



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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# **Librarians Train to Become Mental Health First Aid Instructors**

## **STAFF LEARN HOW TO ADDRESS PATRON MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS**

SAN DIEGO – Nearly three dozen public librarians from across California are in San Diego training to become certified Mental Health First Aid Instructors. Once certified, the librarians will return to their communities and conduct similar trainings to ensure library staff throughout California have the skills needed to effectively and compassionately work with patrons with mental health challenges.

Staff from the City of San Diego Public Library are taking part in the training from Sept. 19 through 23, which is the first of two “train-the-trainer” sessions. The next session will be held in Sacramento in late October. The California State Library is paying for the courses through a new \$1 million Mental Health Initiative, funded by the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). The Mental Health Initiative grant also includes webinars and a series of online videos.

Mental Health First Aid is a course developed by the National Council on Behavioral Health. It’s designed to give library staff and members of the public key skills to aid people with mental health challenges, along with their families, caregivers and friends. When library staff complete the training, they will be certified as instructors and required to teach shorter versions of the program to their library colleagues.

**“Libraries are welcoming and inclusive spaces for all members of the public, and this means that we often come in contact with patrons who are faced with many challenges, including mental health issues,” said Library Director Misty Jones. “This training is so important because it will provide public library staff with information and resources to provide assistance to these vulnerable neighbors.”**

The Mental Health Initiative is just one of many grants available to public libraries through the California State Library. The grant funds are used to promote, through a competitive process, improvements in services to all types of libraries; to facilitate access to and sharing of resources and services through the California State Library; and to achieve economical and effective delivery of service for the purpose of

cultivating an educated and informed citizenry. LSTA is the only federal program exclusively for libraries. It is administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

**About the San Diego Public Library**

San Diego Public Library, which is the largest library system in the region, serves a population of more than 1.3 million people. Its mission is to inspire lifelong learning through connections to knowledge and each other. Learn about other events at the San Diego Central Library @ Joan A Irwin Jacobs Common and 35 community branch libraries, find links to numerous additional resources, or search for materials in the Library's online catalog at [www.sandiegolibrary.org](http://www.sandiegolibrary.org).

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