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For Immediate Release

New Jersey State Library Receives Federal Grant to Support Spanish-Speaking Public Library Users

Award of \$222,697 will support multi-state project to provide professional development training for bilingual library staff in New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and California

Trenton, NJ, April 26, 2018 – The New Jersey State Library (NJSL), an affiliate of Thomas Edison State University, is the recipient of an FY2018 Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program grant award from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for \$222,697. Funds will support NJSL’s *Cross Cultural Communicators in Libraries: Developing Culturally and Linguistically Competent Bilingual Library Professionals* two-year project, which will train English/Spanish bilingual librarians and library staff in cultural competence, interpretation and translation skills in New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and California.

The project team includes national leaders in continuing education and innovative outreach service development; New Jersey State Library, Queens Library, Hartford Public Library, California’s continuing education provider, InfoPeople, a project of the Califa Group, REFORMA (The National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and Spanish Speakers) and the American Library Association’s Office of Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services.

The project will develop and deliver online modules and in-person training for 350 Spanish speaking bilingual library professionals in New Jersey, Queens, New York, Hartford, Connecticut and California. The in-person workshops, a series of self-paced webinars, regional conference presentations and participant meetups will help build a network of bilingual library professionals in each partner region. All training materials and a toolkit of resources will be freely available through an online platform.

“We are pleased to have this opportunity to work with our prestigious partners to help bilingual library professionals provide effective outreach services within their communities,” said Mary Chute, New Jersey State Librarian. “This much needed funding from IMLS will help libraries in partnering regions, and beyond, address the needs of library access experienced by non-English speaking patrons.”

“The project aims to strengthen public libraries in meeting the needs of their Spanish-speaking communities by training bilingual front-line librarians and library staff to communicate effectively and confidently with patrons from multicultural backgrounds,” said Mimi Lee, project director and NJSL’s diversity and literacy consultant. “We anticipate that this project will have a broad impact across the nation. Spanish speaking bilingual library professionals throughout the United States will be able to freely access these training materials online and adopt for their own professional development.”

IMLS awarded 42 grants totaling \$10,431,610 to support libraries across the nation. A total of 16 projects were funded through the first cycle of the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program to support the recruitment and education of the next generation of librarians, faculty and library leaders.

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About the New Jersey State Library

The New Jersey State Library (NJSL), an affiliate of Thomas Edison State University (TESU), connects people with information and resources through its service to libraries, state government, TESU staff and students, and NJ residents, including those with special needs. NJSL provides support for public, school, academic, and special libraries, and continues to promote services for learners of all ages, including key areas of continuing need such as digital literacy, business outreach, workforce development, summer reading programs, and services for the visually and physically impaired, among others. For more information, visit www.njstatelib.org.

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 libraries and museums. We advance, support, and empower America’s museums, libraries, and related organizations through grant making, research, and policy development. Our vision is a nation where museums and libraries work together to transform the lives of individuals and communities. To learn more, visit www.ims.gov and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).