

This nomination is for the following award: **Library Innovation Award**

First Name **Adam**

Last Name **Davis**

Library Affiliation (if applicable) **Palm Beach County library System**

Title (if applicable) **Director of System Services**

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City, State, ZIP **West Palm Beach, FL 33406**

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Are you nominating an individual or a group/organization for this award? **Group/Organization**

Library (Other Organization or Research Team) Being Nominated **Palm Beach County Library System, Embedded Librarian Team**

First and Last Name of Head of Organization **Douglas Crane**

Title of Head of Organization **Library Director**

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Will you be submitting any supporting documentation? **Yes**

If you would like us to review web pages in consideration of this application (including videos or other supporting materials that are stored online), please enter the Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) below.

<https://youtu.be/2KPdwOlqQK4> http://www.urbanlibraries.org/embedded-librarians-in-county-government-innovation-1192.php?page_id=420

<http://dos.myflorida.com/library-archives/services-for-libraries/stars/innovators/>

Essay **Now in its third year, the Embedded Librarian service at the Palm Beach County Library System is a nationally-recognized service that seeks to be the number one source for information in the Palm Beaches by meeting information users where they are at – even and especially if they never thought of the library as their most trusted source for information. Inspired by 2013 SEFLIN Technology Conference’s keynote speaker, Jamie LaRue (Director of ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom), this service pairs research librarians with governmental agencies and NGOs to complete research projects, and in turn, improve the quality of life for Palm Beach County residents. After gaining buy-in from research librarians, branch managers, the Library Advisory Board, and Management Team, the Palm Beach County Library System chose to begin its 6-month pilot phase in 2015 working solely with County government departments for three reasons: 1) government budgets don’t always allow room for paid researchers; 2) the Library System was interested in enhancing its relationship with other governmental agencies; and 3) this was seen as an opportunity to raise the Library’s profile as a research institution. A careful vetting process resulted in 9 librarians who would work with 8 departments. Librarians were trained in enhanced research skills, particularly in government**

documents and grant research, and were soon introduced to their departmental contacts by the Library Director. Having the Director personally introduce embedded librarians to departments (especially when meeting with departmental directors) was key to creating a commitment from both parties to work together for the community. Librarians spent over 260 hours during the pilot time period performing detailed research, writing reports, meeting with County government, and receiving ongoing training. Each County Department was unique in its information needs, and the projects assigned reflected that diversity. One librarian worked with Legislative Affairs to produce detailed data and reports on the embargo to Cuba, lighting and crime reduction, and the impact of film industry incentives in Florida. Another librarian helped to develop a pamphlet and display with Environmental Resources Management that toured the County to demonstrate how residents could reduce their environmental footprint. Two librarians trained for dozens of hours with Emergency Management so that during a disaster, they could take incoming data and package it in a way that would be useful to County Administration. In 2016, during Hurricane Matthew, both librarians were activated and did just that during 12+ hour shifts at the Emergency Operations Center. During year two, the service expanded to offer expert research services to non-profits. Rather than pair librarians with organizations, the Library decided to pair librarians with projects. In all, approximately 265 hours were spent on projects that lasted 1 week to 6 months. Families First of Palm Beach County was the first organization to engage library assistance during the second year. After finding and submitting demographic information for a grant that they were applying to, the organization reported months later that they had received \$90,000, in part, due to the demographic information librarians found. The Coalition of Boynton West Residential Association (COBWRA) utilized librarian expertise to conduct research on identifying effective strategies to raise the image & profile of the organization. At the completion of their project, they stated, ““The research you did for COBWRA with the Embedded Librarian Program was excellent. We are planning to use the information after we have completed our Strategic Plan. We are thankful to the Library System to have completed the research on strategies to raise the profile of COBWRA.”” Library staff also sought to disseminate information on how other libraries could implement a similar project. The Urban Libraries Council recognized the Palm Beach County Library System for its innovation, Florida State Library highlighted Palm Beach County on their “Stars in the Sunshine State” site, and staff presented at the 2016 FLA Annual Conference and SEFLIN Regional Conference. Staff also created a video, “Florida Libraries as Disaster Response Centers” for the Bureau of Library Development to share experiences with other institutions throughout the state. Requests for assistance from County agencies and non-profits are already rolling in for year three, and staff look forward not only to incorporating this service into everyday research services at each branch but to raising the profile of public library research on a national scale.

Summary The Embedded Librarian service at the Palm Beach County Library System is a nationally-recognized service that seeks to be the number one source for information in the Palm Beaches by meeting information users where they are at – even and especially if they never thought of the library as their most trusted source for information. Inspired by 2013 SEFLIN Technology Conference’s keynote speaker, Jamie LaRue (Director of ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom), this service pairs research librarians with governmental agencies and NGOs to complete research projects, and in turn, improve the quality of life for Palm Beach County residents.