

West Hartford is one of the busiest libraries in CT with over 1,500 library patrons visiting each day.

Our collection of over a quarter-million items attracts people from towns all over Connecticut and our renovated facilities (thanks to State Library Building Grants financed by State Bonding funds) offer welcoming spaces for people of all ages. Because the **Connecticard** program allows all CT residents to borrow materials anywhere in the state, each weekday we receive and send out as many as thirty to fifty bins full of library materials that are being returned to us, or that we are returning to other libraries. If the **Connecticard** program should cease, one of the greatest regional programs ever conceived in Connecticut would come to an end -- because not only is the funding threatened by this budget, but the enabling legislation is slated for removal. I have had a former West Hartford patron call my office after she moved across the state line into Massachusetts and beg me to keep her library card valid because MA does not offer the same borrowing privileges to their residents! Why would such a well-used program that embodies the value of cooperative regional projects be axed? Likewise, I am concerned that the Connecticut Library Consortium is being zeroed out. State funding is not their only source of funds, but it does provide the underpinning for them to administer a program that saves literally thousands of dollars for libraries all across that state. Just through the contracts that CLC negotiates on behalf of our library and the other 164 public libraries in the state (not to mention school, academic and special libraries) the taxpayers of West Hartford saved \$129,146.13 last year. I do understand that the state's budget will be difficult this year and that severe cuts may be necessary. But even if those do need to happen, at least leave the legislation that would enable these important programs to be restored in the future in place.

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