

February 16, 2016

Appropriations Committee
Connecticut State Legislature

Written Testimony

The State Library Budget is currently 25% lower than it was 8 years ago. We are asking for no additional cuts. Further reductions will negatively impact local library budgets if our ability to benefit from the group purchasing discounts continues to be threatened along with the possible impact on resource sharing through reductions to the state CCARD reimbursements. But ultimately cuts to libraries means we won't be able to provide equal access to essential informational services for our residents.

Libraries are excellent at providing an incredible return for a small investment. Last year the total expenditures, both state and local, for Connecticut's Public Libraries was \$195 million but the estimated total value of library services to Connecticut's residents was about \$715 million!

How this is possible is through our ability to share resources across town boundaries. Through the CCARD program (now called BorrowIt) libraries are reimbursed for providing materials to out-of-town residents. This program allows libraries to save money because they don't need to buy materials that in their own community may have limited use. Rather they can send their patrons to another library in the state to borrow such items. For example, one library may not have a large collection of materials in Polish but could refer a Polish immigrant in their town to the New Britain Public Library which specializes in these materials. Without the BorrowIt program, this resident would not be served or their local library would need to expend additional funds to purchase specialized materials of limited use and possibly cut back on other materials or services to do so. BorrowIt is an excellent example of regionalization that has been running successfully in Connecticut for over 40 years.

Another way libraries stretch their limited dollars is through group purchasing discounts provided by the Connecticut Library Consortium which is partially funded through the State Library. For just \$332,500 in state expenditures, CLC was able to save Connecticut libraries over 7 million dollars during FY13-14. However, in the current budget their funding has been cut 47% putting this essential cost-saving service at risk. The loss of this service would result in increases to local library budgets or more likely result in big reductions in materials and services to library users. The loss of these savings, combined with the inability to share across town boundaries, would mean disaster for equal access to library service in Connecticut.

Often, when speaking of funding libraries, the question comes up as to whether libraries are still relevant in the digital age. I have included a fact sheet with this testimony that speaks to the high use of Connecticut libraries, essential quality of life services we provide and a list of 100 things you will find when you walk in the door of your local library that may surprise you! But what is important to remember is that libraries remain vital today because we have stayed true to our core mission of providing equal access to information regardless of any new formats that information now comes in. We serve as the one place in our communities where anyone, regardless of age or socioeconomic status, can enter and instantly belong. We are the cornerstone of a democratic and informed citizenry and our ability to provide these services, free of charge must be protected.

Connecticut libraries have over 40 years of proven success at saving money through regionalization and resource sharing. These programs work, they save money and they provide far more value back to Connecticut residents than they cost.

Please protect equal access to information. Preserve Connecticut library funding!

Respectfully submitted by,

Beth Crowley

Connecticut Library Association President

Director, Scranton Memorial Library, Madison, CT



Protect Equal Access - Preserve Our Funding!

The State Library budget is now 25% lower than it was eight years ago. Additional cuts will impact the ability of Connecticut libraries to provide essential services to our residents.

No More Cuts!



**VALUED
DESTINATIONS!**

Did you know, last year:

- 20.7 million people visited a public library in Connecticut
- Over 28 million items were borrowed
- There were 3.3 million requests for information
- 2 million people attended library programs
- Internet computers were used 4 million times

It's not just about books! Connecticut Public Libraries also provide:

- Early-literacy classes for babies and their parents
- Resources and training for job seekers
- Technology access and instruction
- Entrance exam preparation and test proctoring for college students
- Citizenship preparation and ESL classes for immigrants
- Tax forms
- Homebound book delivery for seniors



**ESSENTIAL LIFE
SERVICES!**

Unbeatable return on public dollar investment:

Total expenditures for Connecticut's Public Libraries: \$195 million

Estimated total value of library services to Connecticut's residents: Over \$715 million!

For more information:

Please contact Beth Crowley, President, Connecticut Library Association, (203) 245-7365

100 amazing things you'll find at Connecticut libraries!

1. 3-D printers
2. Adaptive technology
3. Antique appraisals
4. Art exhibits
5. Athletic tournaments
6. Auctions
7. Book discussion groups
8. Book sales
9. Book scanners
10. Cameras
11. Chess clubs
12. Citizenship preparation
13. Community information
14. Compact disc players
15. Computer access
16. Computer instruction
17. Concerts
18. Cultural events
19. Daily newspapers
20. Downloadable music
21. DVD players
22. E-books
23. E-book readers
24. E-magazines
25. Early literacy classes
26. Electric transport chair
27. ESL Classes
28. Engravers
29. Exhibit space
30. Eyeglass recycling
31. Fax machines
32. Flag disposal
33. Food donation drop-off
34. Framed art
35. Game nights
36. Garden clubs
37. GED classes
38. Genealogical information
39. Government information
40. Health newsletters
41. Home schooling information
42. Homebound book delivery
43. Homework centers
44. Investment information
45. Job centers
46. Job skills training
47. Kill-a-Watt meters
48. Knitting clubs
49. Language instruction
50. Large print books
51. Lectern
52. Legal forms
53. Leisure programs
54. Magnifiers
55. Makerspaces
56. Maps
57. Medicare counseling
58. Meeting Rooms
59. Museum passes
60. Multicultural programs
61. New baby packets
62. Notary services
63. Paper shredder
64. Parenting workshops
65. Passport processing
66. Phone books
67. photo copy machines
68. Photography workshops
69. Piano
70. Play groups
71. Poetry readings and contests
72. Postage stamps
73. Pre-school orientation
74. Printers
75. Projectors
76. Puppetry
77. Robots
78. Scanners
79. Small business workshops
80. Smart boards
81. Study rooms
82. Summer reading programs
83. Tai chi
84. Tax forms
85. Tax preparation advice
86. Teen life skills classes
87. Teleconferencing
88. Telescopes
89. Test proctoring services
90. Term Paper Clinics
91. Therapy Dogs
92. Thermal leak detector
93. Translation services
94. Tutoring
95. Typewriters
96. VHS to DVD converter
97. Video equipment
98. Voter registration
99. Wheelchairs
100. Writing groups