



NEWS RELEASE
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California, Nevada and Washington create ground-breaking initiative to increase open data access through local libraries

SACRAMENTO, CA –The California State Library, in partnership with the Nevada State Library and Archives and the State of Washington’s technology agency, WaTech, has been named a winner of the Knight News Challenge on Data by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation for a project that teaches local librarians and community members how to find, use, and give feedback on open data. The project, titled “Data Equity for Main Street,” will receive \$470,000 as part of the award.

The Knight News Challenge on Data asked people to submit ideas to answer the question: How might we make data work for individuals and communities? Knight awarded 17 grants from a pool of 1,000 entries from around the world.

Open data is data that can be freely used, re-used and redistributed by anyone. Governments across the country are opening up this data and making it available for everyone, resulting in important discussion about topics as diverse as community health outcomes, school quality indicators, and local and state budgets.

The project, titled “Data Equity for Main Street,” will use the skills and knowledge of local librarians and civic technologists throughout the three states to create educational resources including:

- A train-the-trainer approach that prepares librarians to help community members find open data resources.
- Class training materials and plans so that libraries can teach community members what open data is, how to find and use it, and how to give feedback on its quality and relevance.

“Most libraries offer digital literacy training to community members. This project will support libraries as they help their communities access the open data, use it to affect change, and provide feedback to make it more useful for everyone. With this effort we hope to increase data equity, making open data open for everyone,” said Anne Neville, director of the California Research Bureau at the California State Library.

“This project aims to help people make data an everyday part of their lives, by using the library, an essential community hub, as a resource for learning and discovery,” said John Bracken, Knight Foundation vice president for media innovation.

About the Data Equity for Main Street Project

The Data Equity for Main Street Project is the result of a unique partnership between the California State Library, the Nevada State Library, and the State of Washington’s technology agency, WaTech, formed to look at ways to increase the use of open data by citizens. This work resulted in a collaborative grant proposal, “Data Equity for Main Street: Bringing Open Data Home Through Local Libraries” for the Knight News Challenge on Data grant. Over two years, the project will develop open educational resources and provide grants to libraries to try out these new tools in their communities.

About the Knight Foundation

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation promotes journalism excellence world-wide and invests in the vitality of communities where the Knight Brothers once owned newspapers. The Knight News Challenge on Data is funding breakthrough ideas that make data work for individuals and communities.

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