

LBPH Budget Comparison

SB35 proposes numerous changes to the funding and operations of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH).

Analysis: The existing federal-state partnership that funds and operates LBPH is a robust service, one that it would be impossible for Connecticut to replicate on its own. Further, significant state investment in the establishment of a stand-alone library or the expansion of a book/audio collection at the state or local library level is an unnecessary change which would only fracture the existing service.

Proposal: The State Library renews its request that the legislature extend the scope of the proposed one-time allocation of \$100,000 for Braille materials to include programming, training, outreach, and community building initiatives. This modest investment will reap large rewards and support the State Library's intention to expand LBPH beyond its historically transactional service model.

The Current LBPH Model

LBPH is a long-standing federal-state partnership. **Connecticut contributes less than \$500,000 per year** in staff salaries/benefits. **The federal government contributes more than \$150million per year** in direct and in-kind support. Thanks to this partnership, LBPH patrons have access, for free, to a continually updated collection of nearly 300,000 books, magazines, music scores, and other items in both English and other languages.

A Standalone/Supplementary Model

Currently, our federal partner selects the books, magazines, and other materials for loan; maintains the catalog and access systems; and provides the equipment, hardware, and software necessary for both patrons and staff. **Connecticut would not be able to use any of these resources in a standalone/supplementary model and would have to fully fund the staff, collection, equipment, and other resources necessary.**

Estimated Stand Up/Annual Expenses for Connecticut-Only Model

Integrated Library System to manage materials	\$345,000 - \$1.2million
New books/audiobooks, including processing, cataloging, maintenance expenses	\$1.2-2.3million (approximately 23,000 items)
Staff to maintain collection and ILS	\$300,000 - \$459,000
Staff to provide specialized tech support	\$265,000
Postage for USPS media bulk rate	\$50,000+
Location to house staff and collection	\$365,000
Development of CT-only Talking Books Catalog	\$35,000+
Playback machines for users	\$500,000 - \$1million

While \$3-6million may seem a modest investment in the larger context of the state's budget, it's vital to remember:

- These costs **duplicate** what Connecticut already receives, for free, from its federal partnership.
- Connecticut would, in effect, **create two separate libraries** that patrons would have to navigate between, causing confusion and distress for the very patrons we are trying to serve. Both the State Library and our federal partner are deeply concerned about this possibility.