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**Innovative Public Libraries Win Awards for  
Creative and Inventive Approaches to Community Issues**

*Urban Libraries Council Celebrates Top Library Innovators at Annual Forum*

Washington, DC — Addressing citywide racial equity, helping adults earn a high school diploma, partnering with small businesses to provide training to help them succeed — these are just a few of the initiatives being led by some of most creative and innovative public libraries in North America. The Urban Libraries Council (ULC) recently recognized 20 public libraries as Top Innovators for programs, services and operating practices that have made a significant impact on those they serve and their communities.

“The breadth of the 2016 innovations is remarkable, confirming that creativity and inventive approaches continue to thrive in public libraries,” said Susan Benton, Urban Libraries Council (ULC) President and CEO. “ULC is proud to highlight programs that provide lifelong learning opportunities, meet the unique needs of diverse audiences, leverage technology to connect people with each other and vital resources and address community issues. These are the initiatives of the 21<sup>st</sup> century public library.”

The 2016 Top Innovators and Honorable Mentions were presented during a special Innovations Celebration on October 6. The event was part of ULC’s 2016 Annual Forum. Award winners were chosen by a panel of expert judges who considered nearly 270 submissions in 10 categories that supported U.S. and Canadian public library programs focused on education, digital inclusion, healthy communities and library operations.

“Today’s public libraries are thought leaders, educational institutions and technology centers that play a critical role in building and strengthening the fabric of their communities,” said Benton. “This year’s top innovators and honorable mentions truly illustrate the commitment that public libraries have to their

communities to create programs and services that promote continuous education and career advancement in the knowledge economy.”

The Award-Winning Top Innovators and Honorable Mentions include:

***Workforce and Economic Development***

Top Innovator: Rochester Public Library “Reimagining Business Reference in a Mid-Sized City”

Honorable Mention: Scottsdale Public Library “Eureka Loft Scottsdale”

***Race and Social Equity***

Top Innovator: St. Paul Public Library “Saint Paul Public Library Racial Equity Initiative”

Honorable Mention: Brooklyn Public Library “TeleStory: Library-to-Jail Video Storytime”

***Civic and Community Engagement***

Top Innovator: King County Library System “Inspire, Engage, Connect”

Honorable Mention: Fort Vancouver Regional Library District “Forum @ the Library”

***Health, Safety and Sustainability***

Top Innovator: San Francisco Public Library “Biblio Bistro”

Honorable Mention: Los Angeles Public Library “Los Angeles Public Library’s The Source”

***Organizational Change and Strategic Management***

Top Innovator: Montgomery County Public Libraries “The ‘Library Refresh Program:’ In-Time Solutions”

Honorable Mention: Kent District Library “Cultural Management through Efficient Staffing”

***Learning: Birth through Teens***

Top Innovator: San Mateo County Libraries “Talk Read Sing”

Honorable Mention: Free Library of Philadelphia “Back to School Jumpstart Camp”

***Learning: Adults***

Top Innovator: Queens Library “Helping Adults Finally Achieve that High School Diploma”

Honorable Mention: Dayton Metro Library “Expanding Connectivity”

***Collections***

Top Innovator: Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County “We Have the Hots for You”

Honorable Mention: Multnomah County Library “Library’s Writers Project”

***Customer Experience***

Top Innovator: Wichita Public Library “Wichita Public Library Creates Raving Fans”

Honorable Mention: Palm Beach County Library System “Enriching the Visually Impaired Community”

### ***Positioning the Library***

Top Innovator: Sno-Isle Libraries “TEDxSnoIsle Libraries 2015”

Honorable Mention: Pierce County Library System “Open Lab @ RP/6: Success in Civilian Life”

Since 2010, the ULC has been collecting, sharing and promoting public library programs through its Innovations Initiative. To date, the ULC website features more than 1,200 leading practices that reflect library missions, strategies, achievements and community contributions through the initiative.

To view the 2016 ULC Innovations submissions in detail, please visit [UrbanLibraries.org](http://UrbanLibraries.org).

### **About Urban Libraries Council**

Urban Libraries Council (ULC), founded in 1971, is the voice for public libraries and the force that inspires them to evolve. ULC creates the tools, techniques, and ideas to make ongoing improvements and upgrades in services and technology. ULC also speaks loudly and clearly about the value public libraries bring to communities, and secures funding for research that results in the development of new programs and services. And by serving as a forum for library leadership, ULC produces innovative ideas and best practices that ensure community impact.

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