



San Francisco Public Library

For Immediate Release
November 17, 2011

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San Francisco Public Library Wins Grant Competition to Design Digital Learning Labs for Young Americans That Will Serve as National Prototypes

National funders provide \$100,000 in initial funding for local program

[San Francisco] – Today, the [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) (IMLS) and the [John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation](#) announced [San Francisco Public Library](#) as one of 12 organizations in the U.S. to receive funding to create a learning lab for middle and high school students. The San Francisco Main Library Teen Center/Learning Lab will be designed to improve digital literacy and to engage young people in hands-on learning that can help them achieve the 21st Century skills and knowledge they need to succeed in school, careers, and life today.

San Francisco Public Library received \$100,000 in funding from IMLS and the MacArthur Foundation to plan and design the learning lab. [Friends of the San Francisco Public Library](#) provided an additional \$20,000 in funds to support the work.

“San Francisco Public Library already plays a central role in the lives of our city’s youth, as a safe, nurturing place to congregate for after school activities, find homework help and enjoy access to innovative programs and technology,” said City Librarian Luis Herrera. “With this grant we will be able to fully engage teens in the digital and online environment, plan for a Teen Center that will offer state-of-the-art exposure to digital resources, provide a framework for learning that inspires creativity and critical thinking skills, and underscore the importance of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education in our children’s future.”

In partnership with the [Bay Area Video Coalition](#), [California Academy of Sciences](#) and [KQED](#), the San Francisco Public Library will begin planning for a new Teen Center/Learning Lab at the San Francisco Main Library, providing a physical resource for new technology and media literacy skills for all 42,000 middle- and high school-age youth in San Francisco. The Learning Lab—with satellite and virtual spaces at San Francisco’s branch libraries and partner organizations—will serve as a magnet for teens throughout the City and be a bridge for the digital divide in this community.

The planning process will engage numerous organizations and youth leaders in a series of workshops and pilot activities, creating a vision for participatory learning, a citywide model for collaboration, a conceptual design for a physical Teen Center, and a sustainability plan. Youth who engage in the planning process and Learning Lab programs will learn how to: select and use resources in new ways as sources for creative media projects; be better consumers and evaluators of digital content; use technology and media production tools; share and license work produced in the Creative Commons; and tell stories that support and celebrate local culture and diversity. The goal is also to better prepare San Francisco’s youth for the technology job market of the future.

The project is supported through a unique partnership among four San Francisco Bay Area organizations, San Francisco Public Library, the Bay Area Video Coalition, California Academy of Sciences and KQED, which have made it a priority to enter into this long-term project and work collaboratively together on the creation of the Teen Center Learning Lab.

"This competition was announced in answer to President Obama's "Educate to Innovate" campaign, a nationwide effort to bring American students to the forefront in science and math, to provide the workers of tomorrow with the skills they need today," said Susan Hildreth, Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. "Libraries and museums are part of re-envisioning learning in the 21st century; they are trusted community institutions where teens can follow their passions and imagine exciting futures."

"Digital media are profoundly influencing young people's lives, their behavior, their civic participation, and where and how they learn," said Robert Gallucci, President of the MacArthur Foundation. "These innovative new teen labs are designed to provide young people with engaging and diverse opportunities for learning and exploration beyond the classroom. The nation's libraries and museums play an important role in leveling the playing field by providing greater access to learning experiences that equip our young people with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the 21st Century."

The Learning Labs Project is inspired by YOUMedia, an innovative teen learning space at the Chicago Public Library. Based on [the latest research about how young people learn today](#), YOUMedia encourages teens to use both digital and traditional media to promote creativity, critical thinking, and hands-on learning. The YOUMedia lab connects teens to mentors and peers, as well as anytime, anywhere access to information through online social networks, so they can pursue their interests more deeply. It enables them to discover new opportunities and follow their passions by not only being consumers of media, but also creators of content.

The Learning Labs Project will be administered by the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) and the Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC), which bring critical expertise and professional networks to the effort, and will help amplify each grantees' experiences more broadly to libraries and museums nationwide.

Applications materials for a second round of the grant competition will be available in Spring, 2012 at www.imls.gov.

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About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The Institute's mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. The Institute works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation; and support professional development. To learn more about the Institute, please visit www.imls.gov.

About the MacArthur Foundation's Digital Media and Learning Initiative

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's digital media and learning initiative aims to determine how digital media are changing the way young people learn, play, socialize, and

participate in civic life. The goal is to build a base of evidence about how young people learn today, in an effort to re-imagine learning in the 21st century. More information is available at www.macfound.org/education.

About the Urban Libraries Council

Urban Libraries Council (ULC) is a membership organization made up of North America's premier public library systems and the corporations supporting them. While ULC's members primarily represent urban and suburban settings, the work done by ULC is widely used by all libraries including those in rural settings. ULC strategically addresses issues important to all communities including education, workforce and economic development, public safety, environmental sustainability, health, and wellness. ULC's members are thought leaders dedicated to the continuous evolution and strengthening of libraries to meet changing community needs. As ULC celebrates its forty-year anniversary, its work focuses on helping library leaders develop and utilize skills and strategies that match the challenges of the 21st century. Learn more at www.urbanlibraries.org.

About the Association of Science-Technology Centers

The Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC) is a global nonprofit organization of science centers and museums committed to raising public understanding of science's role in solving critical societal issues, and its value in igniting and nurturing the innovative spirit that people of all ages need for success in today's world. ASTC encourages excellence and innovation in informal science learning by serving and linking its members worldwide and advancing their common goals. Founded in 1973, ASTC's nearly 600 members in 44 countries include not only science centers and museums, but also nature centers, aquariums, planetariums, space centers, zoos, botanical gardens, and natural history and children's museums, as well as companies, consultants, and other organizations that share an interest in informal science education. Visit www.astc.org to learn more about ASTC and find a science center near you.

Learning Labs Project Summaries

Museums:

LG-47-11-0361

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Houston, TX

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, will plan and design hang@mfah: Houston.Art.New.Generation. Hang@MFAH will be a place where young people can learn about themselves, digital media, and art in an out-of-school museum setting, with a mentor and community of peers. The lab's primary audience will be from the Houston Independent School District—the largest public school district in Texas and the seventh-largest in the United States, serving more than 47,000 students, nearly 80% of who are considered economically disadvantaged and 63% considered "at-risk." The project team will combine best practices in the field of museum and technology education to help bridge the digital divide. The museum will work with the Glassell Junior School (Part of the Glassell School of Art) in this endeavor.

LG-47-11-0374

Da Vinci Discovery Center of Science and Technology

Allentown, PA

The Da Vinci Discovery Center of Science and Technology in Allentown, Pennsylvania, will partner with the Allentown Public Library to create a virtual studio environment for youth engaged in digital media and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) activities. Participation in the virtual environment will be supported by face-to-face outreach programs. Tools for the creation of digital content will be available on loan from the library. The Virtual Studio Project will be governed by youth and staff together and much of the Learning Lab infrastructure will be created by the participants. Participants will be drawn from grades 8-12 in Allentown City schools and rural schools of Lehigh and Carbon Counties. Students in this economically distressed area generally lack strong school media programs or other supports for media learning. The Virtual Studio will establish an ongoing opportunity for learning, creativity, and self-expression.

LG-47-11-0385

New York Hall of Science (NYSCI)

New York, NY

The New York Hall of Science in Queens, New York, will plan and prototype a youth-centered, community-engaged Digital Making program within the museum's new Cognizant Maker Space. Digital Making is a program that will empower diverse groups of middle- and high-school youth to investigate and communicate science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) topics through digital media including sound, video, and games. The programs will be generated by museum staff, Makers in the community, and community organizations. The target population for this project is the museum's local Queens neighborhood, which includes vibrant communities of first- and second-generation Americans. The Digital Making program hopes to ensure these students have the clearest possible pathway to futures in the sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics, and can participate as fully informed citizens.

LG-47-11-0385

Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI)

Portland, OR

The Oregon Museum of Science and Industry in Portland, OR, in partnership with the Multnomah County Library, will convene expert advisors, community advocates, and a teen advisory council in an in-depth planning and design process for the implementation of a hands-on Community Maker Center. Once completed, the space will be a resource youth to gain the 21st century skills needed to participate in a productive civic life. A Teen Advisory Council will inform and collaborate on plans for the design and operation of the Maker Center. In response to a near 20% drop-out rate in Portland Public Schools, the Maker Center will align with Ninth Grade Counts, an effort to connect youth entering grade nine with the support they need to begin high school on the right track. Local youth will have opportunities to engage in creative activities, be valued as resources, and work with adult role models. Project partners include Ninth Grade Counts, Multnomah Youth Commission, FIRST (mentor-based programs that build science, engineering and technology skills), TechShop and Oregon Mentors.

Libraries:

LG-48-11-0398

Free Library of Philadelphia Foundation (Free Library of Philadelphia)

Philadelphia, PA

The Free Library of Philadelphia Foundation will work with a variety of local organizations to develop a comprehensive plan for a digital media Learning Lab in the new Parkway Central Library. The lab design will be based on current research, teen focus groups, input from local partners, expert consultants, and staff experience. The collaborative planning process will emphasize the library's role as a community resource and support the library's many partnerships with local organizations that provide programming and services to teens. In Philadelphia, 33% of youth under the age of 18 live below the poverty level and 48% of city residents do not have access to the internet at home. The Learning Lab will directly address youth needs for free, convenient access to new technologies, supportive mentors, and engaging, interest-driven programming.

LG-48-11-0406

San Francisco Public Library

San Francisco, CA

The San Francisco Public Library along with its partners, Bay Area Video Coalition, California Academy of Sciences and KQED, will begin planning for a new Teen Center/Learning Lab, which will include both physical spaces as well as a shared virtual platform. The planning process will engage numerous organizations and youth leaders in a series of workshops and pilot activities, creating a vision for participatory learning, a citywide model for collaboration, a conceptual design for a Teen Center, and a sustainability plan. By leveraging the expertise and resources of four leading organizations in the city, the library's goal is to bridge the digital divide in San Francisco's youth community; promote digital media literacy; convert digital media consumers to producers and media makers and innovators; develop leaders in civic engagement, social change, and community; create a sustainable partnership model; and prepare youth for the technology job market of the future.

LG-48-11-409

Columbus Metropolitan Library

Columbus, OH

The Columbus Metropolitan Library, in partnership with the Columbus Museum of Art, Franklin County Historical Society (Center of Science and Industry), WOSU Public Media, and Wexner Center for the Arts, will plan and develop a system of teen learning labs across the city of Columbus, Ohio. The labs will use 21st century digital media tools to enhance learning and create a collaborative community of teens. The partners will be guided in their efforts by a teen design group to create a connected system of opportunities for teens across the city, using existing or planned learning lab spaces at each of the partner organizations. The individual assets of each organization will be used to provide Columbus teens with a more coordinated system of lab space and programming that provides access to a wide variety of technological experiences and facilitate collaboration across programs and neighborhoods.

LG-48-11-0417

Nashville Public Library Foundation

Nashville, TN

Nashville Public Library, in Tennessee, will begin planning a Learning Lab to support a city-wide focus on youth and move youth beyond exposure and initial engagement with media, information, and technologies to activities of production, learning, and expertise-building. The planning team will be joined by teen constituents and volunteers, teen T.O.T.A.L. (Totally Outstanding Teen Advocates For The Library) staff, and professionals from Nashville's vibrant

creative community to ensure that both the environment and offerings of the learning lab align with current research on teen learning and engage middle- and high-school teens in meaningful, relevant ways. The library will use the Youth Speaks Nashville program as a model for effective engagement.

LG-48-11-0424

Kansas City Public Library

Kansas City, MO

The Kansas City Public Library, in Missouri, in partnership with Science City at Union Station, will plan and design the components for a Learning Lab to be housed at Union Station and a mobile outreach component that will serve teens throughout the metro area. Throughout the process, the partners will establish a leadership planning team composed of key staff from the two institutions, a project coordinator, teen leaders, and advisory members from the community. Middle school and high school youth in urban areas of Kansas City face a drop-out rate of 48% and struggle with issues of poverty and violence. This program will assist teens to create positive personal stories and become leaders through the opportunity to serve as peer mentors, engage in the planning and implementation of the Learning Lab, and receive valuable learning experiences from adult mentors.

LG-48-11-0426

St. Paul Public Library

St. Paul, MN

The Saint Paul Learning Labs Project will enable Saint Paul Public Library and its partner, the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department, to create a comprehensive plan integrating best practices for digital engagement for youth. The project will include a shared facility, a mobile lab, and the online iRemix portal. The library will draw on the strengths of the extensive network of out-of-school-time organizations in Saint Paul to create learning objectives and measurement tools based on the “learner, contributor, navigator” framework for youth development currently in use across the city. In the city of Saint Paul, 25% of the population is under 18, 72% of this student population qualify for free or reduced lunches and 36% are English language learners. These new spaces will help provide safe, resource rich environments where youth, especially “at risk” urban youth, can “hang out, mess around, and geek out” on projects that help them gain 21st century skills.

LG-48-11-0436

Howard County Public Library

Columbia, MD

Howard County Public Library, in Columbia, Maryland, along with partners The Institute of Learning Innovation and MindGrub Technologies, LLC, will develop a Learning Lab for youth ages 11-18 at the Savage Branch library. Staff at the branch and system levels have identified the need for a dedicated space and activities to meet the increased usage of the library by teen customers, and to deliver effective, informal, learning involving digital media. The project will engage youth in the design, planning, activity selection, ongoing evaluation of the lab. Mentorship and expertise will be delivered by both youth and adults who will interact with teach and guide lab participants in using new and emerging media and technology, while emphasizing youth-directed interests. This youth-centered approach hopes to result in enhanced technical knowledge, strengthened independent learning skills, and foundations for the pursuit of higher education opportunities and jobs.

LG-48-11-0447

Rangeview Library District and Anythink Libraries

Thornton, CO

Rangeview Library District and its Anythink libraries will support a digital learning lab project at the Anythink Wright Farms library in Thornton, Colorado. This location will become a model lab for a teen support center of digital creativity and communication. Anythink will partner with the Denver University School of Library and Information Service to provide internships, and will extend existing partnerships with other community and business organizations to support this project. Anythink Wright Farms is close to two middle schools and one senior high school. Although 30 percent of the county's population is under 18, there are limited services and support for teens in Adams County and few places to engage in creative projects and learning. Throughout the assessment and planning stages, the Anythink team will spend considerable time researching the community, the Chicago YOUMedia project, and informal learning.