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**Orange County Library System among 160 libraries nationwide to conduct digital literacy trainings funded by PLA Digital Literacy Workshop Incentive, supported by AT&T**

Orlando — Orange County Library System is among over 160 public libraries nationwide awarded funding by the Public Library Association (PLA) to conduct digital literacy workshops using Digitallearn.org resources. The PLA Digital Literacy Workshop Incentive, supported by AT&T, provides support to libraries of all sizes to conduct digital literacy training in their communities and help close the digital divide.

OCLS will utilize the funding to translate classes into Haitian Creole and Spanish, to be offered at locations to serve non-native English speakers. Some of the funding will also be allocated to help market the digital literacy classes and online resources being offered during the grant period. The library will offer training on cyber security, video conferencing and internet and email basics. "It will be important to see how we can reach underserved populations such as seniors, refugees and low-income families," said Josh Murdock, the department head of OCLS's Technology and Education Center.

"The mission of libraries has always been about equitable access to information, literacy, learning and culture. In the age of COVID-19, this mission has only become vital as libraries have played a critical role in keeping communities connected and online," said PLA President Maria McCauley. "A 2020 PLA survey found that about 88% of public libraries provide some form of digital literacy support, but only 42% offer formal classes. Staffing and funding were the top barriers to providing technology training. AT&T's investment with PLA and public libraries nationwide will boost access to digital literacy skills for the most vulnerable in our communities."

PLA's free training site, Digitallearn.org, helps community members build skills and confidence using technology. OCLS will help patrons utilize these resources in a series of upcoming workshops that will be conducted online and in-person, at branches as well as at Orlando Public Library. More details will be announced this fall.

**About OCLS**

Orange County Library System provides information, imagination and inspiration to more than four million visitors annually. Numerous technology classes are offered along with author signings, special events and programs throughout the year. The library is involved in several programs and partnerships to foster early reading success, digital literacy, access to cultural events and much more.

### **About the Public Library Association**

The Public Library Association (PLA) is the largest association dedicated to supporting the unique and evolving needs of public library professionals. Founded in 1944, PLA serves nearly 9,000 members in public libraries large and small in communities across the United States and Canada, with a growing presence around the world. PLA strives to help its members shape the essential institution of public libraries by serving as an indispensable ally for public library leaders. For more information about PLA, contact the PLA office at 1 (800) 545-2433, ext. 5PLA, or [pla@ala.org](mailto:pla@ala.org).

### **About Philanthropy & Social Innovation at AT&T**

We're committed to advancing education, creating opportunities, strengthening communities and improving lives. As part of our companywide \$2 billion commitment from 2021–2023 to address the digital divide, we launched AT&T Connected Learning to invest in connectivity and technology, digital literacy and education solutions. We aim to help today's learners succeed inside and outside of the classroom. Since 2008, we've committed more than \$600 million to programs that help millions of students across all 50 states and around the world, particularly those in underserved communities.

**LEARN. GROW. CONNECT.**

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