



Announcing California Humanities' 2024 Library Innovation Lab Recipients

Supporting public libraries through humanities programs that welcome immigrants.

For Immediate Release

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April 15, 2024—(Oakland, CA)—California Humanities is delighted to announce awards for the 2024 Library Innovation Lab (LIL). Ten public libraries in rural, suburban, and urban communities across the state will use grant funds to design new programs that welcome immigrants from the San Francisco Bay Area to San Diego County.

Now in its eighth year, this nationally recognized program supports public libraries as they welcome new Californians and build more inclusive communities. This year's cohort of participating libraries represent a diverse range of professional interests and experiences and includes several who are themselves immigrants. They aim to develop programs that will engage immigrants and refugees from many parts of the world, including Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and Europe. While some will focus on engaging teens, young adults, and seniors, others will emphasize multigenerational and family programming.

To date, 84 librarians representing over 50 library systems have participated in the program. Oral history projects, film screenings and discussions, memoir and zine writing activities, podcasts and mini-documentaries, and art and history exhibits have celebrated the food, music, dance and cultural traditions immigrants have brought to our state, engaging over 107,000 Californians.

LIL provides a nine-month practice-based professional development experience to each librarian along with grants of \$5,500 to research, design, implement, and assess a small scale, short-term public humanities project at their library. By the end of the year, working in a collaborative environment that incorporates group meetings and individualized advising from two peer mentors, both program alumni, they will experiment with new approaches to programming, acquire new skills and knowledge, and build capacity to serve immigrants as well as all community members.

“We are proud to welcome this exceptional cohort to our Library Innovation Lab program,” said Rick Noguchi, President and CEO of California Humanities. “We look forward to seeing how they exercise creativity and

imagination in designing new program approaches for both immigrants and longtime residents in their communities.”

2024 Library Innovation Lab Recipients:

- **Valery Verdin, Project Director**, Long Beach Public Library—Billie Jean King Main Library
- **Allison Ortiz, Project Director**, Los Angeles County Library—La Mirada Branch
- **Jacqueline Stewart, Project Director**, Moreno Valley Public Library—Main Branch
- **Mariella Garcia, Project Director**, Oceanside Public Library—John Landes Community Center Library
- **Christopher Eaton, Project Director**, Richmond Public Library—Main/Civic Center Branch
- **Anna Bekker, Project Director**, Riverside County Library System—Home Gardens Branch
- **Angelica Snyder, Project Director**, San Diego County Library—El Cajon Branch
- **Catalina Morancey, Project Director**, Santa Barbara Public Library
- **Olga Gonzalez, Project Director**, Santa Fe Springs City Library
- **Scott Gurrola, Project Director**, Whittier Public Library—Central Library

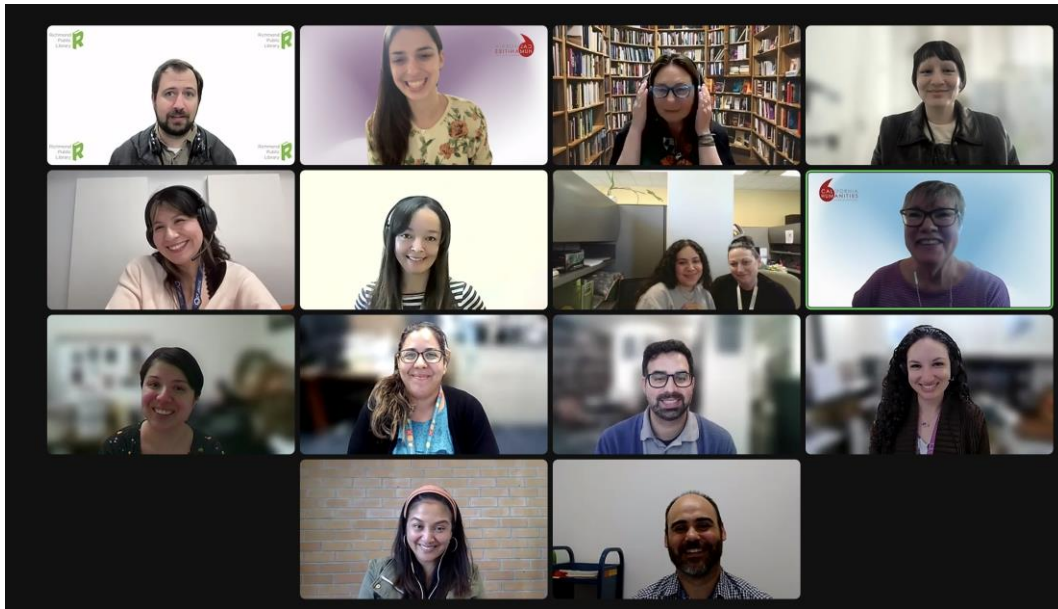
About Library Innovation Lab:

Library Innovation Lab was made possible with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, California Humanities, and the generosity of individual donors. [Learn more here.](#)

About California Humanities:

California Humanities, a nonprofit partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities, promotes the humanities—focused on ideas, conversation and learning—as relevant, meaningful ways to understand the human condition and connect people to each other in order to help strengthen California. California Humanities has provided grants and programs across the state since 1975. To learn more, visit calhum.org, or like and follow on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

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The 2024 Library Innovation Lab cohort convening on March 20, 2024.