

Connecticut Open Educational Resources Coordinating Council

2025 Legislative Report

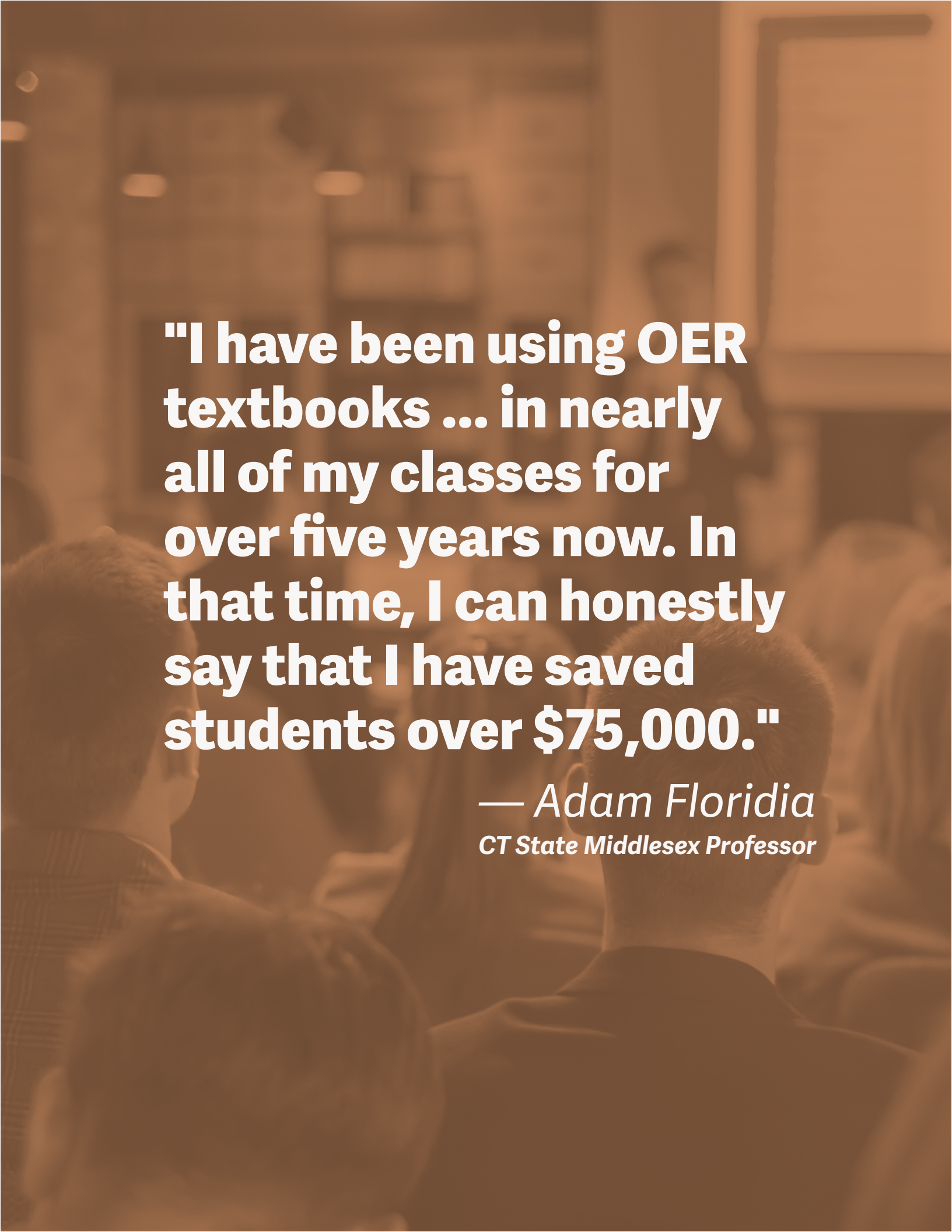
JANUARY 27, 2026





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"I have been using OER textbooks ... in nearly all of my classes for over five years now. In that time, I can honestly say that I have saved students over \$75,000."

*— Adam Florida
CT State Middlesex Professor*

Grant Program Impact



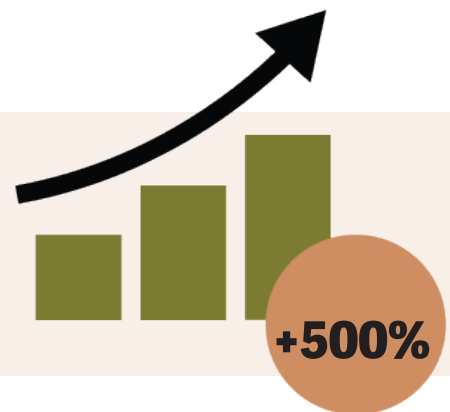
=\$5.23
in benefits to students

Tackling affordability, one textbook at a time.

The CT legislature created the Open Educational Resources Coordinating Council in 2019 to leverage the power of OER to make higher education more open and affordable.

5x Return on Investment

To date, the OER grant program has saved **10,000** Connecticut students nearly **\$1.2 million** in textbook expenses, an ROI of **5.23x** on the state's investment



These numbers would be even higher had the state not eliminated all funding (\$100,000 annually) in FY2024.

While the partial restoration of funding in FY2026 and FY2027 (\$50,000 annually compared to \$100,000 previously) is a positive step, it is insufficient for Connecticut to harness OER's potential.

We can do even more for students with restored funding.

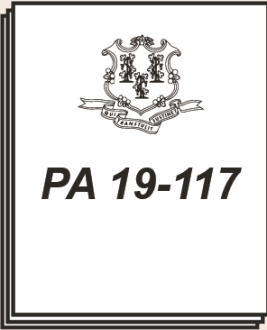
Did you know?

Many states are embracing OER as a strategy to make higher education more affordable. New York, for example, allocates \$8 million annually to support OER at its two public university systems (SUNY and CUNY).

Summary

Open Educational Resources (OER) are freely accessible, openly licensed materials that educators can use, share, and adapt. Recognizing OER's potential to deliver high-quality alternatives to costly textbooks, Connecticut enacted [Public Act 19-117](#), establishing the Connecticut OER Coordinating Council in 2019. This council's volunteer membership (listed on page 24) includes faculty, administrators, librarians, academic support staff, and a student representative from across the state's colleges and universities.

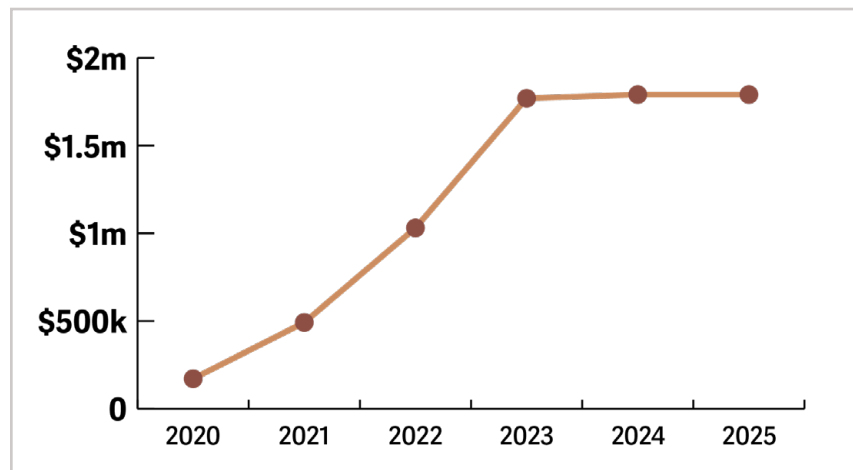
Throughout its history (detailed in its five previous [Legislative Reports](#)), the CT OER Council has worked collaboratively to leverage the power of OER to make higher education more open and affordable. So far the council has saved 10,000 Connecticut students nearly \$1.2 million in textbook expenses, an ROI of 5.23x on the state's investment¹. These figures would be even higher had the state not eliminated all funding (\$100,000 annually) in FY2024. This divestment in OER marked a major setback for the council, which needed to divert attention to raising awareness about the funding loss and its impacts.



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Figure 1: Student savings through the activities of the CT OER Coordinating Council



In the summer of 2025, the council learned that the state has allocated \$50,000 in FY2026 and the same amount in FY2027. While this partial funding restoration allows the council to resume core activities, it is insufficient to meet the needs of the state's students. For Connecticut to realize the potential of OER to save students money and foster their success, the council urges the state to fully restore funding at the previous level of \$100,000 annually.

¹ Based on data that has been directly documented by the council. Actual figures are almost certainly larger, but challenges with data collection (described on page 16) prevent the council from providing a fuller picture.

2025



OPEN EDUCATION IN THE NORTHEAST

Insights and Innovations from a Regional
Perspective (2025 Update)

NEW ENGLAND BOARD
of HIGHER EDUCATION 

Recognition for Our Work

Below are excerpts from the New England Board of Higher Education's [Open Education in the Northeast: Insights and Innovations from a Regional Perspective \(2025 Update\)](#), published in January 2026:

Connecticut offers one of the most comprehensive statewide leadership structures for OER in the Northeast through its statutorily established [OER Coordinating Council](#).

Few states in the region have built a standing, cross-sector leadership body with comparable breadth of expertise and statutory stability.

Connecticut has emerged as a regional leader in sustainable OER policy development through its statewide [Model OER Policy](#), created by legislative mandate and recommended for adoption across all higher education institutions in the state.

Background: Textbook Affordability and the OER Landscape

The benefits of OER are manifold. Research suggests that OER adoption correlates with improved student learning outcomes, increased enrollment and retention rates,² deeper pedagogical engagement,³ and strengthened cultural relevancies of learning materials.⁴

An additional benefit—one that’s foundational to most other benefits—is that OER saves students money: they are a free alternative to costly textbooks and their ancillaries (e.g., lab manuals, interactive modules, homework software, and lecture videos). A survey of officials at regional public colleges across the U.S. found that affordability concerns are among these institutions’ greatest enrollment challenges.⁵ National student surveys underscore this barrier and directly tie it to the costs of textbooks. Indeed, 71 percent of undergraduate students are worried about affording textbooks,⁶ which average between \$1,290 and \$1,520 per year.⁷ To meet these costs, students are taking fewer courses, working extra hours, skipping meals, and attempting to pass courses without the textbook.⁸

The problem is exacerbated by the increasing prevalence of e-textbooks, homework software, testbanks, and other ancillaries that require students to purchase individualized access codes allowing temporary access. Not only do access codes stymie students’ efforts to avoid textbook costs (e.g., by sharing copies, purchasing used copies, and checking out copies on reserve at their libraries) but they also disproportionately impact first-generation students.⁹

OER adoption correlates with:

- *improved student learning outcomes*
- *increased enrollment*
- *increased retention rates*
- *deeper pedagogical engagement*
- *strengthened cultural relevancies of learning materials*

-
- 2 Varma, S. G., & Ren, X. (2023). An initiative to develop OER-based general education courses in higher education. *Open Praxis*, 15(2), 124–133. <http://doi.org/10.55982/openpraxis.15.2.520>
- 3 Werth, E., & Williams, K. (2021). Learning to be open: instructor growth through open pedagogy. *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*, 38(4), 301–314. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680513.2021.1970520>
- 4 Joshi, E., Griffiths, R., & Lawrence, J. (2025). Students' and instructors' experiences with open and culturally responsive instruction: Findings from a state OER program. SRI International. <https://www.sri.com/publication/education-learning-pubs/digital-learning-pubs/students-and-instructors-experiences-with-open-and-culturally-responsive-instruction-findings-from-a-state-oer-program/>
- 5 Vyse, G. (2025). The state of regional public colleges: Reframing value, leading with purpose. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. <https://connect.chronicle.com/rs/931-EKA-218/images/RB-The-State-of-Regional-Public-Colleges.pdf>
- 6 Bay View Analytics. (2023). National survey on student course material affordability. https://www.bayviewanalytics.com/reports/2023_student_course_material_affordability.html
- 7 Ma, J., Pender, M., & Oster, M. (2024). Trends in college pricing and student aid 2024. College Board. <https://research.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/Trends-in-College-Pricing-and-Student-Aid-2024-ADA.pdf>
- 8 Bay View Analytics (2023); Nagle, C., & Vitez, K. (2020). Fixing the broken textbook market: Second edition. U.S. PIRG Education Fund. https://pirg.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Fixing-the-Broken-Textbook-Market_June-2020_v2-5.pdf
- 9 Clinton-Lisell, V., & Kelly, A. E. (2024). The cost of doing homework: Online homework systems with access codes from a social justice perspective. *International Journal of Technology in Education and Science (IJTES)*, 8(2), 296–310. <https://doi.org/10.46328/ijtes.547>

The higher education community is embracing OER as a corrective. Over the past ten years, faculty use of OER has increased from 5 to 33 percent,¹⁰ and the impacts on students' wallets has been profound. For instance, OpenStax (the world's largest publisher of OER) reports that, from 2012 to 2025, their OER have saved students over \$3 billion.¹¹



Recognizing the savings potential, some states are embracing OER as a strategy to make higher education more affordable. New York, for example, allocates \$8 million annually to support OER at its two public university systems (SUNY and CUNY),¹² and Colorado

allocates \$1 million annually.¹³ Other states—ranging from Massachusetts to West Virginia and Texas—are investing in OER as a strategy to lower costs for their states' students.¹⁴

This investment in OER is also reflected in the work of organizations across North America. The [Open Education Association](#) formed in 2025 to strengthen the open education movement nationally. Elsewhere in the U.S., [ISKME](#) created and maintains OER Commons (the repository and discovery platform behind [GoOpenCT](#)), and [SPARC](#) advocates for open education policies at federal and state levels. In the northeast, the New England Board of Higher Education's (NEBHE) [Open Education Advisory Committee](#) (which includes two CT OER Council members) provides a forum for regional collaboration amongst OER leaders, and the [Northeast OER Summit](#) is an annual conference for practitioners. Beyond the U.S., Canada's [Rebus Foundation](#) supports open publishing through professional development and community resources.

¹⁰ Seaman, J. E., & Seaman, J. (2025). Deeply digital: Educational resources in U.S. higher education, 2025. Bay View Analytics. <https://www.bayviewanalytics.com/reports/deeplydigital2025.pdf>

¹¹ Rice University. (2025). OpenStax surpasses \$3B in student savings, grows beyond textbooks. Rice News. <https://news.rice.edu/news/2025/openstax-surpasses-3b-student-savings-grows-beyond-textbooks>

¹² New York State Office of the State Comptroller. (2025, March 27). Open Educational Resources (Audit Report 2024-S-4). <https://www.osc.ny.gov/state-agencies/audits/2025/03/27/open-educational-resources>; SUNY OER Services. (n.d.). Projects and grants. State University of New York. Retrieved December 25, 2025, from <https://oer.suny.edu/projects-and-grants/>

¹³ Colorado Department of Higher Education. (2024, December). Transforming educational practices through open educational resources: 2024 (Statute CRS 23-1-134). https://cdhe.colorado.gov/sites/highered/files/2024_Colorado_OER_Report.pdf

¹⁴ Awkward, R. J. (2025, March 28). Creating an OER action framework for student success in Massachusetts [Keynote presentation]. 2025 CT OER Summit, Middletown, CT <https://drive.google.com/file/d/198M3FonFD6z1RvWqsQ0jPceZjzWjFrk/view>; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (n.d.). Open Educational Resources Grant Program (OERGP). Retrieved December 25, 2025, from <https://www.highered.texas.gov/grants/open-educational-resources-grant-program-oergp/>; West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission. (2025, November 10). West Virginia expands college affordability with \$250,000 in OER Challenge Grants. <https://www.wvhepc.edu/news/west-virginia-expands-college-affordability-with-250000-in-oer-challenge-grants/>



"In today's economy, the cost of textbooks can equal the cost of one (1) or two (2) credits of tuition at a community college. This is more than many students can afford and limits the number of courses in which they can enroll."

Edward Friedman
Connecticut State Community College Professor

"OER makes course materials available to every student from day one, which reduces stress, supports equity, and helps students stay engaged. In my courses, OER removes the cost barrier and allows me to tailor materials to the learning goals, update content quickly, and provide multiple ways for students to access and use resources."

Dr. Phillip J. Fox
CT State Middlesex Director of New Media



"OER provides access to education as it decreases the amount of money students have to spend on textbooks. This is a significant step in minimizing barriers in their higher education journey."

Dr. Lisa M. Wiśniewski
Goodwin University Professor

Survey Results

To understand the OER environment in Connecticut, the council conducts biennial surveys of the state’s colleges and universities. The fall 2025 survey was completed by 20 institutions (vs. 26 in 2023).¹⁵ Eight of these institutions additionally submitted a spreadsheet with data on OER adoptions.

Table 1
Participating Institutions

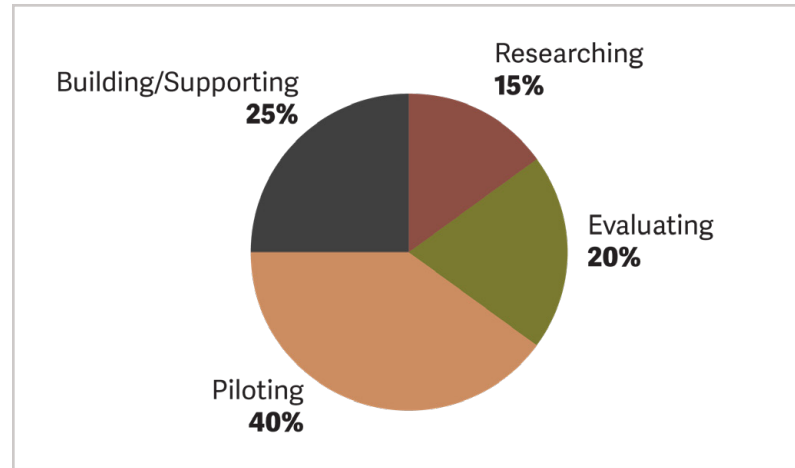
Institution	Completed Survey	Completed Spreadsheet with OER Data
Albertus Magnus College	x	x
Central Connecticut State University	x	
Connecticut College	x	
Connecticut State Community College	x	x
Charter Oak State College		
Eastern Connecticut State University	x	
Fairfield University	x	
Goodwin University	x	x
Hartford International University for Religion and Peace		
Holy Apostles College and Seminary	x	x
Legion of Christ College	x	
Mitchell College		
Norwalk Conservatory of the Arts	x	
Paier College of Art		
Post University	x	x
Quinnipiac University	x	
Sacred Heart		
Southern Connecticut State University		
Trinity College	x	
U.S. Coast Guard Academy		
University of Bridgeport	x	
University of Connecticut	x	x
University of Hartford	x	
University of New Haven	x	x
University of Saint Joseph	x	x
Wesleyan University	x	
Western Connecticut State University		
Yale University	x	

¹⁵ Not an apples-to-apples comparison. The 2023 survey was conducted shortly after the consolidation of Connecticut’s twelve community colleges into CT State Community College. At that time, CT State opted to submit responses on a campus-level, but, for the 2025 survey, CT State submitted one response on behalf of all campuses. If CT State had done so in 2023, there would have only been 18 responses to the 2023 survey.

Engagement

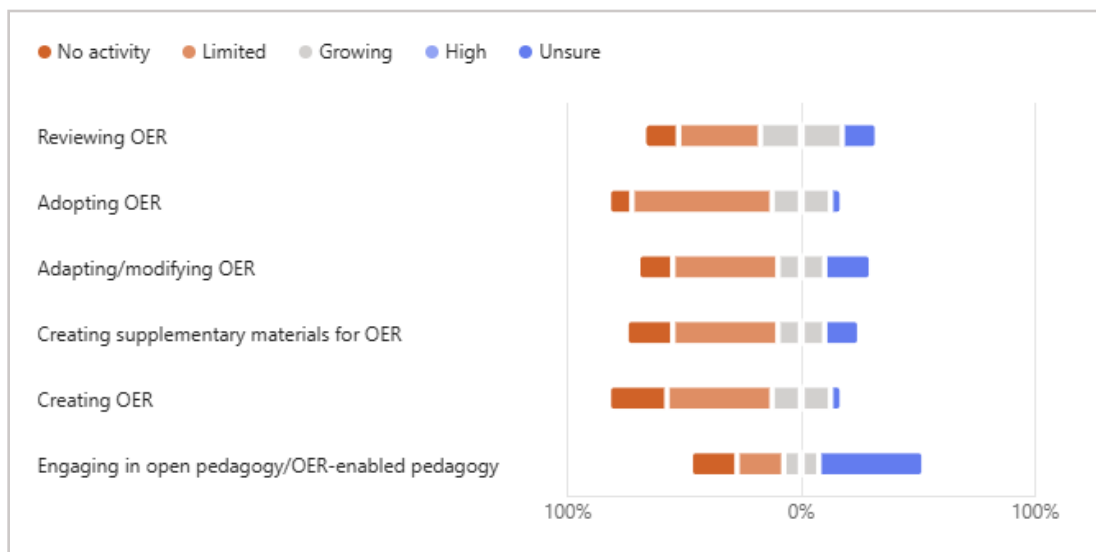
Eighty percent of the institutions report engagement with OER adoption and creation. Forty percent of these institutions say that they are in the piloting phase (up from 28 percent in 2023), which is characterized by active testing of OER. Another 25 percent are building/supporting OER engagement through working groups and infrastructure development (down from 36 percent in 2023). About 20 percent are evaluating options, and 15 percent are just beginning to research. As with the 2023 survey, none of the 2025 institutions report that they have reached the most advanced phase of OER implementation and use: sustaining scale/systematic change.

Figure 2: Overall OER Direction



Another question asked about areas of activity. Results indicate that OER adoption is the strongest area, with 60 percent reporting limited activity and another 25 percent reporting growing activity. For three other areas of focus (creating; adapting/modifying; and creating supplementary materials for OER), the breakdown of activities is the same: 45 percent with limited activity and 25 percent with growing activity. The weakest area of activity is open pedagogy: only 35 percent report any level of activity, and 45 percent indicate that they are unsure (perhaps suggesting a lack of knowledge about the practices of open pedagogy).

Figure 3: OER Activities



Awareness and Promotion

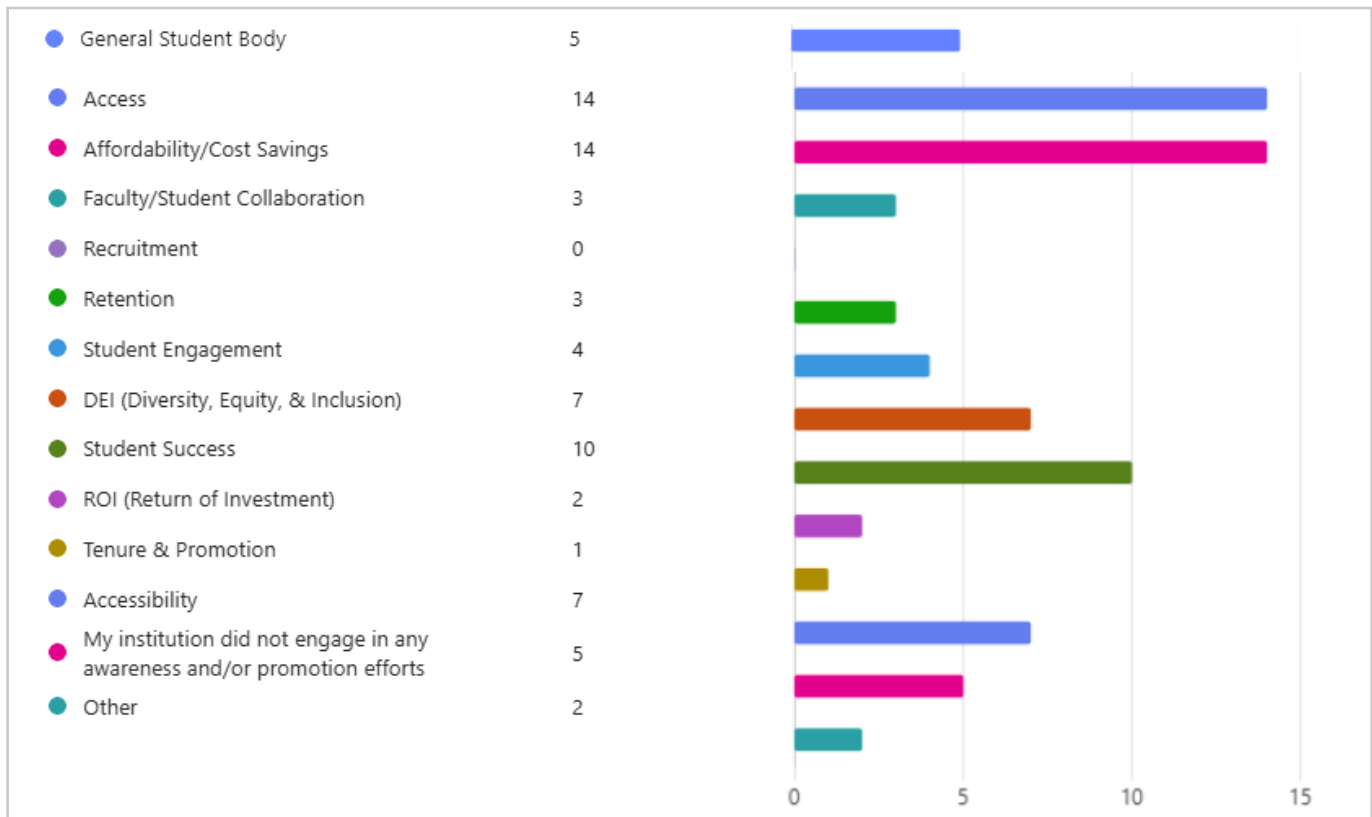
Faculty remain the primary target for OER promotion, with 70 percent of the institutions directing efforts at this group (comparable to 73 percent in 2023). Another important audience is libraries, which are a target audience for 65 percent (compared to 58 percent in 2023) of the institutions. Students, in contrast, receive little attention. Only 25 percent of the institutions promote OER to the general student body (19 percent in 2023), and just 15 percent engage student governments (19 percent in 2023).

Figure 4: Target Audiences for OER Awareness & Promotion



When it comes to framing, most efforts to promote OER continue to focus on the access and affordability of course materials (70 percent of the institutions used each frame). Efforts focused on student success (50 percent), diversity, equity, & inclusion (35 percent), and accessibility (35 percent) were also frequently used frames.

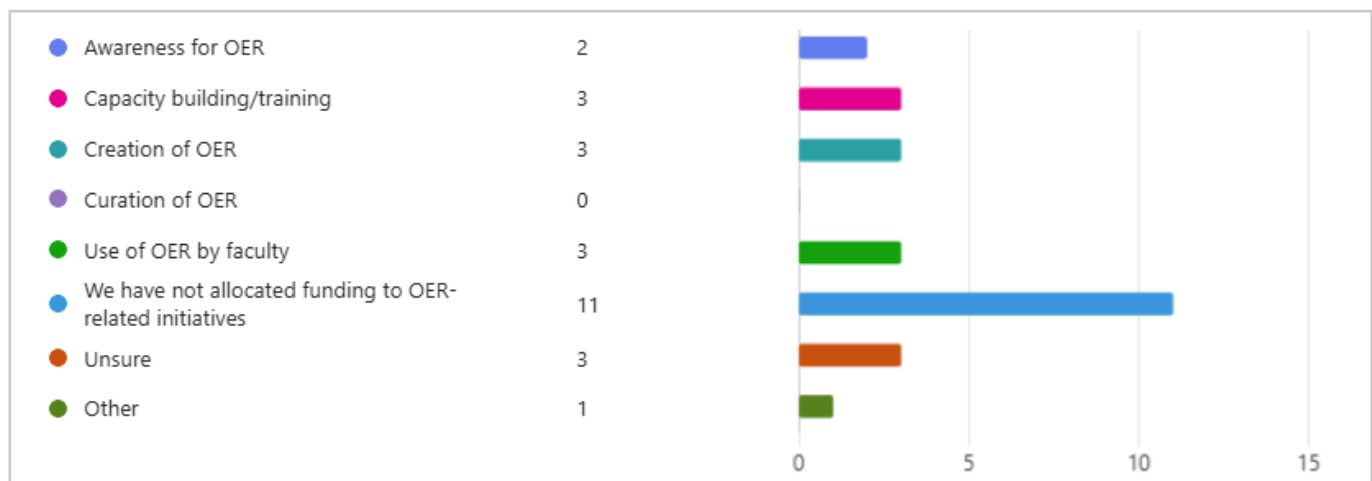
Figure 5: OER Framing



Support

The survey asked for details about institutional funds that, in the past three years, have been used to support OER initiatives. Most of the institutions (55 percent) have no such funds, but a few make funds available for awareness (10 percent), capacity building/training (15 percent), creation of OER (15 percent), and use of OER by faculty (15 percent). These support areas and percentages are similar to the results of the 2023 survey.

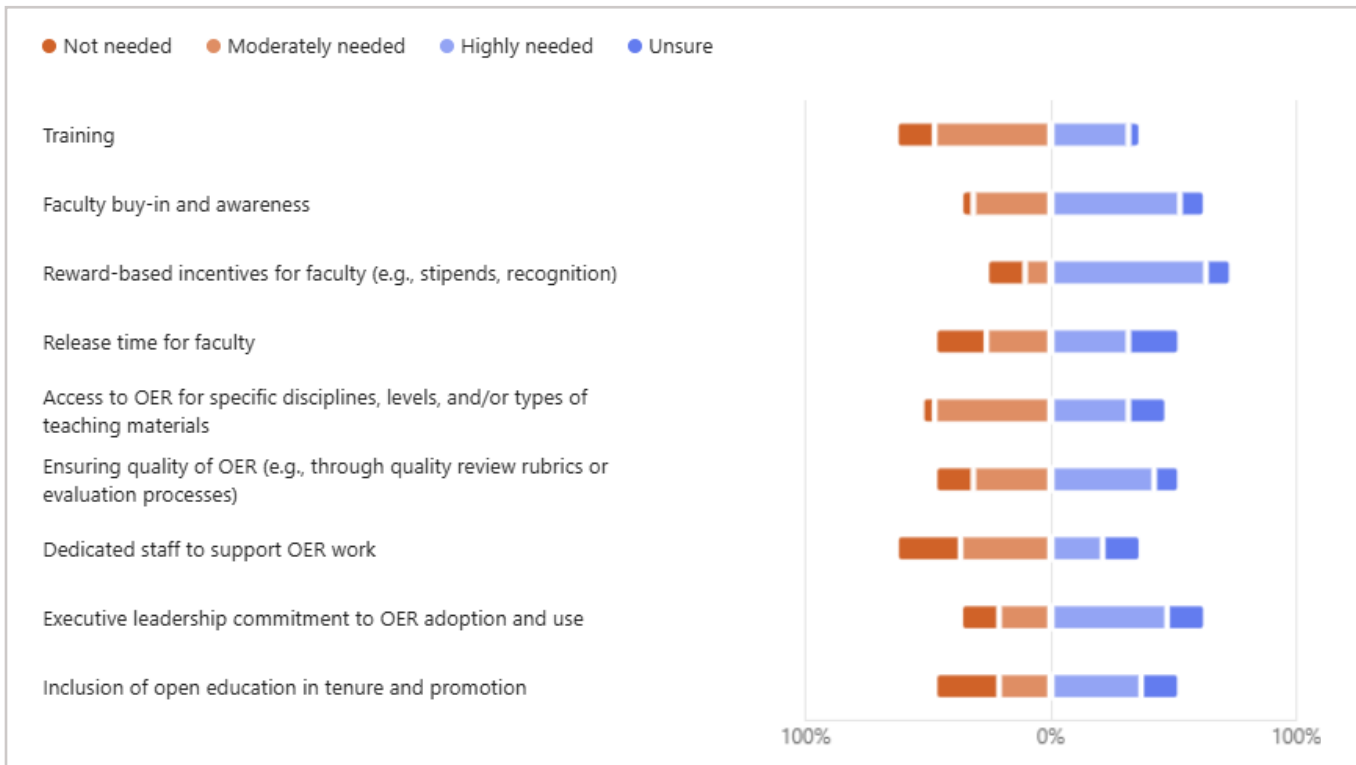
Figure 6: OER Funding



Another support-related question asked the institutions to rate various areas of need concerning OER adoption and use. Survey responses reveal that OER-related needs are significant and diverse: the institutions identify six different areas where the need for support is either moderate or high. Within these areas, there is significant alignment with the charge of the council. The single greatest area of need is reward-based incentives for faculty, which 63 percent of institutions indicated as being highly needed. This need is directly addressed through the council’s OER grant program.

Survey responses reveal that OER-related needs are significant and diverse

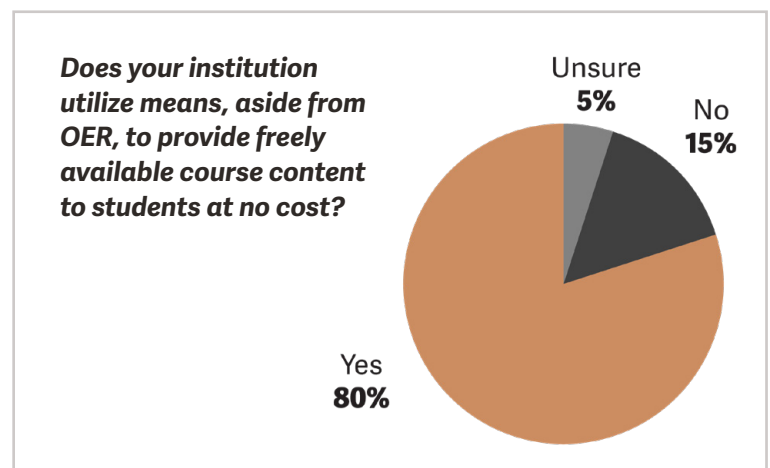
Figure 7: Supports Needed



Freely Available Non-OER

The survey included one question about materials that are freely available but do not fall within the parameters of OER. Examples include Open Access content, library owned or licensed collections, and digital access packages from publishers that are not charged to students. Eighty percent (compared to 92 percent in 2023) of the institutions said that they use these materials in their courses.

Figure 8: Use of Freely Available Non-OER



High Impact Courses

To gather data on the use and impact of OER in high impact courses,¹⁶ the council provided all CT colleges and universities with a template spreadsheet and asked them to populate it with institution-specific data from the 2024-25 academic year. As summarized in Table 2, the course categories where the eight responding institutions (indicated in Table 1) have the most prevalent use (all above 15 percent of total sections) of OER are Business Administration/Management, Biology, General Studies/First Year, and Communications. In contrast, OER are least frequently used (all below 1 percent) in Marketing, Nursing, Law, and Accounting courses.

Looking across all high impact courses areas, CT students saved roughly \$3,475,000 in the 2024-25 academic year through OER use.¹⁷ Substantial as this savings is, it reflects OER use in only about 7 percent of the total course sections. Had OER been used in all 23,939 sections, student savings would have reached an estimated \$37 million.

Students at responding CT institutions saved roughly \$3.5 million in the 2024-25 academic year through OER use ... Had OER been used in all sections, student savings would have reached an estimated \$37 million.



¹⁶ [Public Act 19-117](#) indicates that “high impact courses” should be an area of focus for the council and defines these courses as ones “for which open educational resources would make a significant positive financial impact on the students taking the courses.” To identify these courses, the council gathered input from CT colleges and universities in 2019. Next, the council mapped the survey results to the U.S. Department of Education’s Classification of Instructional Programs taxonomy, thereby ensuring consistent identification of high impact courses across institutions.

¹⁷ This estimate is based on SPARC’s OER Savings Calculation Method (<https://sparcopen.org/news/2018/estimating-oer-student-savings/>), which postulates the average cost savings of OER at \$116.94 per course section.

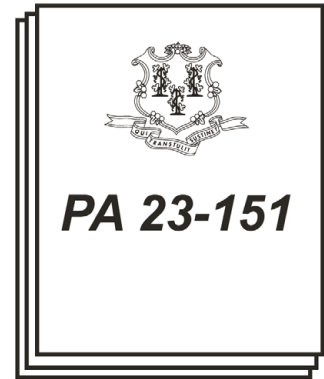
Table 2: OER Use and Savings in High Impact Courses (AY 2024-25)

High Impact Course Category	Total Sections	Total Students	Number of Sections Using OER	Percentage of Sections Using OER	Number of Students in Sections Using OER	Estimated Student Savings from OER
Accounting	578	12,870	4	1%	77	\$9,004
Anatomy	703	13,185	7	1%	149	\$17,424
Art Studies	741	7,816	33	4%	774	\$90,512
Biology	1,092	13,086	217	20%	3,493	\$408,471
Business	526	9,304	18	3%	243	\$28,416
Business Administration/Management	1,020	13,187	211	21%	4,203	\$491,499
Chemistry	1,119	5,265	15	1%	566	\$66,188
Communications	1,240	16,698	196	16%	3,725	\$435,602
Computer Science	2,101	30,667	61	3%	989	\$115,654
Economics	579	5,368	28	5%	367	\$42,917
General Psychology	1,722	18,293	47	3%	1,151	\$134,598
General Studies/First Year	1,085	34,887	206	19%	4,160	\$486,470
History	1,046	12,061	73	7%	1,800	\$210,492
Law	307	5,942	2	1%	25	\$2,924
Literature	310	4,527	36	12%	602	\$70,398
Marketing	240	5,007	1	0%	21	\$2,456
Mathematics	2,177	25,955	38	2%	627	\$73,321
Nursing	1,713	23,558	11	1%	246	\$28,767
Physics	759	1,582	6	1%	49	\$5,730
Sociology	1,050	13,203	106	10%	2,324	\$271,769
Statistics	770	9,483	11	1%	224	\$26,195
Writing	2,061	37,412	218	11%	3,901	\$456,183
Total	22,939	319,356	1,545	7%	29,716	\$3,474,989

OER Model Policy

[Public Act 23-151](#) directed the council to develop an OER Model Policy that CT colleges and universities could consider for adoption. The Act required that the document include recommended definitions for OER-related terms, methods for data collection, and ways to enable students to easily identify OER courses in their institutions’ catalogs.

To meet this directive, the council drew on the results of an open call for volunteers to form a working group with representatives from roles and institution-types across the state. After reviewing comparable documents in other states, the working group engaged in an iterative process of drafting, gathering feedback from the CT higher education community, and revising. The process concluded in the fall 2025, when the council published the [Model Policy for Open Educational Resources](#) on its website. The Model Policy is also included in this report as Appendix A.



In 2026, the council will promote awareness of the Model Policy. Efforts will include general presentations as well as targeted outreach to specific institutions and institution-types. Through this outreach, the council hopes that institutions will opt to follow the Model Policy’s recommendations in whole or in part. By doing so, the institutions will foster environments where OER can thrive and where students will enjoy more open, affordable, and inclusive learning experiences.

Uptake of the Model Policy will also provide a clearer picture of the nature and impact of OER. Based on the results of the council’s 2025 survey of CT colleges and universities (see “Survey Results”), only 15 percent of the responding institutions track the impact of OER on student savings and none track the impact on student success. When institutions do collect data, inconsistent definitions and practices—both within and across institutions—can limit accuracy. Adherence to the Model Policy’s recommendations could significantly reduce these issues.

2025 OER Summit

from the Ivy League to the community college

CT STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

MIDDLESEX

6th Annual CT OER Summit

100+ faculty, administrators, librarians, and academic support staff from **20** Connecticut colleges and universities



2025 OER Summit

On March 28, 2025, over a hundred people gathered at CT State Community College Middlesex for the 2025 CT OER Summit, the sixth such event that the council has sponsored. The summit brought together a cross-section of the CT higher education community that is unparalleled in its diversity: from the Ivy League to the community college, the summit included faculty from across disciplines as well as librarians, administrators, and academic support staff.

93%
*of attendees rated the summit
Excellent or Very Good*

Robert J. Awkward (Assistant Commissioner for Academic Effectiveness at the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education) began the event with a keynote presentation focused on creating a statewide framework for impactful OER programs. Other presenters included Olivia Chiang (Professor of Art History at CT State Community College Manchester), Ariella Rotramel (Vandana Shiva Associate Professor of Gender Sexuality and Intersectionality Studies at Connecticut College), Ashley Hanson (Research/Instruction Librarian at Connecticut College), Aja Shabana (Instructor of Mathematics at CT State Community College Middlesex), and Rachael Barlow (Director for the Center for Faculty Career Development at Wesleyan University). The summit program also gave the floor to students from Eastern Connecticut State University (Tyler Fairbanks and Audrey-Anne Pothier) and CT State Community College (Hasham Rauf), who discussed issues of textbook affordability and how their learning has been impacted by OER.

Attendee evaluations were highly positive. Ninety-three percent of attendees rated the summit Excellent or Very Good, and 74 percent said that the summit was either Extremely or Very Helpful in strengthening their understanding of OER.



Faculty, librarians, administrators, and support staff from across CT joined together at CT State Middlesex.



Members of the OER Council, Kristi Newgarden and Aura Lippincott, brought OER marketing materials.



Robert J. Awkward of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education presented the keynote address.

2026 Grant Program

As a result of the partial restoration of OER funding, the council has been able to offer a new cycle of grants. As with prior cycles, the 2026 grant program is open to faculty across CT colleges and universities in the following categories and amounts:

1. **Adoption:** Adopting an existing OER with little to no changes made to the content. (\$1,500 per grant)
2. **Supplemental:** Developing ancillaries for currently adopted OER. (\$2,000 per grant)
3. **Impact:** Carrying out large-scale collaborative OER projects. (Award amounts are based on the scope and impacts of the project)
4. **Review:** Evaluating an OER for potential adoption in a course and writing a review of the OER to be shared with the higher education community. (\$500 per grant)

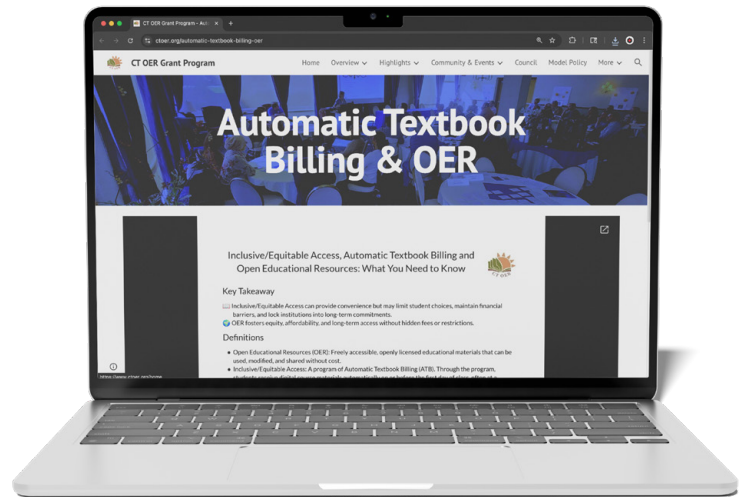
In December 2025, the council hosted two virtual information sessions for potential applicants. As of January 2026, the council has received 24 applications from 19 faculty across a diverse range of institutions. The applications are strong, and the council anticipates that it will fully expend its FY2026 allocation.



Other Accomplishments

Automatic Textbook Billing Factsheet

In Connecticut and across the U.S., some institutions have accepted or are considering vendor proposals for automatic textbook billing (ATB) programs. Through these programs (typically marketed as “Equitable Access” or “Inclusive Access,”), textbook expenses are included in the tuition and fees that students must pay at the start of each academic term. Students sometimes have the ability to opt-out of ATB at the start of each term, but the process can be difficult and the time window is narrow. These programs claim to lower textbook costs, but evidence supporting those claims comes primarily from textbook publishers, corporate bookstores, and their consultants. As a result, there is considerable confusion, including conflation of ATB with OER.



The council assessed that there was a constructive role it could play in helping CT’s higher education community to understand ATB, how it differs from OER, and whether it actually saves money. To that end, the council worked in spring 2025 to develop a two-page factsheet, [“Inclusive/Equitable Access, Automatic Textbook Billing and Open Educational Resources: What You Need to Know,”](#) which defines key terms and evaluates the claims made by the programs’ purveyors. The council published the factsheet on its website, distributed copies at the 2025 CT OER Summit, and has included it here as Appendix B.

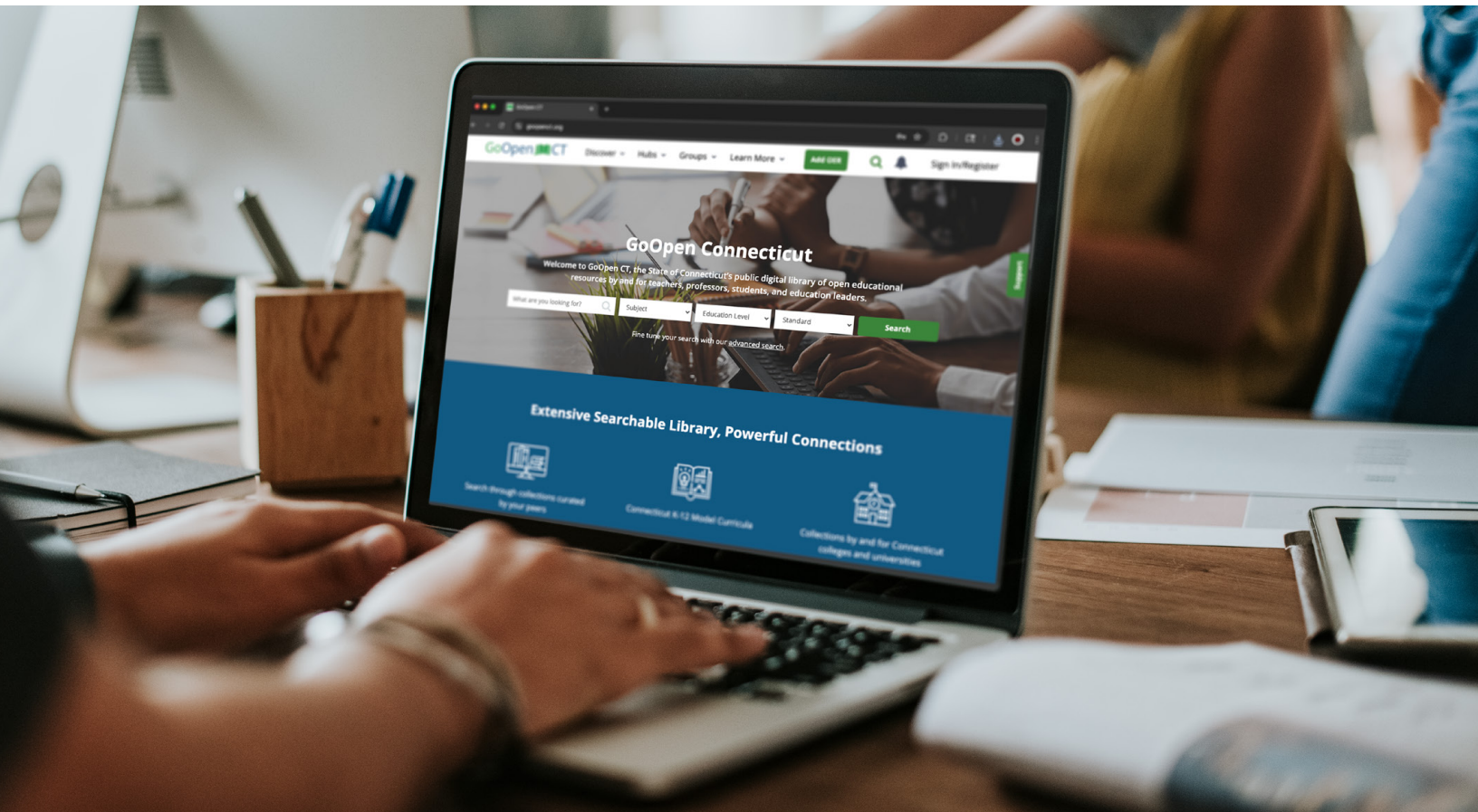
CT OER Listserv

In September 2025, the council launched CT-OER, a listserv for anyone who is affiliated with a CT college or university, primary or secondary school, or government agency that supports education. CT-OER’s purpose is to provide a forum for announcements, questions, and conversation about OER, open licensing, open pedagogy, and related topics. The listserv currently includes about one hundred members. Those interested in joining should review the [Guidelines](#) for participation and then complete a [form](#).

Enhanced Use of GoOpenCT

OER materials related to the council’s grant program are published on [GoOpenCT](#). This public OER repository is used by nearly 2,000 K-12 and post-secondary educators and is administered by the CT Commission for Educational Technology. After an audit of the grant outputs published in GoOpenCT, a small working group (consisting of two council members along with Lea DeForest, head of partner relations at ISKME, and Kristina Edwards, UConn Library’s Electronic Resources Librarian) discovered opportunities to locate resources that had not yet been added to the site as well as map a metadata strategy that will facilitate easier discovery.

In consultation with Doug Casey (Executive Director of the CT Commission for Educational Technology) the working group is currently collaborating to better leverage GoOpenCT for publishing, promoting, and broadening the impact of grant-funded OER. This work includes continuing to build on the findings of the audit and using tags and collection-building to make discovery of the grant outputs easier for users. The council hopes to discuss the results of this initiative in its 2026 report.



Plans for 2026

Key areas of focus for the council include:



Grant Program

The council will administer its 2026 grant cycle. This work includes promoting the program, assisting applicants, evaluating and making decisions about applications, reviewing to ensure that grantees complete their work, and then ensuring that grantees receive payments. Later in 2026, the council will launch a 2027 grant cycle.



OER Model Policy

The council will promote the Model Policy (see Appendix A) to stakeholders across the CT higher education community.



CT OER Summit

The council will plan and promote the 2026 CT OER Summit. This event will occur in the spring (date to-be-determined) at CT State Community College Naugatuck Valley.



GoOpenCT

The council will enhance its use of GoOpenCT, ensuring that the platform provides a compelling showcase of OER related to the council's grant program.

Recommendation

The council recommends that the state significantly bolster funding in support of OER. While the partial restoration of funding in FY2026 and FY2027 (\$50,000 annually) is a positive step, it is insufficient for Connecticut to harness OER's potential.

As discussed in this report, the state's investment in OER has so far produced a 5.23x return: over 10,000 students have realized \$1.2 million in savings.¹⁸ But this ROI is just a fraction of what could be achieved with more robust support. New York, for example, allocates \$8 million annually.¹⁹ While the number of college and university students in Connecticut is roughly 18 percent of New York's student population, CT OER funding is less than 1 percent of New York's funding.

As is shown in the results of the 2025 survey (see page 9) and the large number of applicants for 2026 grants (see page 19), institutional needs for OER support are significant and widespread.

Increased OER funding could allow the council to offer more grants, expand professional development, support institutional adoption of recommendations in the [OER Model Policy](#), and, as a result, make higher education more open and affordable in Connecticut.

¹⁸ A bare-minimum estimate based on available data.

¹⁹ New York State Office of the State Comptroller. (2025, March 27). Open Educational Resources (Audit Report 2024-S-4). <https://www.osc.ny.gov/state-agencies/audits/2025/03/27/open-educational-resources>; SUNY OER Services. (n.d.). Projects and grants. State University of New York. Retrieved December 25, 2025, from <https://oer.suny.edu/projects-and-grants/>

Council Membership

In accordance with [Public Act 19-117](#), the CT OER Coordinating Council membership consists of faculty, administrators, librarians, academic support staff, and a student representative from across the state's colleges and universities.

- **Tiara Arnold**, Research Services Coordinator, Fairfield University
- **Rachael Barlow**, Director for the Center for Faculty Career Development, Wesleyan University
- **Patrick Carr**, Program Manager for Library Consortium Operations, Connecticut State Colleges & Universities (Chair)
- **Salvatore Diaz**, Assistant Professor of Nursing, Albertus Magnus College
- **Paula Dowd**, Dean of Faculty, Connecticut State Community College Naugatuck Valley
- **Sara Harrington**, Associate University Librarian for Academic Engagement, University of Connecticut
- **Elizabeth Hurlbert**, Assistant Professor of Nursing, Southern Connecticut State University
- **Hamid El Khalfi**, Faculty, General Academic Department, Charter Oak State College
- **Caroline Kelly**, Student, University of Connecticut
- **Aura Lippincott**, Instructional Design, Western Connecticut State University
- **Ariela McCaffrey**, Reference & Instruction Librarian, Connecticut State Community College Three Rivers
- **Desmond McCaffrey**, Director, UConn Online, University of Connecticut
- **Kristi Newgarden**, Instructional Design, Charter Oak State College
- **Ahmed Omar**, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, Charter Oak State College
- **Jacquelyn Ray**, Director of Library Services & Academic Success Program, Western Connecticut State University
- **Sasha Teplyaev**, Professor of Mathematics, University of Connecticut
- **Bob Wyckoff**, Professor of English, Connecticut State Community College Housatonic

Acknowledgements

Advancing the use of OER is a collaborative undertaking, and the council thanks many partners in this work. For their assistance with transferring funds and communications with the CT higher education community, the council thanks Ram Aberasturia (Finance Division Director), Scott A. Ciecko (Finance/IPEDS State Coordinator), and Emily Bjornberg (Senior Consultant, Academic Affairs) at the CT Office of Higher Education. In the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities System Office (the council's administrative home), the council thanks Kelly Corbin (Associate for Finance & Accounting), who provides invaluable assistance with the use and management of council funding, and Adam Wisnieski (Visual Communications Designer), who transforms the text of the council's reports into documents that are engaging and easy to navigate.

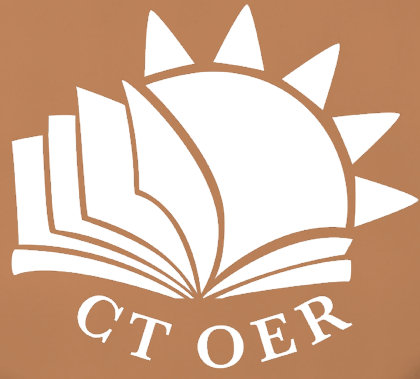
A major project for the council in 2025 was the development of its OER Model Policy, and the council thanks everyone in the higher education community who provided input on the many drafts of this document. Additionally, the council thanks the members of the working group (see Appendix A), who devoted their time and expertise to the project.

The 2025 CT OER Summit was a success thanks to the event's speakers (see page 18) and participants. Additionally, the council thanks CT State Community College Middlesex for hosting. At Middlesex, the council is particularly indebted to Kimberly Hogan (formerly Chief Executive Officer), Mike Cavanaugh (Media Assistant), Wei Cen (Director of Campus Library Services), Lisa Gugliotti (Digital/Systems Librarian), and Donvan Reinwald (Librarian).

For their collaboration with the council to enhance usage of GoOpenCT, the council is indebted to Lea DeForest (head of partner relations at ISKME), Kristina Edwards (Electronic Resources Librarian at the University of Connecticut), and Doug Casey (Executive Director of the CT Commission for Educational Technology).

August 2025 marked the conclusion of several council members' terms, including Thomas Barron (Director of Business and Technology Programs at Charter Oak State College), Lígia Correia (Adjunct Professor at the University of New Haven), Kristina Edwards (Electronic Resources Librarian at the University of Connecticut), Tina Huey (Associate Director of Faculty Development at the University of Connecticut), Eileen Rhodes (Director of Library Services at CT State Community College Capital), Brian Sommers (Professor of Geography at Central Connecticut State University), and Olivia Viel (a student at the University of Connecticut). The council is grateful to the contributions of these former members.

Finally, the council expresses its deepest gratitude to the colleagues across the CT higher education community who raised awareness about the council's loss of funding. Partial restoration of the council's funding would not have been possible for their support for the council and their belief in the power of OER to make it easier and more affordable for CT to reach their educational goals.



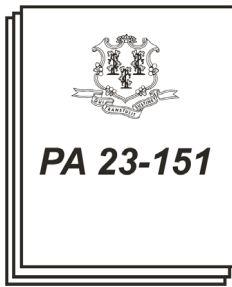
Appendix A: OER Model Policy

Model Policy for **Open Educational Resources**



*Developed by the Connecticut
Open Educational Resources Coordinating Council*
FALL 2025

Preface



Through [Public Act No. 23-151](#), the State of Connecticut added a new role to the charge of its [Open Educational Resources \(OER\) Coordinating Council](#).

This role was to:

Develop a model policy for adoption by institutions of higher education that establishes (A) definitions for terms related to OER, (B) methods for data collection concerning the use and availability of OER, and (C) ways to present online course catalogs to students to clearly identify each course utilizing OER

To fulfill this charge, the council formed a working group consisting of colleagues in positions across the state's colleges and universities:

- **Patrick Carr** (chair), Program Manager for Library Consortium Operations at the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities System
- **Ligia Correia**, Adjunct Professor at the University of New Haven
- **Paula Dowd**, Academic Dean of Nursing and Health Careers at Connecticut State Community College
- **Tina Huey**, Associate Director of Faculty Development at University of Connecticut
- **Peter Kootsookos**, Instructor, Engineering & Computer Science at CT State Community College Middlesex
- **Jillian Maynard**, Research Coordinator and Instruction Librarian at Central Connecticut State University
- **Jeanette Moore**, Coordinator, Praxis Study Center and Adjunct Professor of Education and Educational Psychology, Western Connecticut State University
- **Kevin Redline**, Scholarly Communications, Research & Instruction Librarian at Quinnipiac University

After a review of policies in place in other states, the working group engaged in an iterative and collaborative process of drafting, gathering feedback from the Connecticut higher education community, and revision. This process occurred during the fall of 2024 and spring of 2025, and the working group thanks all of the faculty, administrators, librarians, staff, and students who participated. Additionally, the working group thanks the Connecticut Office for Higher Education for its assistance in outreach with the state's higher education community.

The CT OER Coordinating Council believes that the resultant model policy upholds the academic freedom of faculty while addressing the needs of Connecticut institutions of higher education and their students. The council realizes that different institutions use different templates and conventions in their policies and that, in some instances, institutions who are interested in following this document's recommendations may deem that the recommendations should be addressed through operations rather than policy. Accordingly, the model that follows is presented only as a starting point for institution-specific considerations and not as a finished product that the institution can adopt as-is.



Photos above from CT OER's fifth annual CT OER Summit on March 8, 2024 at Central Connecticut State University.

Part I: Definitions

It is recommended that institutions work within internal governance structures to develop relevant designations for textbooks. Two key designations should be used for instructional materials (regardless of format): OER and NoLo. The designators should be consistently defined as follows.

Open Educational Resources (OER) Designator

OER should be defined as *a designator indicating that a single course section's required instructional materials consist entirely of Open Educational Resources (OER), which are ADA-compliant teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or that have been released under an intellectual property license (e.g., a Creative Commons license) that permits their free use, retention, revision, redistribution, and repurposing by others.*

Consistent with the above definition, the following course materials are not OER:

- Materials that are freely available online but that are not openly licensed or in the public domain.
- Materials that are only available through a library-licensed database, e-book, streaming video, etc.

For avoidance of doubt, examples of OER include:

- Materials in print format that are provided to students free of charge and that have been openly licensed or that are in the public domain.
- Materials that are developed through Open Pedagogy, which is a set of pedagogical practices that include engaging students in openly licensed content creation.

While they are closely related, OER materials are not synonymous with Open Access (OA) materials. [SPARC](#) defines OA as “the free, immediate, online availability of research articles combined with the rights to use these articles in the digital environment.” Accordingly, there are instances in which an OA article could not be adopted as an OER (e.g., the OA article is not openly licensed).



No-Cost/Low-Cost (NoLo) Designator

NoLo should be defined as *a designator indicating that a single course section's required instructional materials are either no-cost or may be purchased for permanent access to a new copy from the institution's bookstore for an amount that, in total, is \$50 or less (pre-tax).*

Exempted from the \$50-or-less calculation are tools and supplies (e.g., lab coats, lab notebooks, goggles, art materials, calculators) and any materials that are recommended but not required by the instructor.

NoLo is a term originally developed by the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities System, and it encompasses instructional materials that receive an OER designator.

Consistent with the above definition, NoLo should not be applied:

- On the basis of pricing for rental costs.
- On the basis of pricing for used copies.
- On the basis of pricing from vendors other than the institution's bookstore.
- To sections that are part of a sequence of courses that use overlapping instructional materials that exceed \$50. Consider, for example, a textbook that costs \$120 and that is used across a sequence of three courses. Even though the cost-per-course-section of this textbook is \$40, NoLo should not be applied to any of the individual sections of the course sequence.
- To library resources in which the institution's library does not provide all of the following:
 - Perpetual access.
 - ADA-compliant access.
 - Concurrent user access to an extent that equals or exceeds the number of students who may be enrolled in the course section. For example, NoLo should not be applied to a section that allows for an enrollment of twenty students and requires a library-licensed e-book that limits access to just three concurrent users.



For the avoidance of doubt, examples of materials that fall within the parameters of NoLo include:

- Any material that qualifies for an Open Educational Resources (OER) designator.
- A new textbook costing \$50 or less to purchase from the institution’s bookstore.
- A course material bundle (e.g., purchase of a new textbook plus a digital access code, such as for a homework website or supplementary course content) costing \$50 or less.
- A faculty-developed course pack costing \$50 or less.
- A library-licensed e-book or article with unlimited concurrent users.
- A web page that is freely accessible online.
- An OA article.
- Instructional materials that the instructor has indicated to students are freely available online (i.e., that fall within the above definition of NoLo) and that may optionally be purchased in print through the institution’s bookstore for an amount greater than \$50. Note that this example presumes that the bookstore designates to students that purchase of the materials are optional. If the bookstore designates to students that the materials are required, then the materials do not qualify for the NoLo designation.



Relationship between Definitions and Automatic Textbook Billing

If an institution participates in an automatic textbook billing program (typically marketed as “Equitable Access” or “Inclusive Access”), the OER and NoLo designations can still be applied to course sections as described above provided that the program:

- (a) is default opt-in or gives students the ability to opt-out; and
- (b) provides students with permanent textbook access.

Rental-based automatic billing programs where students are charged an additional fee to retain textbook copies after the end of the semester should be excluded from OER and NoLo designations.

Part II: Presentation of Information (i.e., Course Marking)

Where institutions include textbook information in the course approval process, the council recommends that colleges and universities leverage the fields and functionalities of their Student Information Systems (SIS) in ways that make it easy for users to identify course sections that have received an OER and/or NoLo designation. While configurations will depend on the specific SIS in use at the institution, at a minimum, the SIS should:

- Prominently define and display the designators
- Allow (when appropriate) a course section to be designated as both OER and NoLo.
- Allow a user to limit searches to course sections that are OER and/or NoLo.

Full definitions (see “Definitions” section above) in the SIS should be preceded by brief definitions for easy reference. Suggested language for the brief and full definitions:

- NoLo:
 - Brief: Textbooks cost \$50 or less
 - Full: This course section’s required instructional materials are either no-cost or may be purchased for permanent access to a new copy from [name of institution’s bookstore] for an amount that, in total, is \$50 or less (pre-tax). Exempted from the \$50-or-less calculation are tools and supplies (e.g., lab coats, lab notebooks, goggles, art materials, calculators) and any materials that are recommended but not required by the instructor.
- OER:
 - Brief: Textbooks are free and open
 - Full: This course section’s required instructional materials consist entirely of Open Educational Resources (OER), which are ADA-compliant teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or that have been released under an intellectual property license (e.g., a Creative Commons license) that permits their free use and repurposing by others.

Where institutions do not approve textbook information in the course approval process, institutions should provide another means for students to identify course sections with an OER and/or NoLo designation. This option should allow students to search for OER and NoLo sections of courses in any given academic term. In whatever format available, this system should use standard OER and NoLo definitions and allow (when appropriate) a course section to be designated as both OER and NoLo. Course sections should provide information on the location, modality, and scheduled time of the relevant section. Information should be available to students on how to use this information to find the relevant course section through the registration process.

Part III: Data Collection

Institutions should designate a specific position or department to coordinate data collection. For each academic term, institutions should collect the following data concerning course sections that have been designated as OER and (separately) as NoLo:

- Course section identifier (i.e., Course code)
- Course name
- Credits offered
- Course section modality
- Number of students who enrolled in the course section
- Persistence of students: The number of students who completed the section.
- Performance of students: The number of students who completed the section and received a grade of C or higher; or, in the case of students who were graded on a pass/fail basis, the number of students who received a passing grade.

The council recommends the [OER Data Collection Template](#) as a tool for data collection.

Institutions should report this data to the Connecticut OER Coordinating Council through the council's biennial surveys of colleges and universities.

Part IV: Additional Recommendations

Colleges and universities who wish to pursue aspects of this Model Policy should strive to:

- Create an advisory group (consisting of a diverse range of stakeholders - e.g., faculty across disciplines, students, librarians, staff, and administrators) to promote and support OER adoption and use and to coordinate with other relevant groups (e.g., student success/retention committees) at the institution.
- Find ways to educate curriculum governance bodies, faculty, and other instructors about the meanings and how to identify and make use of OER and NoLo materials.
- Provide material for students prior to course registration to support their use of OER and NoLo sections where applicable (e.g., orientation materials, emails, signage, FAQ webpage).



Connecticut Open Educational Resources Coordinating Council, 2025.
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Appendix B:

Inclusive/Equitable Access, Automatic Textbook Billing and Open Educational Resources: What You Need to Know

Inclusive/Equitable Access, Automatic Textbook Billing and Open Educational Resources: What You Need to Know



Key Takeaway

-  Inclusive/Equitable Access can provide convenience but may limit student choices, maintain financial barriers, and lock institutions into long-term commitments.
-  OER fosters equity, affordability, and long-term access without hidden fees or restrictions.




Definitions

- Open Educational Resources (OER): Freely accessible, openly licensed educational materials that can be used, modified, and shared without cost.
 - Inclusive/Equitable Access: A program of Automatic Textbook Billing (ATB). Through the program, students receive digital course materials automatically on or before the first day of class, often at a discounted rate, with costs typically included in tuition or fees. Variations are charged by credit hour, course, and term. These programs may be called Day One or First Day Access, All Access, Automatic Access (see [What is Inclusive Access](https://www.inclusiveaccess.org/what-is-inclusive-access/), [InclusiveAccess.Org](https://www.inclusiveaccess.org/)).
-




Evaluating the Claims

Publishers portray an overly optimistic assessment of the advantages these programs provide to faculty and students. However, a detailed analysis casts doubt on these assertions.




Cost Savings

-  Publisher Argument: Bulk pricing reduces costs for students.
-  Counterargument: It depends. While some students may save money, in aggregate, students are likely to spend more on textbooks under Inclusive/Equitable Access models. Students are likely to still pay more than for used books or rentals. It is important to review the basis for the cost savings claims, which are likely based on list prices. Additionally, students employ their own cost savings strategies when shopping for textbooks on their own, such as borrowing, renting, using used copies, or purchasing from cheaper sources, meaning they do not pay full retail prices. Students are able to recoup costs when they sell back texts. ([Smith, June 2024](#)). Learn more [Savings or Spin](https://www.inclusiveaccess.org/savings-or-spin/) ([InclusiveAccess.org](https://www.inclusiveaccess.org/)).
-  OER Benefit: Eliminates textbook costs. Students do not need to employ cost-saving strategies.




Student Financial Agency & Choice

-  Publisher Argument: Opt-out policies exist.
-  Counterargument: Opt-out policies can be difficult to find and use, lack transparency, and students lose the ability to shop for cheaper options.
-  OER Benefit: No need to opt in or out as resources are freely available.




Availability

-  Publisher Argument: Students receive materials on the first day of class
-  Counterargument: First-day access is not always guaranteed due to technical issues. Some students avoid costs by turning to free alternatives like OER or library reserves. Students usually lose access to digital materials once the course ends, as they would with a rental.
-  OER Benefit: Ensures all students have access to materials immediately, without costs - hidden or otherwise. Students can keep and reuse materials indefinitely.




Accessibility

-  Publisher Argument: May claim materials are designed with accessibility features that support students with disabilities (e.g. screen reader compatibility, adjustable text sizes, captioned videos, etc.).
-  Counterargument: Some students with disabilities report challenges working with publishers to address accessibility concerns in a timely manner.
-  OER Benefit: OER materials can be adapted for diverse accessibility needs, thanks to flexible licensing and fewer platform restrictions.



Institutional Considerations

-  Publisher Argument: Steady revenue supports the development of high-quality educational materials. Centralized billing may reduce bookstore workload.
-  Counterargument: Institutions may be locked into long-term publisher agreements with little flexibility, and financial benefits for institutions pose ethical concerns.
-  OER Benefit: Faculty and institutions are not locked into costly publisher materials, demonstrating a commitment to affordability and student success.

Student Outcomes

-  Publisher Claim: Inclusive/Equitable Access improves student success.
-  Counterargument: Studies on success rates may be funded by publishers and may not account for other influencing factors. (see [Solution or Status Quo?](#), InclusiveAccess.Org)
-  OER Claim: Studies also show improved student success with OER, with greater financial accessibility.

Faculty Benefits

-  Publisher Claim: Using commercial texts save faculty time.
-  OER Claim: Faculty are freed to modify and adapt OER for their courses. (see [Supported or Stymied?](#), InclusiveAccess.Org). The benefit of high quality OER (including supplemental materials) increases as more faculty adopt, adapt, and contribute to the growing body of resources.