



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG LIBRARY ANNOUNCES ENGAGE 2020: LOOK BACK, MOVE FORWARD

Civic engagement programs and events to run from March through October

Charlotte, NC – March 12, 2020 – Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, in partnership with the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) and with support from Pivotal Ventures, an investment and incubation company created by Melinda Gates, is proud to announce the launch of Engage 2020: Look Back, Move Forward. Engage 2020 will run from March through October 2020 at all Library and various community locations around Mecklenburg County. Commemorating the centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution and women’s right to vote, the program is targeted to diverse groups of individuals to engage in facilitated conversations around important civic issues about the history of voting in the U.S., past and current campaign trends, and also spotlight the history of women’s voting rights, especially Black women. Charlotte Mayor Vi Lyles has been named honorary chair of Engage 2020.

There will be programs and events to capture voices, perspectives, stories and investigative reports reflecting the diversity of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The DPLA partnership focuses on civic engagement, the August 2020 Republican National Convention in Charlotte, and the 2020 election with support from its digital collection highlighting Black women, voting rights, and civic engagement.

“With the centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment for the Women’s Suffrage Movement, the RNC in August and the election in November, this is the right time for our community to hear personal narratives, attend outreach events and discussions, and view exhibits about the past so they can make truly informed decisions as our community moves forward,” says Hannah Terrell, branch leader and co-chair of the Engage 2020 committee at Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. “Civic engagement helps to build a stronger community, and there is no better organization to provide the forum and resources than the Library.”

As part of Engage 2020, an Engage HER series is planned, with the first of four events scheduled for Saturday, May 16, 2020 at Beatties Ford Road Regional Library, 2414 Beatties Ford Road, Charlotte, from noon – 3 p.m. The Engage HER series will include lunch, a keynote speaker, panel conversation, a volunteer fair, voter registration, and opportunities to engage in discussions. The remaining three events are scheduled for Library locations in July, September and October. Registration is free and open to the public.

“Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is excited to launch Engage 2020 with the goal of increasing access to and public use of resources that help our customers to actively participate in civic engagement conversations,” says Martha Yesowitch, community partnership leader and co-chair of the Engage 2020 committee at Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. “There will be many opportunities across the county for the community to learn, engage and participate.”

DPLA is providing a \$100,000 subgrant to the program as a part of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library’s plans for digitization of local resources and artifacts, outreach, programming, and exhibits. “Engage2020 is a deeply collaborative partnership with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library to create community programming around the Black women’s suffrage digital collection and explore new possibilities for sharing DPLA’s expertise, tools, and stories of cultural heritage items to benefit local communities,” says Shanee Murrain, community manager at DPLA.

More information on the Engage 2020 program and events can be found at cmlibrary.org/engage2020.

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Photo caption: Logo Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Engage 2020: Look Back, Move Forward

Photo caption: Charlotte Mayor Vi Lyles, honorary chair of Engage 2020

About DPLA

The Digital Public Library of America amplifies the value of libraries and cultural organizations as Americans' most trusted sources of shared knowledge. We do this by collaborating with partners to accelerate innovative tools and ideas that empower and equip libraries to make information more accessible. Visit <https://dp.la>.

About Charlotte Mecklenburg Library:

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is one of America's leading urban public libraries, serving a community of more than one million citizens in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Through 20 locations, targeted outreach and online resources, the Library delivers exceptional services and programs, with a mission to improve lives and build a stronger community. For more, visit cmlibrary.org.

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Charlotte Mecklenburg Library newsroom: cmlibrary.org/library-news

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Engage 2020 logo



Charlotte Mayor Vi Lyles, honorary chair Engage 2020

