

**Appropriations Committee Testimony
State Librarian Deborah Schander
Connecticut State Library
February 23, 2023**

Good morning Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Deborah Schander, Connecticut's State Librarian.

First, allow me to thank the Governor and OPM for proposing an increase to the State Library's State-Wide Digital Library appropriation in HB-6659, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2025 AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR. The agency fully supports this proposal and the policies behind it. With this increase, the State Library would be able to meet contract renewal rates and maintain its existing collection and services.

The State Library's overall budget has been reduced by 32% since 2009. Without the proposed increase (\$99,916 in FY24 and \$134,036 in FY25), the State Library will not be able to meet contractual increases to the resources we provide via researchIT CT. Due to past budget cuts, we have already trimmed resources and negotiated lower costs to the extent possible, but we now have an opportunity to halt that backward slide. With this increase, we can maintain our existing services.

Our current appropriation to support the State-Wide Digital Library is \$1,575,174. From a cost-benefit perspective, if each library provided these resources individually, the cost would be \$41,480,364 per year.

The State-Wide Digital Library is an exemplar of resource sharing and equitable access to information. This appropriation funds five key aspects of our work on behalf of Connecticut's many public, special, and academic libraries:

1. eGo CT, **our state-wide library eBook platform**, currently offers more than 23,000 items for free to public libraries and schools. eGo CT supports school curricula, summer reading programs, the Kid Governor program, and the All CT Reads program.
2. findIT CT, **our state-wide library catalog**, currently, 332 libraries across the state contribute information about their collections to findIT CT and provides library users with a central place to find the materials they want to borrow.
3. fullfiLLment is **the back end, open-source software** we developed to facilitate borrowing requests between Connecticut libraries.
4. reQuestIT CT is **our state-wide Interlibrary Loan service**. In FY22, 12,212 items were shared with library users thanks to findIT CT, fullfiLLment, and requestIT CT.

5. researchIT CT is a **core suite of library and information resources** provided to all students, faculty, and residents of Connecticut for free.

Let me go into a little more detail about researchIT CT, as it is the tool most directly impacted by this proposed increase. researchIT CT provides equitable access to a core level of information resources to all Connecticut residents through their schools, colleges, and public libraries or online from any location **regardless of financial status or community wealth**.

In addition, there is a direct correlation between the number of resources we can afford to offer through researchIT CT and savings to municipalities statewide. 14% of public libraries rely exclusively on researchIT CT to provide licensed databases to their communities. 18% of public libraries provide only 1-3 licensed databases in addition to researchIT CT. 32% of libraries rely either exclusively or heavily on researchIT CT to provide licensed databases to their communities. This modest increase means a win for the state and municipalities alike.

Maintaining is one thing. Improving is even better. What could we do with a larger increase to this appropriation?

1. eGo CT - Currently, CSL only purchases backlist eBooks and eAudiobooks for the statewide platform. Additional funding for eBooks would allow for **a more robust collection accessible through all public libraries**. Sustained funding is critical to maintaining current collections for all users.
2. eGO CT Community Share Program to Connecticut schools - This program allows the State Library to deliver eBook and eAudio content, including Summer Reading and All CT Reads titles from eGO CT, directly to schools in Connecticut. To date, we have 101 sites that are active in the program. Additional funding will allow us to **expand this program to all CT schools**.
3. reQuest IT - Additional funds would allow the State Library and our partner Bibliomation to continue to **update, develop, and implement enhanced interlibrary loan services**, particularly to standalone libraries across the state.
4. researchIT CT – The State Library has had multiple requests to acquire specialized online resources/databases to support the school curriculum and public library patron needs, especially in the area of **workforce development, lifelong learning, and DIY resources**, which are currently outside our budget.

And the State Library is so much more than this one appropriation. We house the State Archives and Public Records Center, and we are the principal law library of Connecticut, charged with preserving the laws and legal documents of our state; we are relied upon to keep and provide these materials because other agencies, municipalities, and libraries themselves cannot. We dispense funding to public libraries for much-needed construction projects and

popular, mandated resource-sharing efforts that link our rural and urban libraries together. Over the past four years, the Governor has called for investment in education, equity, workforce development, technology, and infrastructure. These are also our priorities. But funding for these programs has remained level for many years. Investing in the State Library is investing in Connecticut.

Thank you for the opportunity to come before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Attachments: Testimonials, charts, and information about researchIT CT.



Testimonials

Cheryl Robertson, Adams Middle School, Guilford

"As a middle school library media specialist, I find the services provided by the Connecticut State Library invaluable. Our students use researchIT CT on a near daily basis. This database rivals the best databases money can buy, and our students and teachers truly rely on it. It is an indispensable resource for districts that cannot afford to purchase other databases! This year, we also are benefitting from the eGO CT collection. Because of this incredible program, our students now have access to countless more ebooks and audiobooks that I would not have had the money to purchase. Further, when I need books that I cannot purchase, the CT State Library adds them to the eGO collection on our behalf. We've also benefited from the [inter]library loan program, and I've taken professional development courses through [the] Middletown [Library Service Center]. Districts rely on these services, and budgets are tight everywhere. The CT State Library gives us the ability to improve learning for ALL of our students and faculty. It is an essential resource that should continue to be funded generously. The CT State Library helps every resident in the state. What a gift!"

Sunnie Scarpa, E.C. Scranton Memorial Library, Madison

"As a Library Director for a small/mid-sized town in CT, I can see firsthand how valuable the Connecticut Digital Library resources are to members of our community. Access to these databases and digital tools; including researchIT CT, findIT, and especially the fulfillment platform for requestIT, has been critical as we all rely more on our digital assets to find the information our patrons rely on. The budget for these items must keep pace with inflation, so that all CT residents can continue to benefit from them."

Jo-Ann LoRusso, Middlebury Public Library, Middlebury

"Having free access to researchIT CT online resources ensures that the Middlebury community has equitable access to information resources which a limited library budget prohibits. The Middlebury Public Library could not afford to provide these resources to our community without spending a considerable amount of money. The time and resources that go into negotiating licensing fees, setting up public access to the resources, and training staff and patrons on using these resources is not feasible for our size library and budget. This is the reason Middlebury Public Library relies on researchIT CT for these resources."



2022 Program Report Card: researchIT CT – Connecticut's Re-search Engine (CT State Library)

Quality of Life Result: All Connecticut residents are lifelong learners.

Contribution to the Result: researchIT CT provides equitable access to a core level of information resources to all Connecticut residents through their schools, colleges, and public libraries or online from any location regardless of financial status or community wealth.

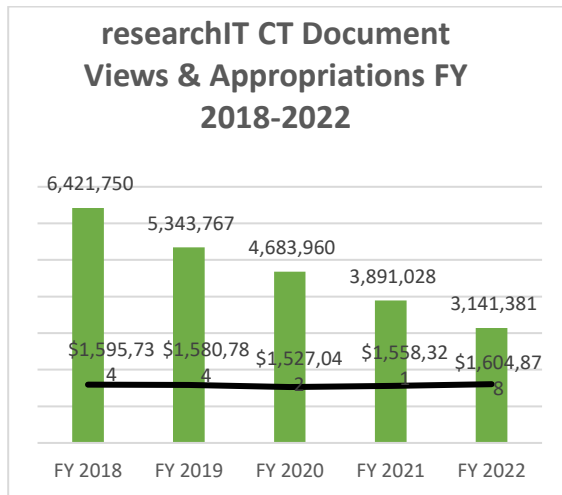
Program Expenditures	State Funding	Federal Funding	Other Funding	Total Funding
Actual SFY 21	\$1,575,174	\$81,000		\$1,656,174
SFY 22	\$1,575,174	\$206,500		\$1,781,674

Cost Benefit
\$41,876,839
\$41,480,364

Partners: Board of Regents, Dept. of Education, Commission for Educational Technology, schools, public libraries, academic institutions, parents and students. A representative of each partner holds a position on the Connecticut Digital Library Advisory Board. Other partners include the CT Association of School Libraries, CT Educators Computer Association; CT Library Association; CT Education Association; CT Library Consortium; and the CT Department of Labor (CTWorks).

How Much Did We Do?

Connecticut Uses researchIT CT



Story behind the usage baseline:

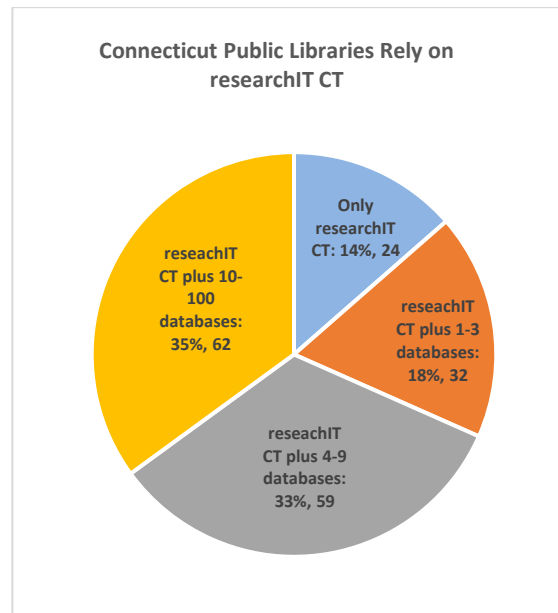
Document views show the level of demand for researchIT CT by measuring the number of times users actually open documents that are relevant to their searches. **To address past budget limitations, we have trimmed resources and negotiated lower costs. Any further cuts will severely compromise our ability to offer core researchIT CT databases.**

Usage decreased between FY2018 and FY2022 because budget shortfalls forced the removal of HeritageQuest in FY2020 and PsycInfo in FY2022. These two database accounted for a total of 898,633 views.

Use Trend: ▼

How Well Did We Do It?

researchIT CT provides equitable access to quality information to all public libraries



Story behind the baseline:

14% of public libraries rely exclusively on researchIT CT to provide licensed databases to their communities. 18% of public libraries provide only 1-3 licensed databases in addition to researchIT CT. **32% of libraries rely either exclusively or heavily on researchIT CT to provide licensed databases to their communities.**

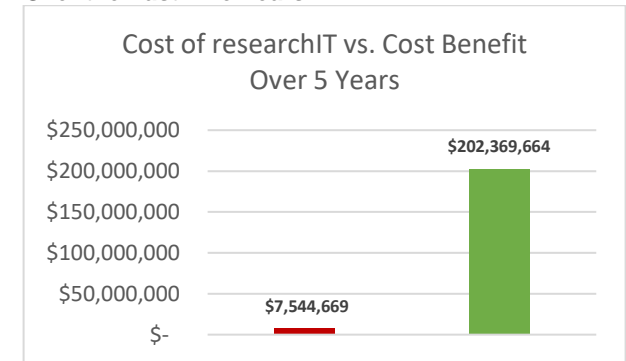
Trend: ◀▶

researchIT CT as "Very Important Service"

Trend: ▲

Is Anyone Better Off?

researchIT CT Saved Municipalities \$200 Million Over the Past Five Years



Story behind the baseline:

\$200 million is the cost savings to local communities of providing heavily discounted, essential licensed databases at the state level over five years. Further, researchIT CT saves considerable library staff time that would otherwise be spent negotiating license fees, issuing purchase orders, setting up public access to the resources on library websites, troubleshooting access issues as they arise, training both staff and the public on using the resources, and promoting the resources. Lastly, for the many libraries that rely exclusively on researchIT CT for these resources, it ensures that their communities will have equitable access to information resources that they would otherwise be forced to do without. **There is a direct correlation between the number of resources we can afford to offer and savings to municipalities statewide.**

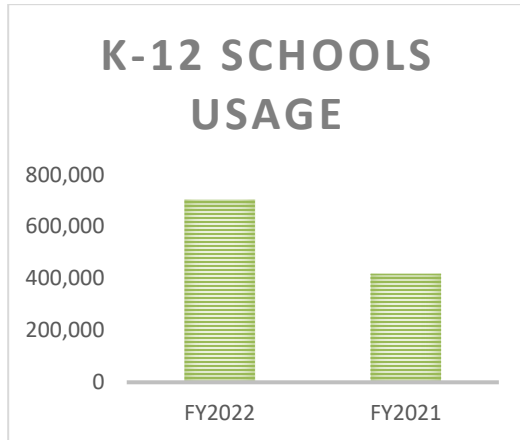
Cost Benefit Trend: ◀▶

2022 Program Report Card: researchIT CT – Connecticut’s Re-search Engine (CT State Library)

Quality of Life Result: All Connecticut residents are lifelong learners.

Are we reaching K-12 schools?

Usage by schools went up by 284,323 views – a 68% increase! Access to researchIT CT resources provides educators and students with the resources they need to succeed!



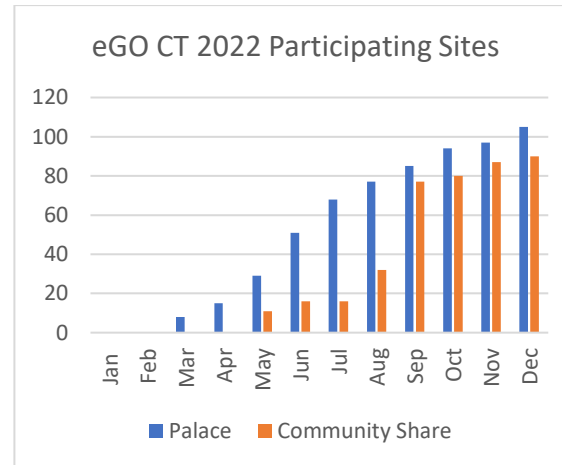
Story behind the baseline:

researchIT CT is fulfilling its intent to provide users with higher quality, more trustworthy information than would be possible using web search engines. Users want relevant, easily accessible information they can trust, not millions of search results from the open Web. The way we promote usage is through access. During the pandemic, an alternate means of access for remote use was implemented to ensure students had access to researchIT resources while pursuing their studies at home. We will continue to work with vendors to improve the means of access to our database resources

Trend: ▲

Rev. 5 (12/15/12)

The eGO CT ebook program is growing and serving both public and school libraries.



Story behind the baseline:

We launched the Palace Project for public libraries and the eGO CT Community Share program for K-12 schools in 2022. **There are 105 public libraries and 90 school sites participating in the eGO CT program.** Of the 191 public libraries in Connecticut, 168 are configured in the Palace app. There are 170 school sites that use Destiny catalog and are eligible to participate in the eGO CT Community Share program for schools. The Connecticut State Library collection offers over 15,000 items for free to public libraries and schools. eGO CT supports the school curriculum, summer reading, the Kid Governor program, and the All CT Reads program.

Trend: ▲

Trend Going in Right Direction? ▲ Yes; ▼ No; ◀▶ Flat/ No Trend

Proposed Actions Maintain Momentum:

The cost benefit analysis above is hypothetical as it posits that each of the libraries and municipalities that currently have access to researchIT CT could afford to provide a comparable service for their own patrons if the state service were to be discontinued. In fact, a substantial number of libraries could *not* afford an added cost of this magnitude. As a result, if researchIT CT as it exists today were to disappear, libraries would experience either significantly higher costs, or vastly diminished service, or a combination of both. In turn, because we know that this result would not manifest uniformly across all municipalities, the “equity of information access” that researchIT CT currently provides all residents would end.

1. We will continue to connect our ebook resources with K-12 Destiny catalogs. To support schools, titles that are in line with the school curriculum and that promote lifelong reading will be added to the Connecticut State Library ebook collection.
2. We will pursue resources that support workforce development such as our current subscription to Workforce Solutions. This resource assist patrons of all ages with the development of job skills and provides a robust platform to assist with their job search.

Find your dream career.
Prep for certification exams.
Apply for open positions.

Land your dream job.



LearningExpress *Workforce Solutions* (featuring *Job & Career Accelerator*) contains hundreds of resources — such as tutorials, practice tests, e-books, articles and flashcards — to help you achieve your professional goals.

Computer Skills Center

Learn the basics of using a computer, navigating the internet, and using popular Microsoft Office software programs such as Access, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint and Word.

High School Equivalency Center

Build your reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary and math skills; prepare for the GED®, HiSET® and TASC® tests.

Job & Career Accelerator

Explore potential careers (including military service), find a career match, search for jobs and internships, build resumes and cover letters, and prepare for job interviews.

Occupational Test Prep

Study for the ASVAB test (military), WorkKeys® Assessments, the TOEIC® test, and dozens of career licensure exams in allied health, nursing, civil service, law enforcement, education and the trades.

Recursos Para Hispanohablantes

Find Spanish-language resources to help you improve your academic skills and prepare for the GED® test.

Workplace Success Skills

Learn how to manage your time, improve communication skills, become a better team member, increase your financial literacy, master social media and more.

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Get to know your library's EBSCO resources!

The Connecticut State Library provides college and university students with free access to reliable information resources from EBSCO. These resources come in a variety of formats — magazines, newspapers, encyclopedias, reference books, primary source documents and multimedia — and cover a vast array of subject areas from art, literature and social studies to math, science and technology.



Research Databases

Academic Search Premier is a multidisciplinary database containing thousands of full-text articles from popular magazines and scholarly journals as well as video content from the Associated Press, the world's leading news agency.

Biography Reference Bank offers in-depth profiles from *Current Biography* and *World Authors*, periodical coverage of *Biography Index* and specialist content of *Junior Authors & Illustrators*.

CINAHL with Full Text is a nursing and allied health database containing publications from the National League for Nursing and the American Nurses' Association. It covers nursing, biomedicine, consumer health and 17 allied health disciplines.

ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) provides access to educational literature via more than 1.6 million records, links to hundreds of thousands of full-text documents, and an education-specific thesaurus.

GreenFILE is a collection of scholarly, government and general-interest content covering the human impact to the environment. Topics include global warming, pollution, sustainable agriculture, renewable energy and more.

Health Source: Consumer Edition provides access to full-text consumer health magazines and reference books. It also includes searchable full text for current health pamphlets.

History Reference Center covers a wide variety of U.S. and World History topics and contains thousands of historical documents, biographies, reference materials, photos, maps and videos.



Key Benefits

- Simple, mobile-friendly search interfaces that quickly deliver relevant results
- 60,000 videos from the Associated Press, the world's leading news agency
- Research Starters providing helpful background information on popular research topics
- Google Drive integration for easy saving and sharing of content
- Text-to-speech for HTML articles to assist struggling readers, auditory learners and students developing English language proficiency
- Full-text translation in more than 30 languages for HTML articles
- Ability to view, save, print and email citations in many formats, including MLA and APA, as well as direct export to EasyBib, EndNote, RefWorks and other bibliographic management platforms

MagillOnLiterature Plus contains biographical essays of the 2,500 most-studied authors. It is the definitive source for editorially reviewed critical analyses, character studies, author biographies and plot summaries of the most studied literary works.

MasterFILE Premier provides full-text magazines, periodicals, reference books and primary source documents covering a wide range of subject areas.

Legal Information Reference Center offers tools and detailed how-to instructions covering a wide range of legal issues. It includes full text for many top consumer legal reference books, including Nolo's do-it-yourself guides, as well as thousands of legal forms.

Newspaper Source Plus provides a full-text digital collection of the world's major news content. It includes millions of articles from newspapers, newswires and news magazines as well as television and radio transcripts.

Professional Development Collection is a highly specialized database for educators, professional librarians and education researchers. Journals include *Education Week*, *Knowledge Quest*, *School Library Journal*, *Educational Leadership* and more.

Referencia Latina contains Spanish-language content covering a broad array of subjects. Content includes reference books, general interest magazines and health reports.

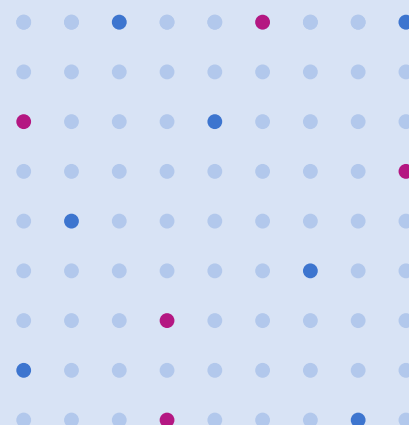
Science Reference Center contains thousands of complete articles on STEM topics ranging from probability and plate tectonics to fossil fuels and forensics. In addition, teachers have easy access to engaging science experiments and lesson plans.

Small Business Reference Center offers exclusive full text for many top consumer small business reference books, including Nolo's do-it-yourself guides. Users will find business videos, a help and advice section, and details on how to create business plans.

Teacher Reference Center provides indexing and abstracts for more than 230 peer-reviewed journals covering assessment, curriculum development, instruction, literacy, educational leadership and more.

Not sure where to start?

OneSearch allows you to search all ResearchIT CT's digital resources using a single search box.



Ask a librarian for more information.



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Find reliable, quality information to help you **succeed in school.**




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-  Newspapers
-  E-Audio and E-Books
-  CT Digital Collections
-  Research Databases

Subjects include:

-  History
-  Literature
-  Science
-  Health

Not sure where to start?

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