



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### *Urban Libraries Council Recognizes 2021 Top Innovators*

**WASHINGTON** – Today, the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) recognized 20 public libraries as Top Innovators for transformative programs that address structural racism, bridge digital divides, provide lifelong education opportunities, meet the needs of under-resourced populations and improve essential library service delivery. The 2021 Top Innovators and Honorable Mentions were presented during a special live virtual Innovations Celebration for submissions in 10 categories that supported U.S. and Canadian public library programs focused on anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion, digital equity and citizenship, healthy communities, education, and workforce development and economic opportunity.

“When ULC launched the Innovations initiative in 2010, we aimed to capture innovative work and enable libraries to showcase the groundbreaking work that member libraries are doing across North America,” said Urban Libraries Council President and CEO Susan Benton. “We are proud to highlight programs this year that advance racial and social equity, connect the unconnected and tell the story of lives that are changed on the ground. Our libraries continue to serve all during this challenging moment in history, leveling the playing field for patrons and creating a positive impact for their local communities.”

The Award-Winning Top Innovators and Honorable Mentions include:

#### **Anti-Racism, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

- Top Innovator: Dallas Public Library | Budgeting for Equity
- Honorable Mention: Cleveland Public Library | Prioritizing Supplier Diversity

#### **Civic and Community Engagement**

- Top Innovator: San Antonio Public Library | Enhanced Library Card
- Honorable Mention: Baltimore County Public Library | Mobile Library Law Center

#### **Communicating the Library’s Value**

- Top Innovator: Cincinnati and Hamilton County Public Library | Spend a Day with a Library Worker!
- Honorable Mention: Edmonton Public Library | Mâmwô Ayâwin

### **Customer Experience**

- Top Innovator: Vaughan Public Libraries | Surprise Me! Bundles
- Honorable Mention: Las Vegas-Clark County Library District | Bringing the Library to Transit Riders

### **Digital Equity and Citizenship**

- Top Innovator: Nashville Public Library | Telehealth for Older Adults
- Honorable Mention: Charlotte Mecklenburg Library | MeckTech Connect - Community Internet Network

### **Education - Birth Thru Teens**

- Top Innovator: Toledo Lucas County Public Library | Never Too Early: Reading in the NICU
- Honorable Mention: Stark Library | Reimagining Summer at Your Library

### **Education - Adults**

- Top Innovator: San José Public Library | Caregiver Support Network
- Honorable Mention: Sonoma County Library | Virtual Adult Literacy Tutor Training

### **Institutional Change and Strategic Management**

- Top Innovator: Kent District Library | Project Management Office for Strategy and ROI
- Honorable Mention: Chesterfield County Public Library | KPI's for Staff Freedom and Performance

### **Wellness, Safety and Sustainability**

- Top Innovator: Prince William Public Libraries | Resilient and Responsible Communities
- Honorable Mention: Queens Public Library | Black Health and Healing 24-Hour Virtual Summit

### **Workforce and Economic Development**

- Top Innovator: Prince George's County Memorial Library System | Creating a Workforce Development Ecosystem
- Honorable Mention: San Diego Public Library | Library Workforce Partnership Initiative

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 **2,500 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 2021 ULC Innovations submissions in detail, please visit [urbanlibraries.org](https://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. More than 160 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.