FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FERGUSON LIBRARY AWARDED CT STATE LIBRARY GRANT TO PROVIDE LITERACY SERVICES

STAMFORD, June 3, 2019 – The Connecticut State Library has awarded The Ferguson Library a highly competitive $7,500 Library Services and Technology Act Literacy Grant to address the basic literacy needs of adult English language learners and new immigrants. The grant will fund the salary of certified instructors who will teach four courses, covering beginning English and employment readiness. The funds will also enhance the Library’s collection for English learners and will meet both language and job skills/training needs.

There is a well-documented need in Stamford for this kind of instruction. The U.S. Census American Community Survey found that 42% of Stamford residents speak a language other than English at home; 18% speak limited English. According to the Stamford Public Schools, 14% of Stamford students are English language learners.

The Library has offered informal Let’s Talk English language conversation groups for more than a decade as well as more formal English language classes and workforce training at the beginning and advanced levels. Statistics show that new immigrants to Stamford primarily seek jobs in four fields: custodial/maintenance, food service, construction and landscaping. This grant will enable library staff to meet the demand for additional entry level English language courses and work skills instruction focused on these areas.

The Library will partner with Literacy Volunteers of Family Centers, Building One Community and Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants.
The Ferguson Library is Stamford’s public library system, consisting of the Main Library, DiMattia Building; the Harry Bennett Branch; the Weed Memorial & Hollander Branch; the South End Branch and a traveling Bookmobile. It provides free and equal access to information, ideas, books and technology to educate, engage and enrich the Stamford community.