

# NEWS RELEASE

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### **Urban Libraries Council recognizes Louisville Free Public Library with 2023 Innovation Award for *Mobile Newsrooms in Libraries* partnership with the Courier Journal**

**LOUISVILLE (April 28, 2023)** – The Urban Libraries Council announced Louisville Free Public Library as one of eight Top Innovators during the 2023 Innovations Celebration held virtually on April 27. ULC’s annual Innovations awards recognize transformative programs from ULC’s member library systems across the U.S. and Canada that enhance the library field to further advocacy, anti-racism and digital equity, democracy, education, health and wellness, and workforce development.

LFPL was selected by a panel of expert judges from more than 150 submissions in eight categories that showcase creative thinking and out-of-the-box application of library resources. LFPL’s *Mobile Newsrooms in Libraries* partnership won in the category of Advocacy and Awareness, for its level of inventiveness, the outcomes achieved, and the ability for other libraries to adapt and implement the project in their communities.

“It is clear from this year’s selected 2023 Innovations that ULC member libraries are at the forefront of industry creativity, leading far-reaching efforts, and developing original programming,” said ULC President and CEO Brooks Rainwater. “We applaud Louisville Free Public Library for their visionary program, which will revolutionize their library and community and serve as a template for public libraries across North America.”

The *Mobile Newsrooms in Libraries* partnership with the Courier Journal embedded a small team of journalists in five libraries located in diverse neighborhoods across the city. Each month, the team worked out of a different library—listening to residents, writing stories, and presenting programs—before moving to another library and neighborhood. Overall, the project helped connect reporters directly to people in underrepresented communities and resulted in more than 40 positive news stories.

“Louisville Free Public Library branches were the obvious choice for our mobile newsroom,” said Courier Journal Executive Editor Mary Irby-Jones. “Our libraries serve all segments of our community, and we knew that the partnership would allow us to temporarily set up shop in parts of our community that we wanted to do a better job of listening to and covering. We

found these residents eager to stop by and meet our journalists as well as to share their stories and offer story ideas."

In addition to having reporters working out of the library, *Mobile Newsrooms* included a series of one-hour op-ed workshops and four JCPD School Board Candidate Forums. The candidate forums brought hundreds of citizens into libraries to ask questions and engage directly with candidates in their communities. The op-ed workshops gave participants tips on what the opinion editor is looking for and how to better make their voices heard. The project not only improved coverage of the city's many diverse neighborhoods, but also fostered greater civic engagement by amplifying the voices within these communities.

"Our libraries serve as community conveners – providing safe spaces for the exchange of ideas and information. The *Mobile Newsrooms in Libraries* partnership helped build connections between residents and journalists, resulting in a better connected, better informed community," said Library Director Lee Burchfield. "We greatly appreciate the Urban Libraries Council's recognition of the innovative work our libraries are doing every day in Louisville."

### **About Urban Libraries Council**

The Urban Libraries Council is an innovation and impact tank of North America's leading public library systems. ULC drives cutting-edge research and strategic partnerships to elevate the power of libraries as essential, transformative institutions for the 21st century. Nearly 170 urban member libraries in the U.S. and Canada rely on ULC to identify significant challenges facing today's communities and provide new tools and techniques to help libraries achieve stronger outcomes in education, digital equity, workforce and economic development, and race and social equity.