

Written Testimony for Public Hearing
Connecticut General Assembly
Appropriations Committee
March 3, 2015

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the Governor's current FY 15-16 budget that proposes to completely eliminate state funding for the Connecticut Library Consortium (CLC), a non-profit cooperative library service unit that provides services to over 800 libraries in the State of Connecticut. I am even more concerned that legislation to implement the budget has been introduced that would actually repeal General Statute 11-9e, the statute that has authorized this program since 1998.

The Connecticut Library Consortium is a small non-profit organization that has member libraries of all types and sizes in every town in Connecticut. We leverage the power of our 815 public, K-12, colleges & /university and special libraries to negotiate up to 72% off of list price on critical products and services they need. This allows these libraries to stretch their budget dollars further and relieves individual libraries of the need to spend resources on negotiations and training.

The Connecticut Library Consortium currently receives a \$332,500 state operating grant. Last year, with that funding we helped over 800 Connecticut libraries realize more than \$7.1 million dollars of savings on critical books, media, databases, materials, supplies, training and more. We, and they, think that is a good return on investment for the citizens of Connecticut.

The Connecticut Library Consortium, CLC, is the last of 6 original regional cooperative library service units established by General Statute 11-9e in 1998 "to improve library service through coordinated planning, resource sharing and the development of programs too costly or impractical for a single library to maintain."

We do this with a staff of five full-time and one part-time employee. The state funding pays for two full-time employees to research products & services, negotiate discounted rates, and then assist libraries in learning how to use and promote to their users these critical library materials that include books, databases, supplies, and technology not available via other state negotiated bids or contracts. These two employees also administer three statewide bids that meet municipal purchasing requirements. In addition, the grant funding from the State of Connecticut partially pays for two and a half other staff members who provide management, bookkeeping, event/training coordination and marketing.

The Governor's proposed FY15-16 budget completely eliminates state funding for our organization. This funding represents approximately 64% of our operating funds and is vital to our ability to bring cost savings to Connecticut's libraries. Without this funding, we would not be able to bring significant savings through negotiated discounts to our members.

We and our members believe a state investment in the Connecticut Library Consortium is a smart choice.

Here are just a few reasons you should believe Connecticut Library Consortium is a smart choice too:

- \$332,500 of State of CT Operating Grant monies EQUALS over \$7.1 million in savings for academic, public, school and special libraries across the state.
- For every \$1 the State of Connecticut invested in the Connecticut Library Consortium, Connecticut's libraries realized an average of over \$13.50 in savings.
- 18 libraries funded by the State of Connecticut; Connecticut's public college, public universities and state department libraries saved \$88,497 on products and training provided through CLC.
- IN FY13-14 all Connecticut libraries that purchased through CLC negotiated contracts saved between 10 -72% off list price for products & services. The average savings was 36%.
- In FY13-14 CLC offered Connecticut librarians over 225 opportunities to learn ways to be more efficient, effective and knowledgeable in assisting the citizens of Connecticut. Training opportunities were unique from other professional development opportunities offered by other groups including:
 - Affordable Care Act Training- Although only 10% of CT residents were qualified for insurance under the Affordable Care Act, the other 90% of the population had questions about the issue and turned to their local public libraries for assistance. CLC connected librarians to AccessHealthCT assistors & navigators & trained over 250 librarians about the program.
 - 114 Roundtables that connected more than 800 Connecticut librarians with their peers to exchange critical professional information, best practices, and money saving tips.
- CLC helps libraries find less expensive ways to purchase not just books, but other important resources like early literacy learning stations, online job preparation tools and coaching, and business databases – resources vital to the success of key populations in every community.

We understand that cuts must be made to the state's operating budget, but ask that those cuts be made judiciously. The elimination of funding to the Connecticut Library Consortium, combined with the elimination of the authority to potentially restore funding to this service would have a devastating effect on all of our state's libraries. I respectfully urge you to hear my plea and the pleas of other library professionals and consider carefully the elimination of state funding for library services.

Sincerely,



Jennifer O. Keohane
Executive Director
Connecticut Library Consortium

AN EQUATION THAT MAKES SENSE



Savings, Education & Collaboration for Connecticut's libraries since 2003

+

\$332,500 State of CT Operating Grant

=

\$7,147,331 in savings
for Connecticut Libraries*

*July 2013 – June 2014



Savings, Education & Collaboration for Connecticut's libraries since 2003

**FACT: CLC SAVES MONEY FOR EVERY
CONNECTICUT TOWN**

**FACT: CLC SAVES LIBRARIES \$13.54 (avg.)
FOR EVERY STATE DOLLAR INVESTED**

July 2013 – June 2014

In just one year,



helped Connecticut libraries save
\$7.1 million.

Ask us how much the towns in **YOUR**
district saved!

July 2013 – June 2014



Savings, Education, Innovation & Collaboration for Connecticut's libraries since 2003

A Model of Statewide Savings for Libraries

Who we are

- The Connecticut Library Consortium (CLC) provides over 800 Connecticut libraries - public, K-12 school, college/university, and "special" - with cost savings and professional development through its cooperative purchasing and educational programs.
- 225 (94%) of Connecticut public libraries, 62 (92%) of Connecticut college/university libraries, 454 (44%) of Connecticut public K-12 schools, and approximately 20% of Connecticut special libraries are CLC members. Membership is open to any Connecticut library.
- CLC is mandated by Conn. Gen. Stat. Sec. 11-9e, and is the only multi-type library membership cooperative in Connecticut.
- CLC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, supported via a combination of state grant funds (63%), membership dues (27%), and fees (10%).

What we do

- CLC saves Connecticut libraries millions of dollars each year by leveraging the collective buying power of our members. We negotiate discounted prices on a wide variety of library resources and services essential to excellent library service for Connecticut citizens.
- CLC's statewide contracts for books, non-print media, and supplies enable members to waive their own bidding requirements and realize savings of up to 72% on mission-critical library materials.
- CLC provides low-cost, high-impact library professional development by coordinating more than 30 member-driven "roundtables," where members share knowledge and ideas about professional topics.
- CLC arranges unique workshops, symposia, and collaborative events to help librarians improve service to their communities and keep up with the latest professional trends.
- CLC partners with state agencies, businesses, and other non-profits to bring more programs and services to libraries, and to convey to a wider audience the essential role that libraries play in Connecticut's 169 cities and towns.

Why we're successful

- CLC member libraries saved \$7,147,331 in FY 2013-14 through CLC's negotiated discounts, group purchasing programs and training.
- Public libraries saved almost \$75 for every \$1 they invested in CLC in FY 2013-14.
- Nearly 1,400 Connecticut librarians benefited from CLC's free or low-cost professional development programs in FY 2013-14.

Why we were created

- CLC was formed in 2003 from the merger of four state-mandated regional "cooperating library service units" (CLSUs). At that time, the four organizations' boards determined that one statewide cooperative would provide even greater efficiencies and savings to Connecticut's libraries.
- CLC's purpose is "to improve library service through coordinated planning, resource sharing, and the development of programs too costly or impractical for a single library to maintain." (CGS Sec. 11-9e)

Find out more

To find out more about CLC's activities and plans:

- Visit us online at www.ctlibrarians.org
- Contact Executive Director Jennifer Keohane: jkeohane@ctlibrarians.org or 860.344.8777 x103

CLC's discounts enable Connecticut libraries provide their residents and students with award-winning products to bolster educational initiatives such as early literacy.

These products include:

TumbleBooks Library

Currently available at 43 libraries reaching 582,460 residents and students

TumbleBooks are animated, talking picture books that teach kids the joy of reading in a format they enjoy. TumbleBooks are created by adding animation, sound, music, and narration to existing picture books to produce electronic books that children can read or have read to them. Also includes National Geographic videos and games. With a school license, teachers and students have access to the Common Core Portal, quizzes and teacher materials/lesson plans.

BookFlix, TrueFlix, Freedom Flix and ScienceFlix

Currently available at 55 libraries reaching 1,063,861 residents and students

Scholastic Inc., based in Danbury, offers their award-winning children's online resources to CLC members at a substantial discount (31-36%). CLC currently has 3 subscribing groups of public and school libraries participating, with many purchasing multiple titles. All Flix products are Common Core-aligned and help students hone literacy skills, build knowledge of important topics, and cultivate 21st Century Skills through the inquiry process.

- **BookFlix** – Literacy for grades PreK-3. BookFlix pairs classic fictional video storybooks with nonfiction eBooks to reinforce reading skills and develop real-world knowledge. BookFlix is accessible to every child – early readers, reluctant readers, and English Language Learners.
- **TrueFlix** – Science & Social Studies for grades 3-6. Each TrueFlix “unit” includes a streaming video that introduces the topic, an eBook, related content, interactive features, lesson plan, and more.
- **FreedomFlix** – History for grades 4 and up. FreedomFlix transforms content from the highly successful *Cornerstones of Freedom* series into enhanced eBooks, supported with related content and primary sources featuring videos, audio, images, and text.
- **ScienceFlix** – Science for grades 4-9. ScienceFlix provides an in-depth examination of more than 35 different scientific topics by combining award-winning content (videos, articles) interactive features (inquiry questions, experiments) and intuitive navigation into a highly-engaging digital resource.

AWE Early Literacy Station

CLC discounted group purchasing has enabled more than 50% of Connecticut public libraries to purchase one or more of these engaging learning stations for their children's rooms.

The Early Literacy Station (ELS) is a dynamic all-in-one computer learning station for children ages 2-8. It requires no Internet connection, so it is safe and secure. More than 70 educational software applications spanning seven curricular areas are pre-loaded on the computer and displayed using engaging graphics and intuitive menus. The ELS is available in English, Bilingual Spanish, and Bilingual French, and is aligned with Common Core Standards.

CLC's discounts also help Connecticut libraries offer their communities tools to help job seekers and small businesses.

These products include:

Brainfuse JobNow

Currently available to 2,622,416 people in Connecticut through 93 libraries

Thanks to CLC's early adoption of this product, member libraries pay as little as \$250 for a yearly subscription. JobNow provides live, interactive online help combined with online resources to help library patrons and students get a job. A "resume lab" and live, online job coaches help jobseekers strategically target suitable jobs and prepare and practice for job interviews. The Adult Learning Center provides foundational, career-enhancing skills to adult learners through test preparation (including the GED and the U.S. Citizenship Test) and features live, online academic tutors for writing assistance, computer literacy, and basic software assistance.

AtoZdatabases™

Currently available to 92,066 Connecticut residents and 4,991 college students

CLC saved member libraries up to 46% on their subscriptions to this premier job search, reference, & mailing list database. Residents and students turn to AtoZ for sales leads, mailing lists, market research, employment opportunities, finding friends and relatives, and much more.