2024 INNOVATIONS

URBAN LIBRARIES COUNCIL

INNOVATIONS CATEGORIES

APPLICATIONS OPEN ON JUNE 17, 2024

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ULC's annual Innovations Initiative showcases out-of-the-box thinking and successful library programs that revolutionize the field. Through each year's submissions, ULC members share groundbreaking projects that build awareness of the library, further education for people of all ages, address inclusion and digital equity, prioritize health and wellness, enhance strategic internal operations and staff management, and champion the importance of workforce and economic development.

Entries for this year's application cycle will be accepted from June 17 to August 9, 2024.

Submitted applications will be published on the ULC website throughout the summer.

This document provides an overview of the 2024 Innovations categories. An independent panel of judges will select Top Innovator and Honorable Mention award winners in each category, and winners will be announced this fall.

Explore Categories

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4 EDUCATION: CHILDREN AND ADULTS

5 EQUITY AND INCLUSION

6 HEALTH AND WELLNESS

7 LIBRARY OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

8 WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CLICK HERE TO REVIEW INNOVATIONS FAQs AND SUBMISSION TIPS

Advocacy and Awareness

Share your library's innovations that **increase the awareness and importance of the library** and its many programs, such as the right to read freely, civic engagement resources, and the library's overall role as a community hub.

Examples of library projects to highlight in an application include:

- Storytelling and how you communicate the impact of library services and programs in the community to external audiences.
- Partnerships that enhance the library's reach to under-resourced audiences.
- Strategic brand extensions and rebranding initiatives.
- Advocacy or fundraising campaigns.
- Initiatives that build policies and actions around democracy and intellectual freedom in our communities.
- Civic engagement and voter education and / or services.
- Programming to support civility, kindness and communities working together.

Advocacy and Awareness

Education: Children and Adults

Share your library's innovations that increase access to **high-quality learning opportunities for all children and adults**, such as how the library advances personal and family learning goals and develop literacy in all forms, for all ages.

Examples of library projects to highlight in an application include:

- Education and community engagement partnerships with PK-12 school leaders, school districts and community organizations.
- Summer Learning programs, as well as youth mentorship, internship and leadership initiatives for teens and young adults.
- Trauma-informed programming, caregiver workshops and learning circles.
- Adult education for reading, media, digital, financial and other types of literacy.

Education: Children and Adults

Equity and Inclusion

Share your library's innovations that address **structural racism, systemic and digital inequity and social justice** within the library and across the community.

Examples of library projects to highlight in an application include:

- Community engagement initiatives, partnerships and programming regarding systemic racism and social justice.
- Anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion embedded in strategic planning.
- Organizing for anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion outcomes.
- Anti-racist audits of library operations.
- Partnerships to bring high-speed broadband directly to all households to support community-wide digital literacy and access.

Equity and Inclusion

Health and Wellness

Share your library's innovations that help library staff and customers better understand and make informed decisions about **personal and public health issues**. This can be accomplished through educational programs, social services/partnerships, mental health services, and other holistic wellness programming.

Examples of library projects to highlight in an application include:

- Programming and community engagement partnerships to support customer well-being.
- Mental health resources and support for staff dealing with trauma in the library and / or through lived experience.
- Programs and partnerships to address public health and public safety.

Health and Wellness

Library Operations and Management

Share your library's innovations that advance the **operations, strategy and culture of the system**. This can be accomplished through thoughtful decision-making, safety and security strategy, organizational change, leadership trainings, performance management and reporting, impact assessment and all-around process improvements.

Examples of library projects to highlight in an application include:

- Internal/crisis communications systems and tools.
- Staff programming for well-being and professional development.
- Leadership and organization benchmarking and strategic planning.
- Strategic planning informed by data collection and community engagement.
- Data-driven evaluation and impact assessment systems.
- Administration of business practices to create the highest level of efficiency possible within an organization.
- Facility changes to reduce carbon emissions and enhance energy efficiencies.

Library Operations and Management

Workforce and Economic Development

Share your library's innovations that promote **equitable economic mobility and opportunity** for all local workers, jobseekers, entrepreneurs and business owners.

Examples of library projects to highlight in an application include:

- Entrepreneurship and advanced digital skill-building.
- Professional coaching and certification programs.
- Business challenges and fellowships.
- STEM as a career path.

Workforce and Economic Development

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Honorees announced in Fall 2024

FAQ, Application Form, Previous Years' Entries and More:

www.urbanlibraries.org/innovations