

5 July 2019 -- The Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference's New Jersey Caucus is pleased to announce that the winner of the 2019 Innovative Archives Award is the New Jersey Hispanic Research and Information Center's Puerto Rican Community Archives of the Newark Public Library. The award is given every year to an organization that has made an outstanding effort to preserve and make accessible archival materials in the State of New Jersey.

The Puerto Rican Community Archives (PRCA) was established in 2006 after the Newark Public Library conducted a systematic survey of historical records on New Jersey's Puerto Rican communities. Archives staff work to collect, preserve, and provide access to the records that tell the story of the state's oldest Latino group, and they seek to educate the community of the value of preserving its history. In furthering these goals, PRCA staff reach out to families, organizations, and businesses to acquire materials that may otherwise be lost. They also encourage high school and college students to train for careers as librarians and archivists, and foster an active Friends group to support the collection's mission.

The Puerto Rican Community Archives comprise over fifty collections originating from across New Jersey, including personal and professional papers, community and cultural organizations, and records of newspapers and government agencies. In addition to scholarly use, PRCA materials were highlighted in Diantha Dow Schull's 2016 publication, *Archives Alive: Expanding Engagements with Public Library Archives and Special Collections*, and are featured in public programs and travelling exhibitions. In order to expose young people to careers in special collections, the PRCA Archivist developed an eight-week summer program that trains Newark-area teens to identify and inventory records of local organizations.

For these reasons, the MARAC New Jersey Caucus recognizes the New Jersey Hispanic Research and Information Center's Puerto Rican Community Archives for their innovative approach to documenting the history of the state's residents. The award will be presented on October 12, 2019, at Archives and History Day at the Monmouth County Library Headquarters in Manalapan; additional details to follow.