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Connecticut Library Association Warns Governor's Proposed Budget Cuts Will Undermine Library Services and Access to Resources for All Residents

HARTFORD, CT — [February 6, 2026] — The Connecticut Library Association (CLA) expresses deep concern and opposition to Governor Ned Lamont's proposed cuts to library funding in the state's FY2027 budget, including a 20% reduction in support for statewide library services that will significantly impact programs like borrowIT CT — a vital resource-sharing initiative that has long enabled Connecticut residents to access the collections of public libraries across municipal boundaries.

The borrowIT CT program (formerly known as Connecticard) allows residents of any Connecticut town with a valid home library card to borrow materials from any of the 191 participating public libraries across the state. Under this cooperative model, libraries are reimbursed by the Connecticut State Library for lending items to non-residents, facilitating equitable access to books, media, and other resources, regardless of a person's hometown.

"Connecticut's statewide reciprocity through borrowIT CT is not a luxury — it is a cornerstone of equal access for all residents and a powerful cost-sharing program that helps local municipalities stretch their budgets further," said Erin Dummeyer, CLA President. "Reducing or destabilizing this program will force local libraries to bear the full cost of sharing resources, threatening access to millions of items and diminishing the value libraries provide to their communities."

Connecticut Library Association

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In recent years, libraries have reported that a significant portion of their lending (approximately 11% of all circulation) is to non-residents through borrowIT CT, with more than 2.3 million items loaned in a single year — demonstrating the scale of inter-community sharing that relies on state support.

CLA emphasizes that cuts to this program will have ripple effects across the state:

- **Reduced Access to Resources:** Students, job seekers, families, and lifelong learners will lose the ability to easily borrow books, media, and educational materials not available in their hometown library.
- **Increased Local Costs:** Without adequate reimbursements, many local libraries will be forced to absorb the rising cost of inter-library lending, potentially reducing participation in the program or cutting back other services.
- **Strained Local Budgets:** Smaller and rural libraries, which already operate with tight budgets, will be disproportionately affected, exacerbating inequities in library services statewide.

"borrowIT funding ensures our collections—and our doors—remain open to the thousands of neighbors who rely on us. With these cuts, small libraries like ours will struggle to meet regional demand and provide equitable access to library services," said Rebecca Harlow, Head of Reference and Adult Services, Case Memorial Library, Orange.

CLA urges the Connecticut General Assembly to fully fund the borrowIT CT program at levels that reflect their value to education, workforce development, lifelong learning, and civic engagement across the state.

For more information about borrowIT CT and its role in Connecticut's library ecosystem, visit the Connecticut State Library's program overview: <https://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/dld/borrowit>.

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About the Connecticut Library Association:

The Connecticut Library Association advocates for strong public libraries and equitable access to information for all Connecticut residents. CLA supports library professionals, promotes literacy and lifelong learning, and works with lawmakers to advance public policy that strengthens library services statewide.

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