



California Humanities and Califa Awarded \$249,946 from IMLS to Enhance Library Innovation Lab Program

For Immediate Release

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August 28, 2024, [San Francisco, CA]—The Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has announced a grant award of \$249,946 to Califa Group, in partnership with California Humanities, for **Fostering Empathy with Immigrant Communities to Enhance Library Public Programs and Services** (RE-256614-OLS-24), to assist libraries across the country in welcoming new Americans and better meeting the lifelong learning needs of immigrant communities.

Funding from the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program will be used to enhance and scale nationally the Library Innovation Lab program, which has been successfully piloted by California Humanities in California public libraries since 2016. Over the next two years, key activities will include 1) further developing the existing program framework 2) recruiting and field testing the program with a national cohort of libraries in 2025; 3) cultivating a pilot partnership with another State Humanities Council in 2026; and 4) publishing and disseminating a DIY program toolkit to facilitate replication by libraries or library-serving organizations across the country.

The Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program supports the development of a diverse workforce of librarians and archivists to better meet the information needs of the public.

“Califa Group is honored to partner with California Humanities through this IMLS grant to expand the Library Innovation Lab,” said Assistant Director of Califa Group Veronda J. Pitchford. “Enhancing libraries’ ability to offer culturally rich programs for immigrant communities benefits everyone—meeting immigrants’ needs while allowing the larger community to connect with their neighbors’ experiences and engage in our global society.”

IMLS invited 83 institutions to submit full project proposals, and of these, awarded **35 projects** totaling \$9,327,744.

“In these highly polarizing times, it’s more important than ever to promote immigrant inclusion and belonging, said California Humanities’ President and CEO Rick Noguchi. “That has been the goal of our humanities-centered Library Innovation Lab program from the very beginning, and this grant will help us extend the program’s reach and build capacity for California libraries to serve their diverse communities across the state.”

Now in its eighth year, Library Innovation Lab ***Exploring New Ways of Engaging Immigrant Communities through Public Humanities Programming*** (LIL) program supports the design and delivery of responsive and relevant public humanities programming in California’s public libraries through a ten-month practice-based professional development experience supplemented by cash grants. To date, **84 California libraries** from across the state of California have participated in the program which aims to provide welcoming experiences for immigrants and foster more inclusive communities. In 2020, LIL was recognized for outstanding contributions to public humanities with a Schwartz Prize, an annual honors program of the Federation of State Humanities Councils. Read more about the program’s impact **here**.

For more information about LIL, visit [the program page](#).

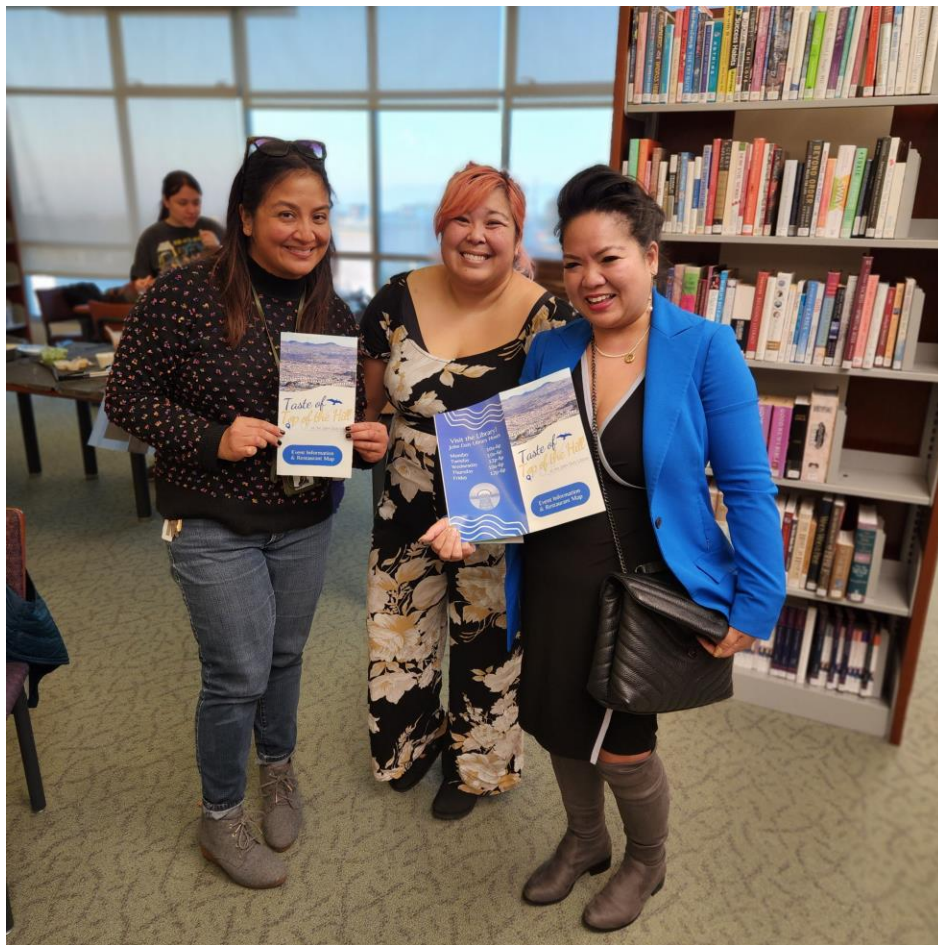
California Humanities, a statewide nonprofit partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities, promotes the humanities—focused on ideas, conversation, and learning—as relevant, meaningful ways to understand the human condition and connect people to each other in order to help strengthen California. 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, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

Califa Group is a San Francisco-based 501 (c)(3) nonprofit library membership consortium with the mission to unlock the inherent value, impact, and influence of libraries. Founded in 2004, Califa is the largest library network in California, facilitating the procurement of discounted library products; is a partner to the California State Library in administering statewide grant projects supported by federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA); serves as strategic partner and fiscal agent for national grant projects (IMLS, Mellon, Packard); and offers continuing education, professional development,

consulting, and custom trainings through Infopeople. To learn more, visit califa.org and infopeople.org.

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 grantmaking, research, and policy development. IMLS envisions a nation where individuals and communities have access to museums and libraries to learn from and be inspired by the trusted information, ideas, and stories they contain about our diverse natural and cultural heritage. To learn more, visit imls.gov and follow them on **Facebook** and **Twitter**.

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Library Innovation Lab mentor Patricia Mallari, project director Celina Tirona, and Daly City Mayor Juslyn C. Manalo at the Taste of the Top of the Hill program at the John Daly Branch Library, October 11, 2023.