innovations Celebration on April 27, 2023. A Top Innovator and Honorable Mention was named for each of the 8 categories, highlighting programs focused on advocacy, anti-racism and digital equity, democracy, education, health and wellness, data management, operations and workforce development.

“The winners of this year’s Innovations initiative are true trailblazers in meaningful, equitable programming,” said Urban Libraries Council President and CEO Brooks Rainwater. “ULC’s Innovations initiative launched in 2010 to recognize cutting-edge programs and strategies. As our world changes, libraries continue to creatively adapt and advance in response to challenges. I am proud to recognize these 16 libraries from the U.S. and Canada for their incredible work advancing equity, education and democracy for all members of their communities.”

The Award-Winning Top Innovators and Honorable Mentions include:

Advocacy & Awareness:

- Top Innovator: Louisville Free Public Library | Mobile Newsrooms in Libraries
- Honorable Mention: Alameda County Library | Every Month is Pride Month

Anti-Racism, Digital Equity, Inclusion:

- Top Innovator: Las Vegas-Clark County Library District | Cell Phone Lending Program
- Honorable Mention: Baltimore County Public Library | ACP Adoption Events and Kits

Data & Performance Management:

- Top Innovator: Dallas Public Library | Data-Driven Support for Equity in Budgets
- Honorable Mention: Chesterfield County Public Library | Visual Storytelling Through GIS – Who Do We Serve?

Democracy:

- Top Innovator: Prince George’s County Memorial Library System | “Rock Banned” Intellectual Freedom Campaign
- Honorable Mention: Salt Lake County Library | Let’s Be Neighbors: Connecting to Civic Engagement

Education – Children and Adults:

- Top Innovator: Queens Public Library | The World of Work for Teens
- Honorable Mention: Richmond Hill Public Library | Library Programming Partnerships

Health & Wellness:

- Top Innovator: Cambridge Public Library | A Library That Reinforces Community + Wellness
- Honorable Mention: Edmonton Public Library | Taking Sing, Sign, Laugh and Learn to Families

Operations & Management:

- Top Innovator: Kansas City Public Library | Request It: Collaborative Acquisitions
- Honorable Mention: Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library | Functional Mentoring for Practical Success

Workforce & Economic Development:

- Top Innovator: LA Public Library | Be a Successful Street Vendor
- Honorable Mention: San Diego Public Library | Creative Economy: Library Filmmaking

The Top Innovators and Honorable Mention award winners were selected based on the inventiveness of the program or service, outcomes achieved and potential for other libraries to adopt and adapt the innovation. To date, the ULC website features more than **2,700 leading practices** that reflect library missions, strategies, achievements and community contributions through the initiative, providing a key learning resource for all libraries and other learning institutions across North America.

To view the 2023 ULC Innovations submissions in detail, please visit urbanlibraries.org.

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About the 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 for the 21st century. Nearly 170 urban member libraries in the U.S. and Canada 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.