



## Connecticut Library Association 2021 Legislative Agenda

**This year our message is simple. The time for cuts at the Connecticut State Library is over.**

### Federal Maintenance of Effort (MOE)

After more than a decade of cuts, any cut to the State library budget is now also a cut to Federal dollars. The proposed cuts totaling \$200,000 will lead to an additional \$97,000 cut in Federal IMLS funds. A \$297,000 cut will damage vital programs and services of the State Library.

The Connecticut State Library receives Federal money from the Institute of Museum & Library Services. The Governor's proposed cuts to the State Library would trigger the Federal Maintenance of Effort (MOE) statute, leading to a loss of \$97,000 in Federal funds for Connecticut. This additional cut would force the State Library to find additional savings, further eroding the State Library's ability to meet the needs of Connecticut's citizens.

- Cuts to the Connecticut State Library are cuts to Federal dollars.

### borrowIT CT (formerly C-CARD)

Governor Lamont cuts this Connecticut State Library budget line 15% with a \$100,000 cut. The borrowIT CT program, created in 1976, is enormously popular and enables ALL Connecticut residents to freely borrow materials from other libraries at no extra cost. This program supports equity and regionalization and saves money for communities. At an estimated value of \$52,000,000 for the borrowed materials and a cost of \$700,000, borrowIT CT has tremendous return on investment for the state. The program has long been underfunded, now providing only \$0.20 per item loaned, although the estimated cost to libraries to lend is \$1.05 per item. Once funded at over \$1 million, the program has been whittled to 57% of the 2008 appropriation. Reducing funding decreases incentives for towns to participate, leading communities to pull up drawbridges to non-residents.

Connecticut residents continued to make use of the program once most public libraries re-opened in the summer of 2020. With 37% of the state's public libraries still physically closed to residents, Connecticut's citizens are visiting other libraries to check out materials, use public computers, and to study. Due to COVID closures and limited services at other libraries, many public libraries are undertaking more use by non-residents than ever before. For example, Manchester has seen a six percent increase in loans to non-resident borrowers since reopening in June 2020.

- Restore \$100,000 to Connecticut's borrowIT CT program.

### Connecticut State Library

The Connecticut State Library has lost 31% of its funding over the past decade as cuts and accumulating rescissions have cut away at the staff and services of the agency. Those cuts undermine services and resources for the public and students from Kindergarten to graduate school. Rescissions seem like the painless way to reduce the budget, but over time, their damage is real and lasting. Libraries of all kinds will either take on additional, unanticipated costs or reduce or eliminate services. For public libraries, schools, and higher education this amounts to a second tax.

- Cuts at the State level are false savings leading to higher costs/reduced services locally.

**Questions?** Contact CLA Legislative Committee co-chairs Beth Crowley [bcrowley@cheshirelibrary.org](mailto:bcrowley@cheshirelibrary.org) or Kate Byroade [kbyroade@colchesterct.gov](mailto:kbyroade@colchesterct.gov)