



THE NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

5 Washington Street • P.O. Box 630 • Newark, NJ 07101-0630
www.npl.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Newark, NJ — [March 13, 2026] The Newark Public Library is proud to announce the grand opening of a newly dedicated space for the New Jersey Hispanic Research and Information Center (NJHRIC), an essential resource committed to preserving and sharing the histories, cultures, and contributions of Newark’s Hispanic and Latinx communities.

The grand opening celebrates more than four decades of collaboration between the Library and Newark’s Latino residents. The HRIC’s origins date back to the late 1970s, when the Library began actively recruiting Latino librarians and expanding bilingual services to meet the needs of Newark’s growing Latino population. During this period, the Library launched a Spanish hotline, expanded its Spanish-language book collection, and introduced bilingual outreach programs to ensure equitable access to information.

As Newark’s Latino community continued to grow and diversify throughout the 1980s, the Library further strengthened its commitment by establishing annual Hispanic Heritage celebrations and, in 1989, creating La Sala Hispanoamericana—a welcoming space for Spanish-speaking patrons that houses the largest Spanish-language book collection of any public library in New Jersey. La Sala quickly became an important cultural and educational hub for the community.

By 2000, as the Latino population continued to grow, community leaders recognized the urgent need to preserve the history of New Jersey’s Latino communities. Through advocacy and fundraising efforts led by community members and supporters, the NJHRIC was founded in 2002, incorporating La Sala Hispanoamericana while establishing the Puerto Rican Community Archive and Hispanic Reference Collection. Today, the NJHRIC holds more than 75 archival collections, maintains the largest public Spanish-language book collections in the state, and provides thousands of digitized images documenting New Jersey’s Latino history. These materials serve scholars, students, educators, journalists, and families seeking to explore and understand the diverse experiences of Hispanic and Latinx communities throughout the region.

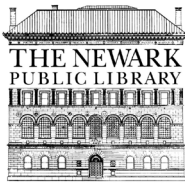
“The opening of this new space—25 years in the making—marks a major milestone and reflects the Newark Public Library’s longstanding commitment to preserving and celebrating the history of Latino communities throughout New Jersey for future generations,” said Yesenia López, Director of the NJHRIC at the Newark Public Library.

The newly dedicated NJHRIC space will serve as a central hub for research, education, and community engagement. The expanded space will provide improved access to archival collections and Spanish-language books for adults, teens, and children. The new space also

Ras J. Baraka
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includes audio-visual research and conference rooms, digital and physical exhibition spaces that highlight materials from the Center's growing collections and New Jersey's Latino communities, and a dedicated children's area. These resources will support culturally focused programming to connect residents, scholars, and visitors with the stories and histories that have shaped Newark and the broader Latino experience in New Jersey.

Press Conference Event Details

Date: Wednesday, June 3, 2026

Time: 11 am - 12 pm

Location: Newark Public Library

5 Washington Street, Newark, NJ, 07102

Grand Opening Event Details

Date: Saturday, June 13, 2026

Time: 10 am - 4 pm

Location: Newark Public Library

5 Washington Street, Newark, NJ 07102

The event is free and open to all. The Library warmly encourages families, students, researchers, and community members to join in celebrating this important milestone.

Learn More About Newark's Latino Community History

To further highlight the significance of this new space, the Library invites the public to explore a digital exhibit celebrating more than 40 years of partnership with Newark's Latino community. This collection showcases the stories, achievements, and community-driven efforts that have shaped Newark's cultural landscape and why the HRIC remains such an essential resource for the city.

[View the digital exhibit here](#)

About the Newark Public Library

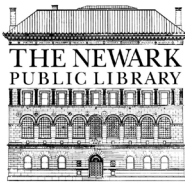
Newark Public Library, home of the Philip Roth Personal Library, is located at 5 Washington Street, Newark, NJ. Built in 1899, the Newark Public Library is one of New Jersey's largest and most historic public library systems, serving the city through its Main Library and six branch locations. The Library offers a wide range of services, including literacy programs, digital learning resources, cultural exhibits, and community engagement initiatives.

For more information about the Newark Public Library, its programs, and services, please visit www.npl.org

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About the New Jersey Hispanic Research & Information Center

The New Jersey Hispanic Research and Information Center (NJHRIC) is a prime destination for researchers, academics, teachers, students, and the general public throughout the state. Who seek services and information about the histories and cultures of New Jersey's diverse Latino communities in Spanish and English.

For more information about the NJHRIC, its programs, and services, please visit

www.npl.org/collections-services/njhric/

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