

LIBRARY LANDS GRANT TO HELP IMMIGRANTS

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Abstract: The Hartford Public Library learned Monday that it will receive a \$637,896 federal grant to develop a program to help immigrants and new citizens play a greater role in the civic life of their communities.

Full Text: The Hartford Public Library learned Monday that it will receive a \$637,896 federal grant to develop a program to help immigrants and new citizens play a greater role in the civic life of their communities. The program will build on the library's nationally recognized The American Place program, which has helped immigrants and refugees adjust to American life since 2000. The library will use the grant to offer new services and develop a program during the next three years that libraries throughout the country can implement. "It puts this library on the national stage," Matthew K. Poland, the library's chief executive officer, said Monday. The grant is from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services, which on Monday announced \$17.3 million in grants to 34 institutions. The Hartford library will work on the project, called "Building Relationships and Bridging Social Capital," with Catholic Charities, the city of Hartford, the University of Connecticut's School of Social Work, and Everyday Democracy, a nonprofit organization. Homa Naficy, the library's manager of multicultural education and outreach services, said The American Place provides a range of practical services, such as English and civics classes. The grant will allow the library to take the next step, she said, by developing programs that will encourage "shared civic values" and social integration. One initiative will recruit and train volunteers who will partner with immigrants and recent citizens. Teaching immigrants about their new country could include everything from learning how to participate in local government to having Thanksgiving dinner together. Poland said that when he attends citizenship swearing-in ceremonies at the library, the excitement is often palpable among the participants, which he hopes can ultimately be a boon for the civic life of a community. "You capture that excitement and put it back in the community," he said.

Subject: Libraries; Grants; Multicultural education; Social integration

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