



## BOOKMARK IT!

- Restore state funding for library service.
- Protect freedom to read in school libraries.
- Rein in the cost of library electronic books.

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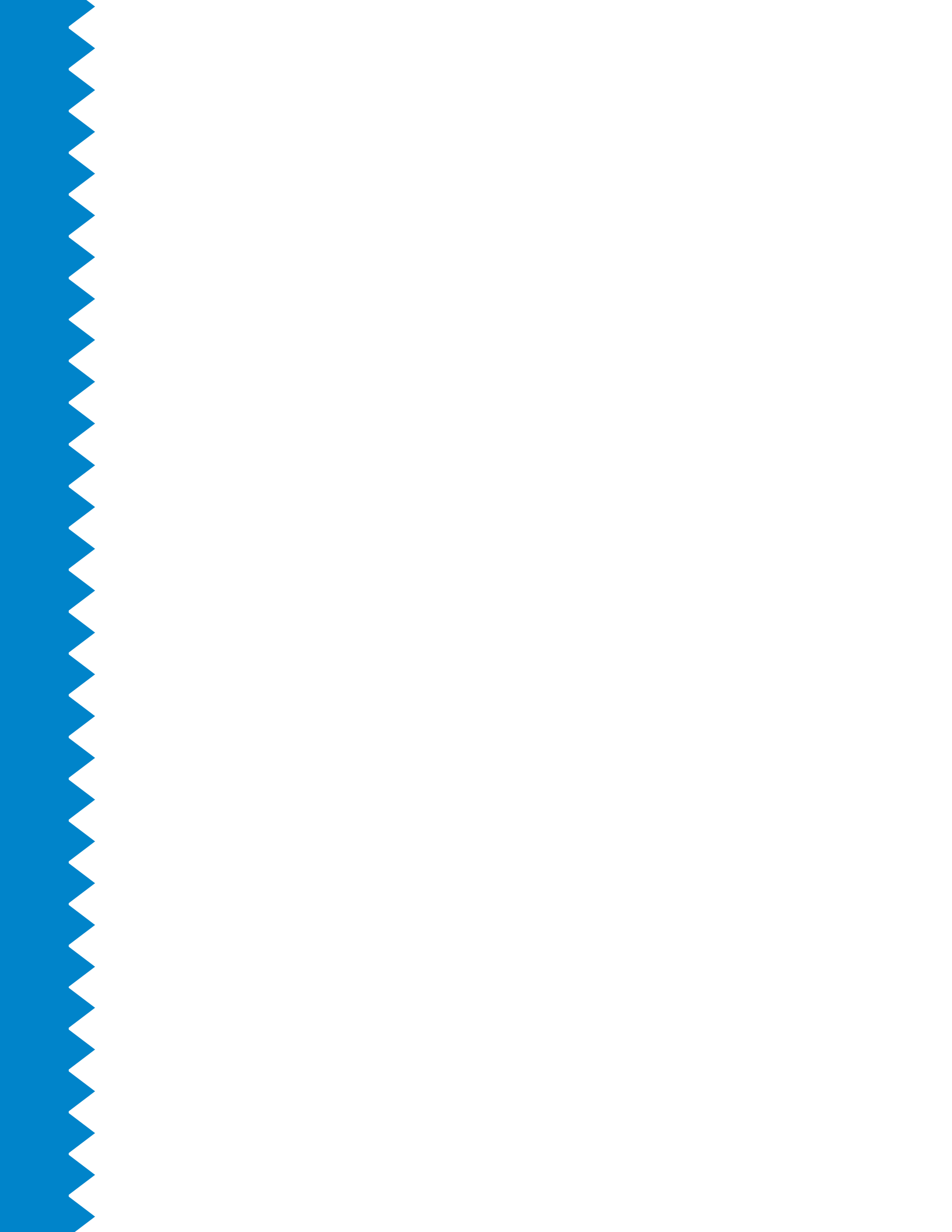
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# Connecticut Libraries

Access to Information for All

## 2025 LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING





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# Connecticut Libraries

BY THE NUMBERS

**240** Public library buildings,  
branches and bookmobiles

Certified School Library Media  
Specialists and Paraprofessionals  
working in Connecticut Public Schools.

**1,075**

**3,788**

Librarians and paraprofessionals  
working in Connecticut Public  
Libraries.

Average percent of municipal  
revenues spent on public library  
services across Connecticut.

**1.18%**

**762**

Students per certified library  
media specialists in Connecticut.

# Connecticut Libraries

## ABOUT

Connecticut has over 1,000 public, school, higher education and special libraries. Although all of them lend books, each one serves its unique community in different ways.

**Public libraries** provide a wide range of services to the community, including access to books, e-books, audiobooks, and other educational materials. They provide free access to computers, internet, and digital resources for research, learning, and job-seeking. Many libraries also host educational programs, workshops, and events for all ages, such as reading groups, computer classes, and storytime for children. Additionally, libraries offer services like book borrowing, interlibrary loans, and research assistance, fostering a welcoming space for learning, creativity, and community engagement.

**School libraries** should be staffed by a certified library media specialist but many in Connecticut are not. They provide essential resources and services to support students' learning and academic growth. They offer access to a wide variety of books, digital resources, and educational materials that complement the curriculum. Certified library media specialists assist students with research, information literacy, and organizing resources for assignments. Additionally, school libraries frequently host reading programs, book clubs, and events to encourage a love of reading and lifelong learning among students.

**Academic, or higher education, libraries** offer a wide array of services designed to support the research, learning, and teaching needs of students, faculty, and staff. They provide access to a vast collection of scholarly books, journals, databases, and electronic resources, including specialized research tools and academic publications. Librarians may teach classes on information literacy and assist with advanced research, citation management, and information literacy. They may also offer consultations to help users navigate complex research topics. Additionally, academic libraries facilitate interlibrary loans, access to archives, and scholarly resources to enhance academic success.

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**Whatever the cost of libraries, the cost is cheap  
compared to that of an ignorant nation.**  
— Walter Cronkite

————— ” —————

# Restoring State Funds for Libraries

## ABOUT

According to the most recent report by the Federal Institute of Museum and Library Service, Connecticut is 32nd in the nation in direct state aid to public libraries. In FY 2024, Connecticut appropriated just over \$928,000 in aid to public libraries. In comparison, Rhode Island appropriated over \$8.7M, Massachusetts appropriated \$13M and New York appropriated \$45M to their respective public libraries.

Direct aid to public libraries flows through two budget line items in the Connecticut State Library's budget: **17003 Grants to Public Libraries** and **17010 Connecticard Payments**. Grants to Public Libraries was appropriated \$225,000 and Connecticard Payments was appropriated \$703,000 in the last fiscal year. These funds are distributed by the State Library to public libraries across the state according to statutory formulas.

Connecticut appropriates additional funds to the State Library in indirect aid to public libraries. This includes several line items that establish and encourage resource sharing. Through the **Statewide Digital Library (12061)**, the State Library provides cost-effective digital access for school, higher education and public libraries to research and reading materials and connects all of our public libraries through a shared catalog. **Interlibrary Loan Delivery (12104)** ensures that no matter what town in Connecticut a resident lives in, they have access to the full depth and breadth of our state-wide print collections. The **Cooperating Library Service Unit (16022)** coordinates bulk purchasing and procurement ensuring that libraries band together to negotiate the very best prices. State Library staff through the **Personal Services (10010)** provide public, higher education and school libraries with consulting, professional development and support.

State funding for libraries in Connecticut has been cut or stagnant for the last 16 years. This lack of funding has effected the quality of services in libraries throughout the state, whether urban, suburban or rural. This impacts all state residents.

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I have found the most valuable thing in my wallet is my library card. –Laura Bush

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# Restoring State Aid

## GRANTS TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**LINE ITEM NUMBER AND NAME:** 17003 - GRANTS TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES  
**FY 2025 ACTUAL:** \$225,000  
**FY 2026 PROPOSAL:** \$3,225,000  
**PROPOSED INCREASE:** \$3,000,000

The Grants to Public Libraries line item (17003) in the Connecticut State Library budget supplements local library funding and helps community libraries improve local services.

This line item was zeroed out in the 2016 State Budget. It was restored in 2023 with the passage of Senate Bill 2 and appropriated \$225,000. This amounts to \$1,433 in State Aid to each qualifying public library or \$0.06 per Connecticut resident. This is significantly lower than neighboring states. In New York, direct state aid to public libraries is \$0.94 cents per capita, in Massachusetts it is \$2.86 per capita, and in Rhode Island, it is \$10.82 per capita.

Connecticut libraries propose increasing this funding to \$3,225,000 or \$.89 per Connecticut resident. This influx of funding would have an immediate and dramatic effect on library service throughout the State of Connecticut.

The formula established in CGS 11-24b provides a base grant to all libraries in the State and provides additional support to help offset differences in community wealth and provide municipal incentives for strong local support. All Connecticut communities would receive additional support for their libraries under the proposed increase.

With increased funding, libraries can expand access to books, digital resources, educational programs, and technology, ensuring equitable opportunities for learning and personal growth. Enhanced funding would allow libraries to hire more staff, upgrade facilities, and offer innovative services, ultimately strengthening communities, supporting lifelong learning, and fostering economic and social development.

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**Without libraries what have we? We have no  
past and no future. – Ray Bradbury**

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# Restoring State Aid

## RESOURCE SHARING

**LINE ITEM NUMBER AND NAME:** 12061 - STATE WIDE DIGITAL LIBRARY  
**FY 2025 BUDGET:** \$1,709,210  
**FY 2026 PROPOSAL:** \$3,209,210  
**PROPOSED INCREASE:** \$1,500,000

**LINE ITEM NUMBER AND NAME:** 12104 - INTER LIBRARY LOAN DELIVERY  
**FY 2025 BUDGET:** \$365,209  
**FY 2026 PROPOSAL:** \$865,205  
**PROPOSED INCREASE:** \$500,000

**LINE ITEM NUMBER AND NAME:** 16022 - COOPERATING LIBRARY SERVICE UNIT  
**FY 2025 BUDGET:** \$124,402  
**FY 2026 PROPOSAL:** \$324,402  
**PROPOSED INCREASE:** \$200,000

Over the last several decades, new information technologies and electronic resources have outstripped the technical and financial capacities of most individual libraries.

During this period, libraries have, under the leadership of the State Library, responded by the implementation of shared computer systems and shared online resources as a means of allowing all libraries, whether large or small or rich or poor – and all the people of Connecticut – access to a broad range of “state of the art” library services.

The **Statewide Digital Library** line item provides funding for a shared statewide digital library which includes a broad range of e-books, online resources, and databases. These resources are available to all libraries and all residents. The provision of these resources on a statewide level offsets the the financial burden on each municipality to individually fund these resources.

The **Statewide Digital Library** line item also funds the Statewide Catalog. Funds for this catalog were cut in 2015. Since then the State has relied on a system that does not have the capacity to serve every library and every resident, leaving some libraries holdings out of the catalog entirely. The purpose of a robust statewide catalog is to ensure the equitable sharing of print resources. This feat is not accomplished with current state funding.



# Restoring State Aid

## RESOURCE SHARING CONT.

Ensuring equitable access to print resources goes beyond proffering an effective statewide catalog. It also requires a reliable system to deliver materials to libraries throughout the State. While the State's DeliverIt system provides services within its current funding constraints, the service is a fraction of what it was before the severe funding cut to the **InterLibrary Loan Delivery line item** in 2016.

In the eight years following the budget reduction, the automated library consortia implemented delivery programs to provide supplemental transit services to their member libraries. However, this did not come without significant costs to municipalities throughout the State whose funding is integral to these supplemental transit services. Increased support from the State would alleviate the financial pressure placed on the municipalities, would expand the reach of the delivery services, and would safeguard the program ensuring its long-term sustainability.

The **Cooperating Library Service Unit** was established by State Statute 11-9e in 1975 as a multi-type library consortium to provide coordinated planning, resource sharing, and projects too big for one library to accomplish on their own. The CLSU's legal operating name is the Connecticut Library Consortium (CLC) and is currently funded at \$124,402, down from \$600,000 in 2002 and \$350,000 in 2012.

The CLSU is the primary provider of publicly bid discount contracts for libraries, including school libraries, across the State. These contracts saved Connecticut libraries and schools just over \$8 million this past year. The CLSU also provides professional development, free and reduced cost consulting services for libraries, human resources assistance, a program directory, and job listing service. The ability of the CLSU to provide effective resource sharing and cost savings have been severely curtailed given the reduction in State funding.

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A library outranks any other one thing a  
community can do to benefit its people.  
— Andrew Carnegie

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# Restoring State Aid

## STATE LIBRARY STAFFING

**LINE ITEM NUMBER AND NAME:** 10010 - PERSONAL SERVICES

**FY 2025 BUDGET:** \$5,884,263

**FY 2026 PROPOSAL:** \$6,384,263

**PROPOSED INCREASE:** \$500,000

As the state's public libraries have been effected by a lack of direct state funding in the form of grants (Sec. 11-24b), the State Library agency has also been effected by the lack of state support for statewide services for all library types.

Over time, the State Library has been forced to utilize federal funds to support functions mandated under state statutes. Examples include administering statutory programs such as data collection for the annual report, BorrowIT (Connecticard), and the statewide digital library (eBooks, databases, and statewide catalog), as well as administering construction, automation, and connectivity grants.

The State Librarian, via the Division of Library Development (DLD), is also obligated to advise and assist libraries in the organization, establishment and administration of free public libraries (CGS Sec.11-23). In this capacity, DLD is a national leader in Digital Equity, diverse and equitable Children's Services, and Professional Development. Their work with TFSX (formerly Kedge: The Futures School) has helped libraries transform traditional strategic planning.

The proposed increase would address this imbalance, which has grown over time. Federal funds would be used to further enhance services to libraries across the State.

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Perhaps no place in any community is so totally democratic as the town library. The only entrance requirement is interest.

– Lady Bird Johnson.

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# Freedom to Read

## ENSURING NON-DISCRIMINATION IN SCHOOL LIBRARIES

In the 2024 legislative session, Connecticut Librarians worked with State Representatives Currey and McCarty to enact legislation (An Act Concerning Public School Libraries, HB 5417) that would require boards of education to have a school library book reconsideration policy and to follow that policy in the case of a challenge by a parent, guardian or student to the inclusion of a book in the school library.

Further, the legislation prescribed that if a school board removed a book from a school library collection that they must state a reason and that a book could not be removed from a school library for partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

There is currently no federal or state law about the removal or restriction of library materials. In the 1982 Supreme Court case *Pico vs. Island Trees*, the court affirmed that Boards of Education cannot remove a book from the school library simply because they do not like the ideas expressed in that book. *Pico*, however, is not a binding legal precedent.

Connecticut already has a robust non-discrimination statute (Chapter 164, Section 10-15c) that provides students equal opportunity to participate in the activities, programs and courses of study offered in such public schools and prohibiting discrimination on account of race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability.

Through this legislation, Connecticut is afforded the opportunity to expand our commitment to non-discrimination in our school libraries and put in law that books cannot be removed from their shelves because of these protected classes. At the same time, this legislation will ensure that parents, guardians or students who object to the inclusion of a book in the school library have a clear process to express that objection.

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**At the moment that we persuade a child, any child, to cross that threshold, that magic threshold into a library, we change their lives forever, for the better. -Barack Obama**

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# eBook Licensing

## ENSURING EQUITABLE CONTRACT TERMS FOR LIBRARIES AND TAX PAYERS

Since the 2022 legislative session, Connecticut Librarians have worked with State Senator Hwang and State Representatives Blumenthal and Kavros DeGraw to enact legislation to reform to the library electronic book licensing marketplace. In 2024, HB 5312 An Act Making Certain Terms in Electronic Book and Digital Audiobook License Agreements or Contracts Unenforceable made it to the floor of the House.

Publishers often charge libraries six to ten times what a consumer pays for the same eBook with more restrictive licenses. Last year, Connecticut public libraries spent over 6.5 million tax dollars on electronic resources including ebooks and digital audiobooks. By 2027, most of the content that our libraries have licensed will be gone and will need to be repurchased to retain access.

Libraries have doubled what they spend on eBooks and yet residents face wait times as long as six months. Libraries can't afford to keep pace with demand.

For many people eBooks and digital audiobooks aren't just a preference, they're a necessity. Students with dyslexia and visual impairments depend on digital audiobooks. For people with disabilities, eBooks keep them reading. For those with mobility issues or who are homebound, eContent keeps them connected to the world.

Connecticut libraries propose the adoption of a state law to regulate library eBook contract pricing and terms, thereby enabling Connecticut libraries to offer more digital content in return for residents' tax dollars. The bill leans on the State's strong consumer protection law and the power of the state government to regulate the terms of consumer contracts to require publishers to use fair practices when doing business with taxpayer-funded libraries.

Specifically, the bill requires contractual agreements between libraries and publishers to contain equitable licensing terms for the acquisition of ebooks and downloadable audiobooks. It would require that electronic books to have the same utility in digital form as print or physical forms. Finally, the bill prohibits non-disclosure agreements and any term that would require libraries to violate the confidentiality of patron library records according to State Statute.

# Connecticut Libraries

## BOOKMARK IT

The legislature can make meaningful and positive changes for people across Connecticut by supporting Connecticut Libraries.



**Restore State Aid to Libraries across Connecticut** by increasing funds to crucial line items within the State Library budget. Increase Grants to Public Libraries by \$3M, Statewide Digital Library by \$1.5M, Interlibrary Loan Delivery by \$500K, Cooperating Library Service Units by \$200K and Personal Services by \$500K.



Pass legislation to **protect students' freedom to read** and ensure non-discrimination in our school libraries.



Pass legislation to **rein in the out of control cost to license electronic books** and digital audiobooks to libraries.

Set up a visit to your local library to learn more about these issues or contact us below.

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The very existence of  
libraries affords the best  
evidence that we may yet  
have hope for the future  
of man. - T.S. Eliot

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