



CT State Library

Preserving the Past. Informing the Future.

Library Services and Technology Act Five-Year Plan, 2023-2027

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Overview

The Connecticut State Library is an executive branch agency of the State of Connecticut with an annual budget of \$9,277,287 in FY 2022. The State Library provides a variety of library, information, archival, public records, museum, and administrative services to the 3.6 million citizens of Connecticut, as well as to the employees and officials of all three branches of State government. The State Library also serves students, researchers, public libraries, and town governments throughout the state. The Connecticut State Archives, the Office of the Public Records Administrator, and the Museum of Connecticut History are components of the State Library. In addition, the State Library, through its Division of Library Development (DLD), directs a program of statewide library development, administers the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) state grant, and provides the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH).

In approximately 5,565 square miles, Connecticut contains 191 public libraries, only a few of which are library systems with more than one branch. Counting school, academic, special, and government libraries, there are more than 950 locations, all of which are eligible to benefit in some way from the services provided through Connecticut's LSTA funding.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the fact that not all libraries across the country were prepared to be immediately responsive to the needs of their communities with robust and resilient programs, services, and resources. With the social justice movement simultaneously swelling and intersecting with the pandemic, libraries, like many others, began coming to terms with the inequity vibrantly present in their histories, practices, and policies. Many are beginning to acknowledge the gaps in their antiracist understanding and education, and so this work both continues and begins again. The CT State Library will direct its efforts towards strengthening libraries and their staff during times of essential learning and rapid change so they in turn can better serve all their communities. DLD will continue to emphasize the role of libraries as community anchors while providing support for statewide sharing of resources, professional development, knowledge, and services. As always, DLD will embrace flexibility to catalyze and capitalize on new opportunities, and to be mobile and adapt as needed in response to the library communities', and the greater statewide community's, self-identified needs.

Mission

The mission of the CT State Library is to preserve and make accessible Connecticut's history and heritage and to advance the development of library services statewide.

For libraries to thrive in the current information-rich, knowledge-based, hybrid-oriented society, the Division of Library Development (DLD) must concentrate its work in areas that meet the current needs and priorities of libraries and the people they serve. DLD provides leadership, funding, education, and statewide services that enhance a local library's ability to deliver high-quality library service to their community. The Division's key principle is to work together with the Connecticut library community toward the common goal of making libraries "a trusted community resource and an essential platform for learning, creativity and innovation in the community" (Aspen Institute Dialogue on Public Libraries, *Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries*, Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute, October 2014, page iv).

Needs Assessment

Although much of the data gathered in the needs assessment shows that the CT State Library's past priorities are still relevant today and going forward, the COVID-19 pandemic and concurrent social justice movement are significant drivers of change reflected throughout this plan. The goals and

projects in this Five-Year Plan are based on the findings and recommendations in the evaluation of the previous plan (2018-2022); the results of various surveys, focus groups, and interviews; the results of CT State Library initiatives under the previous plan; and input from advisory committees and working groups. Many of DLD's efforts and initiatives over the past five years have supported the transformative priorities of expert consulting, statewide initiatives, enhanced professional development, strategic partnerships, supporting collections, and subgrants. This work is expected to both continue and grow.

Five-Year Plan 2018-2022 Evaluation: Looking Back

QualityMetrics, evaluators of the previous Five-Year Plan, conducted focus groups, individual stakeholder interviews, and a survey. Their evaluation report, submitted to IMLS in March 2022, indicated that DLD's existing core services are highly regarded by respondents. For instance, deliverIT is "indispensable" (p. 4), the supplementary library collections are "of high value" (p. 4), libraries of all types "have come to rely on" statewide databases (p. 5), the DLD consultants are a "lifeline" (p. 9), and competitive subgrants are "high in impact" (p. 17).

Open-ended survey questions with a special focus on professional development, supplementary library collections, consulting services provided by DLD staff, and competitive subgrants yielded similarly strong support from respondents. All these initiatives received positive survey comments, with the professional development and consulting services being called "invaluable" (p. 54).

Throughout the five years, DLD formed new partnerships and strengthened existing ones with organizations that supported the seven literacies defined in the previous plan and supported the development of new services, such as the eGO CT eBook platform. These partnerships proved invaluable for DLD and will continue. Individual libraries in the state also developed new community partnerships because of subgrants and connections made through professional development programs.

In reviewing the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH) during the previous Five-Year Plan, evaluators drew upon the State Program Report, gathered additional statistics through National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS), reviewed a patron survey conducted by LBPH between December 3, 2021, and January 10, 2022, interviewed several staff members including the new program Director, interviewed current and former members of the LBPH Advisory Committee, and interviewed several users/consumers. The evaluators concluded that, "staff of the State Library's LBPH have demonstrated dedication, fortitude, and creativity in the face of several significant challenges. Their efforts have been rewarded by continued high use of the program, increases in the use of both DoD (Duplication on Demand) and the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) program, and a relative stability in the number of program users" (p. 21).

The 2021 LBPH patron survey indicated that 98% of LBPH patrons rated overall quality of service as adequate or above, with 89.9% of patrons rating service as good or excellent. Less than 2% of patrons rate the service poor. 91.14% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "Using the services of the Library for the Blind improves the quality of my life." This data is consistent with ratings received by LBPH in previous user surveys, dating back to 2018.

Five-Year Plan 2022-2027 Focus Groups: Looking Forward

To gain input from the library community for this new plan, DLD consultants hosted four focus groups of library staff from urban, suburban, and rural public libraries plus a focus group with members of the Advisory Council for Library Planning and Development (ACLPD), who represent public libraries as well as academic, school, and special libraries. The focus groups indicated good recognition of DLD's core services and noted continuing education programs, deliverIT, and interlibrary loan support as the services they use most frequently.

Most of the conversation in the focus groups centered on subjects of diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), and digital inclusion. Libraries know their DEI work is just getting started and they need support on all fronts. There was an expressed need for good tools and training on DEI for all levels of library staff as there are variabilities in staff knowledge, including those in leadership roles. That DLD can help with continued professional development and overall visioning on DEI was a common theme. There were consistent requests for networking conversations among librarians, best practices benchmarking for DEI, and more structure to process DEI especially from smaller libraries or resistant communities. Focus group participants know they need to address collection development, and there is a need for more training on outreach and engagement, specifically for reaching underserved communities, as libraries solidify their roles as community anchors.

Influence of COVID-19 and social justice movement

The nationwide social justice movement that gained prominence in 2020 has greatly affected how DLD thinks about library services in Connecticut. DLD pivoted to provide deep, insightful virtual training on topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion under the new umbrella title of Growing Equitable Library Services (GELS). Additional programs for youth services librarians taught about inclusive storytimes, programming for neurodiverse patrons, and diversity audits of library collections. Feedback from the library community shows that these programs are not just appreciated but are essential going forward, as library workers continue to learn and evolve their services with a DEI lens.

The DLD consultants also continue to learn, building on the coursework from Library Journal's course on "Equity in Action: Fostering an Antiracist Library Culture" in early 2021. This course was influential in shaping the consultants' work afterward and resulted in the addition of a new goal in this Five-Year Plan to integrate social justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility into the daily practice of librarianship.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Connecticut residents saw how essential public libraries are to their communities, for sheer entertainment, for social connection in the face of isolation, and for access to necessary information and technology. Use of electronic materials and attendance at virtual programs boomed. As anchor institutions, libraries were essential.

The pandemic also threw a spotlight onto digital inequity in Connecticut, a state with significant disparities in personal income and school funding. The lack of a robust digital infrastructure throughout the state became apparent as students tried to attend classes online and complete assignments from home. DLD's e-resources consultant worked diligently with database vendors to ensure that students would have seamless access to electronic resources, but that access relied on having broadband available in the homes, which was not always the case. Almost all public libraries in Connecticut expanded their outdoor Wi-Fi access to help fill the gap.

To address digital inequity in an immediate way, DLD used CARES funding in summer 2020 to purchase Chrome books and hotspots that were used by 15 public libraries to assist under-connected patrons for the purposes of K-12 student support, job searches, benefits applications, and other economic development and basic support needs. In addition, in 2021 DLD allocated \$400,000 in IMLS ARPA funding to Digital Navigation pilot projects at four public libraries, with the goal of collecting best practices to replicate the concept elsewhere in the state. DLD also launched CT Libraries & Partners for Digital Equity, a broad state alliance that brings together libraries, state agency representatives, and community organizations to plan and educate around the goals of providing access to devices, high speed broadband access, and digital navigation for every resident. Lessons learned from these initiatives will continue to inform the Division's work over the next five years.

Past continuing education programs sponsored by DLD were held in person at library sites around the state. During the pandemic, however, DLD moved to offering these programs online, resulting in

increased attendance as more library staff members were able to devote an hour to training rather than several hours plus travel that had been required previously. Attendance became feasible, and directors encouraged staff to take advantage of virtual learning opportunities especially while library buildings were still closed to the public. Learning from this success, DLD will continue to offer many programs, information sessions, and meetings online, thereby increasing their accessibility to a broader range of library workers.

Future: Leading Our Libraries

In the summer and fall of 2021, library directors and leadership teams representing all types of libraries in Connecticut – standalone public libraries of various sizes, libraries with shared automation systems, special, municipal, association, and libraries serving persons with disabilities – self-selected to participate in a three-part individualized pilot program called Lead Your Library: The Importance of Foresight and Vision to Library Success. Twelve libraries participated in this program offering space for reflection, information sharing, collaboration, and deep engagement, all towards the goal of co-creating the future for resource sharing in CT.

Lead Your Library responded to the CT Vision for Resource Sharing drafted by the ACLPD Resource Sharing committee. The Vision centers on the philosophy that "Connecticut's libraries willingly cooperate and collaborate with each other and affiliated organizations to provide maximum access to materials, services, and expertise for the mutual benefit of all." The CT Vision for Resource Sharing was endorsed as a best practice for CT libraries by the CT State Library Board in November 2021, formalizing this work.

Conversations with the twelve participating libraries moved beyond the traditional notions of sharing physical and digital collections and moved towards the future of human sharing. As DLD staff met with each library multiple times over the weeks, patterns and trends emerged showing the need for knowledge and expertise as primary within almost every library. Access to expertise began with administration and management topics including human resources, legal advice, finances, board development, information technology, and facilities. These needs arose primarily for smaller libraries with limited staff and for nonprofit association libraries separate from municipal structures.

Other kinds of expertise were also identified as resource sharing opportunities including staffing, programming, partnerships, community engagement, and fundraising. Participants offered specific ideas for resource sharing including mentoring programs, targeted regionalization, a network of library experts, a temporary library staffing agency, a statewide ILS system, a universal library card, professional development opportunities, and more. In considering what would have to be true for libraries to build and invest in this statewide vision for resource sharing, participants had strong and constructive ideas. Many touched on the lack of a level playing field when it comes to funding which thus highlights the need to make any resource sharing system an equitable one. Investing in all libraries to provide equitable access to all is a priority.

To provide all Connecticut residents equal access to library resources and improve users' access to information, the CT State Library supports deliverIT CT (statewide delivery services), borrowIT CT (statewide shared borrowing to cardholders), requestIT CT (statewide interlibrary loan), findIT CT (statewide library catalog), researchIT CT (free electronic resources for all CT libraries and their users), and eGO CT (statewide library eBook and eAudio collection). Collaborative resource sharing for maximizing access to a vast array of resources is achieved through these programs. Building on these current resource sharing systems, the concept of a shareIT CT program emerged in these discussions, a program that would incentivize the sharing of staff, expertise, programs, and other nontraditional resources across libraries.

DLD will update knowledge of the state’s library service needs through constant and ongoing communication with library staff and directors who use the services as well as regular meetings of the State Library Board, ACLPD, and other committees. DLD continues to solicit and receive formal evaluation results for professional development workshops, as well as user feedback on deliverIT and resource sharing. Before issuing a new RFP for database subscriptions to start in FY2026, DLD will seek customer input on the previous subscriptions as well as needs for the future.

Specific Needs for Library Services

How does DLD forge libraries’ resilience for the future? By “future proofing” Connecticut libraries for any situation. This involves continuation of DLD’s core services to support libraries as community anchors alongside openly embracing change, acknowledging that libraries and workers are all in this together. To that end, communication will continue to be vital – from the State Library to directors, among directors, through all levels of library staff, and outward towards patrons and stakeholders. Recognizing that the future is people, DLD will invest in the people working in, supporting, and using Connecticut libraries.

After examining and reflecting on the results of the evaluations, focus groups, and initiatives, the CT State Library has framed the following specific needs for library services to be addressed in the next five years:

- Library workforce and communities all benefit from leadership, learning, and tools to integrate social justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility into daily practice.
- Library workforce benefits from ongoing training, tools, and professional support focused on both core library services as well as emerging needs.
- Library workforce benefits from knowing how to develop and capitalize on community partnerships to solidify their places as community anchors.
- Library workforce and patrons benefit from sustainable methods of resource sharing that take advantage of a statewide economy of scale.

Goals

Goal	Identified Need from Needs Assessment	LSTA Priorities
Goal 1. Support the library workforce as they integrate social justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (SJDEIA) into their daily work and their approach to patrons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library workforce and communities all benefit from leadership, learning, and tools to integrate social justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility into daily practice. 	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Goal 2. Support the impact of libraries as community anchors serving diverse populations with increased institutional capacity, community partnerships, and programming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library workforce benefits from ongoing training, tools, and professional support focused on both core library services as well as emerging needs. • Library workforce benefits from knowing how to develop and capitalize on community partnerships to solidify their places as community anchors. 	2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8
Goal 3. Ensure equitable access to information and library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library workforce and patrons benefit from sustainable methods of resource sharing that take advantage of a statewide economy of scale. 	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

resources for all residents of the state.		
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The CT State Library’s top priority for this Five-Year Plan is to support the library workforce, starting with its staff, in learning, developing, and integrating social justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility into their mindset and all aspects of library work. Connected to Aspen Report’s theme of People, this priority ensures that libraries across Connecticut are meeting the present moment in a real and actionable way, acknowledging gaps, and building stakes in growing equitable library services for all.

The CT State Library’s second priority of this Five-Year Plan is to emphasize the role of libraries as anchor institutions within their communities and to help librarians gain skills, knowledge, and resources to serve their communities’ needs. Partnerships and collaborations, both formal and not, will remain instrumental in how DLD grows its work. Building on the Aspen Report’s themes of People and Place, the State Library will help public libraries cement their place as essential organizations that are central to the quality of life, civic and cultural engagement, and economic vitality in every municipality.

As a third priority, the CT State Library will continue to support statewide programs that represent the foundations of library service to all people in CT, building on the Aspen Report’s theme of Platform. This priority ensures that all CT residents regardless of location, ability, or socio-economic circumstances, will have equal access to quality library services.

Each of these goals address existing, ongoing, and long-term needs. While some projects and activities to support the goals will be finite (e.g., subgrants) or repeated annually (e.g., Summer Reading), others will continue from year to year (e.g., databases).

The CT State Library will meet these goals through a combination of statewide services and programs, special projects, and possible subgrants to libraries. Specific projects and activities may change in response to state budget conditions and the continual reassessment of library needs. As in past years, the State Library will continue to pilot and test new initiatives with libraries to determine through data and feedback whether they will be useful to the statewide community. With limited resources, the State Library must conduct its due diligence and lay foundations before moving forward with anything new.

These goals and projects were designed by DLD staff informed by their outreach, focus groups, ongoing work, existing relationships, and daily interactions with libraries and the people who work there. The Division’s success is because of the expertise of DLD staff, the invaluable insights of its human library network, and the ways in which constant community engagement is paramount.

Projects

Goal 1. Support the library workforce as they integrate social justice, diversity, equity inclusion, and accessibility (SJDEIA) into their daily work and their approach to patrons.

Projects and Activities:

- 1) Ensure that DLD consultants have appropriate and extensive training to best support and educate the CT library workforce in building equitable library services.
 - a. Provide well-rounded and continuous training for DLD staff in justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (i.e., cultural competency, cultural humility, and systemic inequities as they tie to library services).
 - b. Develop a diversity plan for DLD, to stand separate from the strategic plan, that will list goals and outcomes that integrate diversity into everything the division does.

- c. Update Collection Management Policy to reflect the growing diversity of CT's communities and its literary and affirmational needs; and continue to conduct diversity audits of all collections.
- 2) Provide the CT library workforce with appropriate and extensive training to best support CT residents through equitable library services.
 - a. Provide well-rounded and continuous training for CT's library workforce in justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (i.e., cultural competency, cultural humility, and systemic inequities as they tie to library services).
 - b. Award subgrants to libraries, as funding and priorities permit.
 - 3) Through DLD, provide the CT library community access to a variety of resources to support integrating social justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in their library.
 - a. Provide resources (i.e., books, databases) to supplement and support libraries as they work to meet the everchanging needs of their staff, communities, and collections.
 - b. Provide access to a set of SJDEIA guidelines and benchmarks to enhance the Best Practices in CT Public Libraries.
 - c. Award subgrants to libraries, as funding and priorities permit.
 - 4) Catalyze CT libraries as active agents in the movement for digital equity for all CT residents.
 - a. Provide on-going training for libraries in digital inclusion planning and execution.
 - b. Provide pilot grants that will allow libraries to gain expertise in digital navigation, as funding permits.
 - c. Award other subgrants to libraries, as funding and priorities permit.
 - d. Support the development and operation of CT Libraries & Partners for Digital Equity, a state alliance for education, networking, and policy development.
 - e. Support the collaboration of libraries and partners in the annual Digital Inclusion Week.

Additional activities can be added as the need for them is identified through DLD's continuous assessments.

The State Library may offer subgrants to libraries to support some of the projects and activities in Goal 3. This determination of whether to offer subgrants will be made from year to year depending on the State Library's projected financial condition.

Benefits and outcomes:

- DLD investment in its own staff through ongoing, engaged learning on social justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility so they can engage this growing insight as better consultants.
- A more knowledgeable and empathetic library workforce offers equitable and inclusive service to their communities.
- The CT library community has access to the necessary tools, resources, and consultants to support their collaborative integration of social justice practices into their work, staff, and communities.
- All CT residents will have digital access as libraries, funding, and partnerships work to remove all existing connectivity barriers.

Projected use of IMLS funds to meet this goal:

- DLD staff to enact and support these projects
- Instructor and webinar fees
- Contractor fees
- Purchase of circulating library materials
- Other necessary supplies and materials
- Training and travel for DLD staff to learn more about these subjects

- Possible subgrants used to pay for consultants, contractors, library personnel, mileage, supplies, library materials, and other program expenses.

The timeline for these projects and activities will be the full five-year period, 2023-2027.

Goal 2. Support the impact of libraries as community anchors serving diverse populations with increased institutional capacity, community partnerships, and programming.

Projects and Activities:

- 1) Assist libraries with creating strategic, sustainable partnerships and lifelong learning programs.
 - a. Provide support to public libraries for year-round and summer reading initiatives (i.e., book tracking software, training, book lists, subgrants)
 - b. Award subgrants to libraries to support partnerships and lifelong learning, as funding and priorities permit.
 - c. Connect individual libraries with partner organizations to address healthcare, legal needs, digital inclusion, and financial literacy needs in their communities.
- 2) Offer training opportunities and resources for the library workforce to improve their abilities to create strategic, sustainable partnerships and to address lifelong learning in their communities.
 - a. Building on partnerships with state agencies and nonprofit organizations, recruit trainers from those organizations.
 - b. Offer training for the library workforce through workshops, webinars, and self-guided instruction on a variety of subject areas.
 - c. Share the Libraries and Veterans National Forum Toolkit with libraries and other organizations in Connecticut to address cultural competency training and expand service to veterans and military families.
 - d. Provide access to a circulating collection of professional development books and resources for the library workforce in print and electronic format.
 - e. Offer training to the library workforce related to LBPH resources and services.
- 3) Assist libraries with planning initiatives.
 - a. Provide assistance from DLD staff.
 - b. Encourage use of Aspen Action Guide in library planning.
 - c. Update the Best Practices for CT Public Libraries with SJDEIA benchmarks and promote its use as a self-assessment and development tool for libraries
- 4) Provide subject expertise and advice through DLD's library consultants.
 - a. Provide individual consultations on DLD staff subject specialties for library directors, library employees, and boards.
 - b. Continue regional liaison program in which DLD consultants are paired with libraries and directors in a defined geographic region.
 - c. Provide subject-specific web pages and email discussion lists to support DLD initiatives and programs.
- 5) Collect annual statistics from public libraries and disseminate the results for local use in planning and budgeting
 - a. Provide staff support for annual data collection and dissemination.
 - b. Add questions related to diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.
 - c. As the set of outcome data from Summer Reading grows, share the results with richer customizable chart-making capabilities.

Additional activities can be added as the need for them is identified through DLD's continuous assessments.

The State Library may offer subgrants to libraries to support some of the projects and activities in Goal 2. This determination of whether to offer subgrants will be made from year to year depending on the State Library's projected financial condition.

Benefits and outcomes:

- A more knowledgeable, skilled library workforce positioned to effectively serve their communities.
- Increased library user satisfaction and engagement with their library's services.
- Greater number of sustainable partnerships between libraries and public/private community organizations.
- Greater responsiveness by libraries to providing programs and services that meet stated and assessed community needs.

Projected use of IMLS funds to meet this goal:

- DLD staff to enact and support these projects
- Software licensing fees
- Instructor and webinar fees
- Contractor fees
- Subscription fees
- Purchase of circulating library materials
- Other necessary supplies and materials
- Training and travel for DLD staff to learn more about these subjects
- Possible subgrants used to pay for consultants, contractors, library personnel, mileage, supplies, library materials, and other program expenses.

The timeline for these projects and activities will be the full five-year period, 2023-2027.

Goal 3. Ensure equitable access to information and library resources for all residents of the state.

Projects and Activities:

- 1) Facilitate resource sharing of physical materials among libraries through a statewide catalog, interlibrary loan system, delivery system, and supplementary library collections.
 - a. Continue to provide access to a statewide catalog (findIT CT) that includes holdings from public, school, academic, and special libraries as well as an ILL system (requestIT CT), and eGO CT (statewide eBook platform).
 - b. Train the library workforce to use the statewide catalog, interlibrary loan system, and eGO CT platform to find and deliver resources for their patrons.
 - c. Acquire supplementary collections, particularly those related to subjects of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and circulate them to libraries through the service center and LBPH.
 - d. Support a sustainable solution for statewide delivery of physical library materials (deliverIT CT).
- 2) Facilitate sharing of a wide variety of intangible resources among libraries, including ideas, programs, partnerships, and others.
 - a. Support opportunities for CT libraries to activate the CT Vision for Resource Sharing, which includes a framework of three scenarios alongside a toolkit consisting of best practices, standards, strategies, and tactical actions.
 - b. Provide opportunity for CT libraries to share successful, innovative initiatives, especially those that engage partners and address needs of the communities.
- 3) Provide access to scholarly and popular databases (researchIT CT) for all residents and students.
 - a. Select databases, negotiate vendor contracts, and purchase subscriptions.

- b. Train the library workforce to use electronic databases effectively to find resources for their patrons including support for the migration to a new user interface scheduled for summer of 2022.
 - c. Promote the availability of these free resources for all CT patrons.
- 4) Offer a statewide eBook and digital resource sharing platform populated with electronic resources for use by all CT library card holders.
- a. Launch the Palace Project app to all public libraries and continue to add content to the platform.
 - b. Work with K-12 schools to deliver age-appropriate content directly to schools as part of the eGO CT Community Share program.
- 5) Expand the services and impact of LBPH beyond just the provision of recreational resources to patrons with print disabilities.
- a. Increase outreach activities to new patrons and partner organizations.
 - b. Circulate materials.
 - c. Offer reader's advisory services to patrons.
 - d. Provide information and training for statewide library employees about LBPH and its resources.
 - e. Partner with several public libraries across the state to establish dedicated information hubs that highlight LBPH resources, equipment, and services.

Additional activities can be added as the need for them is identified through DLD's continuous assessments.

The statewide catalog and delivery support the borrowIT CT program, which allows any patron to borrow an item from any public library and return the item to any other public or academic library in the state, with the delivery system providing item delivery back to the owning library.

Benefits and outcomes:

- All CT students, teachers, and residents have seamless access to a wide range of electronic resources including eBooks to support their research and lifelong learning needs.
- All CT residents can find and borrow the library materials they want in the format they want.
- A more knowledgeable, skilled library workforce can locate and obtain materials requested by patrons.
- The CT library community share an expanded menu of nontangible, creative, and innovative resources, including, ideas, programs, partnerships, and more.

Projected use of IMLS funds to meet this goal:

- DLD staff to enact and support these projects
- Database licensing fees
- Contractor fees
- Purchase of circulating library materials
- Other necessary supplies and materials
- Equipment rental
- Training and travel for DLD staff to learn more about these subjects

The timeline for these projects and activities will be the full five-year period, 2023-2027.

Coordination Efforts

Stated Goal	IMLS Focal Areas	LSTA Purposes	Associated Project	IMLS Intent
1. SJDEIA Integration in Daily Work	Institutional Capacity, Information Access	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8	SJDEIA Training of DLD Consultants	Improve library workforce
			SJDEIA Training of Library Workforce	Improve library workforce
			SJDEIA Resources	Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources, Improve library operations
			Digital Equity	Improve library operations
2. Community Anchors	Lifelong Learning, Institutional Capacity	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	Partnerships & Programs	Improve users' general knowledge and skills, Improve library operations
			Training & Resources	Improve library workforce
			Planning	Improve library operations
			Consulting/DLD Administration	Improve library operations
			Library Statistics	Improve library operations
3. Information Access	Information Access	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	Resource Sharing Physical Materials	Improve users' ability to obtain information resources.
			Resource Sharing Networking	Improve users' ability to obtain information resources.
			Statewide Databases	Improve users' ability to discover information.
			eBook Platform	Improve users' ability to obtain information resources.
			LBPH	Improve users' ability to obtain

				information resources.
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Evaluation Plan

The CT State Library will use a variety of methodologies in evaluating the success of the projects in meeting the three goals.

The CT State Library will provide responses in the State Program Report (SPR) to outcomes-based assessment questions for training opportunities for the library workforce (Goals 1 and 2), use of the professional development and supplemental collections (Goals 2 and 3), and subgrant-funded instruction programs for libraries’ patrons (Goal 2). This data will be collected through surveys administered after library workforce training, surveys collected from librarians who borrow professional development books, and final reports from subgrantees.

DLD staff will continue to provide regular reports on their individual consultations with public library staff regarding the incorporation of social justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in all work; partnership opportunities and planning that may enhance their ability to determine and meet community needs; and efforts to advance digital inclusion services (Goals 1 and 2).

Activities that include the development of policy, best practices, and benchmarking for public libraries (Goals 1 and 2) will be approved via an evaluation process conducted by the Advisory Council for Library Development, the State Library Board, or both. Networking to improve resource sharing (Goal 3) and SJDEIA work (Goal 1) will be used as opportunities to solicit feedback during development and after approval.

The CT State Library will monitor its success in elevating public library initiatives in resource sharing, SJDEIA, partnerships, and so on, by keeping track of media mentions, public events hosted, and occurrences in DLD official communications (Goals 1, 2 and 3).

The CT State Library has invested time and resources in crafting a new direction for the Summer Reading Program (Goal 2). With the foresight and groundwork of DLD’s Children and YA Consultant, the Division has made strides in moving the State Library’s Summer Reading Program towards an outcome-based model focused on goal setting, values, and community impact. DLD provided in-depth training and resources to support this new approach and mindset. The summer of 2021 was the first summer with the redesigned outcome-based summer reading report and patron evaluations for public libraries. This methodology will continue.

LBPH will continue self-assessments through patron surveys with the target of maintaining a high level of patron satisfaction from year to year and will add surveying user experience at its new information hubs at selected public libraries (Goal 3).

Using annual reports, the CT State Library will track and report in the SPR on the performance indicators for projects and activities identified in the cart below, with the target of sustaining quality of service and satisfaction from year to year, contingent on resources. These annual assessments will feed into the overall independent evaluation of this Five-Year Plan in FY2027.

Goals & Objectives	Associated Project	Activity	Performance Indicators
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Goal 1 Objective: Support the library workforce, including DLD staff, in learning, developing, and integrating social justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in all aspects of library work.	Training of DLD consultants for support	Ongoing classes	# of classes attended, participant outcome surveys, participant annual reports on applications of lessons	
		DLD diversity plan	Plan approved by Advisory Council for Library Development and the State Library Board	
		Update collection management policy	Plan approved by Advisory Council for Library Development	
	Library Workforce Training	Continuous training	# of trainings, # of attendees, surveys of workshop attendee outcomes; annual professional development survey	
		Subgrants as funding permits	# of applicants, final reports by awardees including program participant surveys or staff surveys, as appropriate	
	SJDEIA Resources	Resources (print, classes, databases)	# of libraries participating and using, # of items purchased, borrowed, delivered, loaned; # of page views (databases)	
		Develop Best Practices guidance for SJDEIA	SJDEIA guidelines and benchmarks approved by Advisory Council for Library Development	
		Subgrants as funding permits	# of applicants, final reports by awardees including program participant surveys or staff surveys, as appropriate	
	Digital Equity	Library workforce training in planning & execution	# of attendees, surveys of workshop attendee outcomes, annual professional development survey results	
		Pilot subgrants as funding permits	# of applicants, final reports by awardees including program participant surveys and/or staff surveys, as appropriate	
		Support CT Libraries & Partners for Digital Equity	# of members, # of library participants, # of partners, annual report approved by Advisory Council for Library Development	
		Support Digital Inclusion Week	# of partners, # of media reports, # of events, outcome surveys for event participants, CT Libraries & Partners approved final report to Advisory Committee for Library Development	
	Goal 2 Objective: Support the impact of libraries as community anchors serving diverse populations with	Partnerships & Programs	Summer Reading support	Summer Reading Annual Report, which includes program counting, patron outcome survey data, and other metrics provided by participating libraries
			Subgrants as funding permits	# of applicants, final reports by awardees including program participant surveys and/or staff surveys, as appropriate
			Connect libraries & partners	Annual DLD consultant reports on partnerships in healthcare, legal needs,

increased institutional capacity, community partnerships and programming.			financial needs, and digital inclusion, # of libraries participating
	Training & Resources	Recruit trainers from partners	# of trainers, instructor evaluations for State of CT
		Library workforce training	# of workshops, # of workshop participants, workshop participant surveys, # of users for self-guided instruction, survey of users of professional development databases
		Share Veterans Toolkit	# of libraries implementing veteran programs
		Professional development collection	# of related acquisitions, # of loans, # of libraries using, # of individual borrowers, annual professional development survey results
		Train library workforce for service to LBPH users	# of workshops and instructional sessions, # of participants, workshop participant outcome surveys
		Planning	DLD staff assistance
	Promote Aspen Guide		# of mentions in DLD communications, in DLD workshops, on DLD LibGuides
	Develop and share SJDEIA benchmarks		SJDEIA benchmarks approved by Advisory Council for Library Development, # of mentions in DLD communications
	Award subgrants funding permitting		# of applicants, final reports by awardees including program participant surveys and/or staff surveys, as appropriate
	Consulting /DLD Admin	DLD 1:1 consultations	# of DLD consultant-library exchanges
		Continue Library Liaison Program	Annual consultant's reports on liaison work; DLD annual open house and follow-up survey of participants
		Provide subject-specific online sites & email list serves	Annual report by DLD consultants with itemization, # of mentions in DLD official communications, # of list serve participants
	Library Statistics	Annual data collection & dissemination	# of libraries contributing data, # of libraries requesting data sheets for budget process
		Update survey with SJDEIA questions	2023 CT Public Libraries Annual Report form for reporting libraries approved by DLD Administration
		Enrich reporting of summer reading outcomes	2023 CT Public Libraries Summer Reading Report and resources disseminated
Goal 3 Objective: Ensure equitable access to	Resource Sharing Materials	Provide access to findIT CT, requestIT CT, and eGO CT	# of libraries participating, # of items included, borrowed, loaned, and/or delivered

information and library resources for all residents.		Train library workforce in online resource use	# of workshops, # of participants in workshops, participant outcome surveys
		Enrich supplementary collections	# of acquisitions by SJ, DEI, and A
		Sustain deliverIT CT	# of libraries participating, # of items delivered, \$ savings vs a vs US Postal Service
	Networking for Resource Sharing	Support library implementation	# of consultant exchanges on CT Vision for Resource Sharing toolkit
		Share initiatives by libraries	# of libraries showcased on CT Pages, on DLD LibGuides, in official DLD communications and by media; # of resource sharing panels or exchanges of librarians hosted
	Statewide Databases	Select databases	# of libraries participating, # of page views
		Train library workforce to use databases	# of workshops, # of participants in workshops, participant outcome surveys
		Promote to all CT residents	# of media mentions, annual report on DLD strategic communications
	eBook Platform	Launch Palace Project	# of libraries trained in Palace Project, # of libraries participating
		eGO Community Share program	# of exchanges with schools, # of schools participating
	LPPH	Increase outreach	# of new patrons, # of new partner organizations
		Circulate materials	# of acquisitions, # of patrons, # of items loaned
		Readers' Advisory	# of exchanges, # of patrons requesting service, # of acquisitions
		Train library workforce in LBPH best practices and offerings	# of individual consultations, # of workshops, # of participants in workshops, participant outcome surveys
		Establish information hubs	# of hubs established in public libraries, hub user outcome surveys

Stakeholder Involvement

The CT State Library uses the following procedures to involve libraries, library users, and partners throughout the state in policy decisions.

The State Library Board (SLB) determines policy for the State Library and provides for the supervision of the State Library by a State Librarian appointed by the Board. Section 11-1 of the Connecticut General Statutes assigns to the Board responsibility for:

- the supervision of the State Library by a State Librarian
- planning for state-wide library service, other than for school libraries

- maximum state participation in federal aid for public libraries
- establishing standards for principal public libraries
- appointing an advisory council for library planning and development [ACLPD]
- instituting and conducting programs of state-wide library service
- maintaining the state's principal law library
- maintaining a library service for the blind and other persons with disabilities
- planning and developing the Connecticut Digital Library
- making construction grants to public libraries
- creating and maintaining the official state archives
- programs for library development and reader services
- operating the Raymond E. Baldwin Museum of Connecticut History and Heritage.

The Advisory Council for Library Planning and Development (ACLPD) provides the State Library Board and staff with advice, perspective, and communication from the library community on matters relating to the State Library's various statewide program and service responsibilities, including the administration of the federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). Its 19 members consists of one representative from each of the following interest areas:

- Small public libraries (serving less than 10,000 population)
- Medium public libraries (serving 10,000 to 99,999 population)
- Large public libraries (serving 100,000 and over population)
- Connecticut Library Consortium (CLC)
- Libraries participating in shared automation systems
- The Connecticut Library Association (CLA)
- Special libraries
- Academic libraries
- Institution libraries
- Libraries serving persons with disabilities
- The Department of Education
- The Department of Higher Education
- Six users of libraries

Members of the library community and members of the public are welcome to attend both SLB and ACLPD meetings, where they can address these groups during periods of public comment.

The CT State Library and DLD staff meet regularly with committees and task forces that support statewide projects, such as the Connecticut Digital Library Advisory Board, the eResource Task Force, and CT Libraries and Partners for Digital Equity. The CT State Library is committed to continuing to work with other state agencies and offices to coordinate resources, programs, and activities to leverage federal and state investments in childhood education, workforce development, and other programs and activities related to library services. DLD works with the CT Department of Education on the Governor's Summer Reading Challenge as well as with the State Education Resource Center, the CT Office of State Broadband, the CT Office of Higher Education, and the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and other state agencies on additional statewide initiatives.

In addition, DLD has existing and growing relationships with nonprofit organizations, social service agencies, and other strategic partners including the CT Access to Justice Working Group, CT Saves, Libraries and Veterans National Forum, Hartford HealthCare, CT Library Consortium, CT Library Association, CT Association of School Librarians, CT Association of School, and CT Center for the Book at CT Humanities. Beyond Connecticut, the CT State Library will continue to work with state and regional partners, including other State Library Administrative Agencies (SLAAs), the Council of State Library Agencies in the Northeast (COSLINE), Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA), and the National Network of Libraries of Medicine/New England Region.

The CT State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH) Advisory Committee advises and assists the staff of the State Library on matters pertaining to the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and, when appropriate, gives advice and makes recommendations to the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS). The committee must have at least ten members, of whom at least one-third must be patrons of LBPH. The remaining committee members include members from the following areas:

- Veterans Administration Visual Impairment Service Team
- Low Vision Support Groups
- Connecticut Volunteer Services for the Blind & Handicapped, Inc (CVSBH)
- State Education Resource Center
- New England Assistive Technology Center (NEAT) at Oak Hill
- CRIS Radio
- Other organizations and agencies that serve people who are blind or visually impaired, people who have a reading disability, or people who have a print disability.

The LBPH Advisory Committee meets quarterly throughout the calendar year. LBPH reports annually to the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled, U.S. Library of Congress.

Communication and Public Availability

The CT State Library will continue to inform the State Library Board, the State Librarian, and Advisory Council for Library Planning and Development (ACLPD) about the new plan and progress on meeting its goals. DLD will post the new Five-Year Plan on its website (<http://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/dld>), which is readily available to the library community and the public. Copies of the plan are available upon request.

Through the DLD Regional Liaison Program, each consultant provides personalized outreach to a group of principal libraries in contiguous towns. The liaisons help to share information across each region and keep librarians updated on news from the State Library regarding events, resources, training, grants, and other services, including the new Five-Year Plan. The liaisons also gather input and requests from their libraries that will help shape DLD's future services and offerings. DLD's intent with this program is to inform, engage, and empower the Connecticut library community through effective and regular communication.

In addition, DLD communications efforts have expanded and grown, and information about the new plan will be shared through all the channels described below. Regular email communications now include Weekly Wrap-ups to the listservs begun in March of 2020; DLD Monthly Newsletters; a new bimonthly DLD Children and YA Newsletter; and the new bi-annual Directors' Notes email specifically for public library directors. In addition, DLD launched an initiative to send all new public library directors a welcome letter with access to DLD resources, including the Directors Handbook, Best Practices, the Five-Year Plan, DLD's menu of services and other announcements, as well as an introduction to their DLD Regional Liaison, as each DLD Consultant serves as the point person for a region of the state.

DLD ramped up coordination across its three social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) with a new management platform making it easy to share and engage timely and efficiently. DLD also increased media relations efforts around specific initiatives with press releases for activities including ARPA funding, digital inclusion, the State Annual Report, and other initiatives.

Monitoring

DLD monitors the Five-Year Plan through both formal and informal methods. DLD staff, including the LSTA Coordinator, will assess progress on the Five-Year Plan goals and projects annually in August/September, including a review of annual reports from statewide programs such as deliverIT and the catalog/ILL system. DLD will review activities related to Goals 1 and 2 to ensure that all are being addressed and will adjust service offerings as needed in the following year to address gaps.

ACLPD and its subcommittees will continually assess and adapt the resource sharing systems to ensure sustainability, based on communication with libraries and consortia/networks.

When subgrants are awarded, the LSTA Coordinator will oversee financial and programmatic monitoring of them through communications with the project director, evaluation and expenditure reports, and a site visit, where feasible.

The LSTA Coordinator will track LSTA spending on projects monthly to ensure compliance with federal regulations and correct allocation of expenses to specific projects.

Assurances

These required certifications and assurances are submitted with this plan:

- Program Assurances for 2023 Grant Award (includes compliance with Internet Safety; Trafficking in Persons; Nondiscrimination; Debarment and Suspension; Drug-Free Workplace; Federal Debt Status; and Lobbying requirements)
- Assurances of Non-Construction Programs
- State Legal Officer's Certification of Authorized Certifying Official
- Internet Safety Certification for Applicant Public Libraries, Public Elementary and Secondary School Libraries, and Consortia with Public and/or Public-School Libraries

Appendix A: Strategic Initiatives

- **Leadership**
- **Children & Young Adult**
- **Community Engagement**
- **Literacies and Partnerships**
- **Collections**

Leadership

Aspen Institute

Following the release of the groundbreaking Aspen Institute report, *Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries*, Connecticut was selected to host the first state level dialogue on public libraries in April 2015 with nearly 100 library leaders, state and local policy makers, and civic partners. The State Library integrated much of the identified actions from this convening into the Best Practices in Connecticut's Public Libraries, a tool that libraries can use to evaluate its services. In addition to promoting the Best Practices tool, DLD continues to utilize the Aspen Institute people, place, and platform tenets in DLD communications and in work with the library community, whether working directly with library directors and administrations or boards as well as rolling it out through numerous channels including the Association of CT Library Boards (ACLB) annual conference. DLD has structured the Weekly Wrap-up email launched in March 2020 with sections on people (the human capital, relationships, community, and participation), place (the safe and trusted physical, virtual, and hybrid spaces), and platform (the depth of customized services, data, tools, and resources).

Best Practices in CT Public Libraries

Starting in 2014, a task force of ACLPD members began to develop uniform best practices and standards to apply to all CT public libraries with input from the CT library community. On September 18, 2017, Best Practices in CT's Public Libraries was endorsed by the State Library Board as a voluntary best practice for Connecticut public libraries and encouraged their widespread use. These best practices were carefully developed to guide libraries toward 21st century practices and principles in the areas of Facilities, Finance, Governance, Resources and Services, and Staff describing baseline levels for essential services in all libraries, with additional levels for enhanced and exemplary services.

CT Vision for Resource Sharing

The CT Vision for Resource Sharing established a philosophy that "Connecticut's libraries willingly cooperate and collaborate with each other and affiliated organizations to provide maximum access to materials, services, and expertise for the mutual benefit of all." The CT Vision offers a framework of three possible resource sharing scenarios for CT libraries and is intended to provide a vision of opportunity for the CT library community to determine through consensus, which scenario. The CT Vision includes an overview of the three scenarios along with a toolkit consisting of best practices, standards, strategies, and tactical actions.

Lead Your Library

In spring and summer 2021, DLD launched Lead Your Library with a three-part series of workshops for CT library leaders to understand the CT Vision for Resource Sharing and to inform and prepare them to bring futures work to their libraries and staff. Focused on leadership, participants learned the importance of strategic foresight and vision to the future of libraries and to their own effective leadership. They learned and began to put into practice a set of critical leadership behaviors for involving and engaging library staff in the creation of a compelling vision for their library. Following the workshops, libraries representing all types of libraries in CT self-selected to participate in a three-part individualized pilot program. Over the course of the pilot, libraries participated in the planning and development of a process to craft a collaborative future vision for their library. Lead Your Library strove to build more confidence in their ability to lead transformative change.

Transformation for Libraries | The Futures School

The CT State Library has identified Strategic Foresight as a critical discipline for librarians now. The COVID-19 pandemic and the coinciding social justice movement forced adaptive change in the way libraries serve their communities; Strategic Foresight training can provide librarians with the skills to plan for future shifts. With support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, DLD has partnered with Kedge: The Futures School, to provide training that equips 300 librarians with a futures mindset and skillset. The trainings will result in the development of adaptable, resilient, and transformative individuals who are able to connect and capitalize on their changing organizational and community environments.

Children and Young Adult

Reimagining School Readiness

The Reimagining School Readiness Toolkit is a suite of research-backed activities. The corresponding training introduces library staff to help families prepare children ages 0 to 8 for success in school and in life. Through an interactive presentation with hands-on activities, this training introduces library staff to the research, practical implications, and resources offered in the toolkit, which is available in its entirety for free online.

Transforming Teen Services (T3)

T3 was created to provide continuing education opportunities to library workers who work with teens. Trainings were held across the state and then virtually on the four components of the training, Connected Learning, Computational Thinking, Youth Development, and Educational Equity.

Summer Reading

Traditionally the data collected about summer reading has been output data (i.e., how many books or pages read). Going forward the CT State Library will work to collect impact data using the iRead summer program. This method will collect information about how the library serves community patrons during the summer and what affect those services are having on members of the community to learn if their needs are being met and if a positive impact is being made. For the summer of 2022, the CT State Library initiated outreach to the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection inspired by the iRead summer reading theme, *Camp iRead: Read Beyond the Beaten Path*. Both agencies are looking forward to a growing partnership.

Summer Enrichment Grant

Launched in 2022, the purpose of the CT Library Summer Enrichment Grant Program is to empower libraries to enhance their Summer Reading Programs with additional enrichment opportunities by providing library-led programs and activities that spark creativity and productivity, engage individuals, and benefit their communities. Enrichment activities achieve outcome goals that provide a benefit to the people as defined by IMLS resulting in positive changes to one's skill, knowledge, attitude, behavior, condition, or life status.

Governor's Summer Reading Challenge (GSRC)

GSRC is an initiative run through the CT Department of Education. Every summer the Children and YA Consultant develops five reading lists for CT schools for grades K-12. Each list contains age-appropriate titles that adhere to the summer reading theme and include CT State Nutmeg Nominee titles, as well popular and inclusive titles in the literary community.

From Diversity to Inclusion: How to Audit Your Collection and Why

DLD's Children and YA Consultant developed this workshop in April 2021 for DLD and has since been invited to Wallingford, CT Public schools, CT's Reference Roundtable, CT's Readers Advisory Roundtable as well as Tennessee, the Ohio Library Council, Michigan, Indiana, the New England Library Association, the Children's Literacy Foundation, Niche Academy, and the Mid-Hudson Library System in Poughkeepsie, NY (66 Libraries), reaching approximately 500 people so far.

New England Collaborative

The New England Collaborative, made up of the Youth Services Consultants from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont, provides an opportunity for regionwide, largescale, collaborative programming. Together the members of the New England Collaborative launched the first New England Teen Summit as well as the region's first Summer Summit. The Youth Services Consultants continue to work together to execute large scale workshops and symposium as this multimember partnership grows.

Community Engagement

DLD Liaison Program

Through the DLD Regional Liaison Program, each DLD consultant provides personalized outreach to a group of principal libraries in contiguous towns. The liaisons help to share information across each region and keep librarians updated on news from the State Library regarding events, resources, training, grants, and other services. The liaisons also gather input and requests from their libraries that help shape DLD's future services and offerings. DLD's intent with this program is to inform, engage, and empower the Connecticut library community through effective and regular connection.

Growing Equitable Library (GELS)

GELS is a workshop series that strives to build understandings as library staff, that much of library work has a strong common thread; libraries all need to consider how to create more accessible, DEI-conscious libraries with services rooted in social justice.

CT Pages

Beginning in fall 2021, the CT State Library DLD began partnering with CT libraries to create and release short video conversations with the library staff who make things happen. CT Pages is a channel for sharing community engagement success stories by libraries with and for their communities.

All CT Reads

A program of the CT State Library, All CT Reads is a year-long initiative to promote lifelong reading, learning, and connection that uses a rotating community committee structure to select one main book title and 3 shortlist book titles, each calendar year for three age groups: children (ages 8-12), teens (ages 13-18), and adults. In addition to the books, All CT Reads provides a supported programmatic structure built around the titles with room for individuality and creativity.

Digital Navigation Pilot Projects

The CT State Library DLD, awarded 4 public libraries grants to carry out Digital Navigation Pilot Projects with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The libraries are deploying navigators who can work one-on-one with residents who need computers, low-cost broadband in the home, and/or skills to participate fully in the digital world and gain access to such necessities as telehealth, employment assistance, social benefits, educational resources, and cultural enrichment. The National Digital Inclusion Alliance will be training and advising libraries throughout the grant cycle, which ends July 31, 2022. Anecdotal experience and qualitative and quantitative data collected as part of these pilots will be analyzed with the assistance of the National Digital Inclusion Alliance and compiled into a state report that will not only show the centrality of libraries in the effort to reach digital equity but help inform best practices for librarians in the state.

Literacies and Partnerships

CT Libraries and Partners for Digital Equity

CT Libraries and Partners for Digital Equity (CLPDE) is a group gathered to ensure that community voices and the frontline experience of public library staff are elevated into the statewide conversation about digital equity best practices and policy priorities. In collaboration with the National Digital Inclusion Alliance, CLPDE began when the CT State Library Advisory Council for Library Planning and Development convened a Digital Inclusion Task Force in January 2021 with representatives from small, medium, and large-sized public libraries, K-12 school libraries, and academic libraries as well as the CT Office of State Broadband and the CT Commission for Educational Technology.

Access to Justice Commission | Workgroup on Libraries & Access to Justice

The goal of the Access to Justice Commission is to increase access to justice for all people by identifying and removing barriers. Since its inception, the Commission has collaborated with internal and external stakeholders to identify justice gaps and craft meaningful responses to help ensure that the judicial system is accessible. The Libraries Working Group continues in its ongoing efforts to provide training to public librarians, provide resources (paper and electronic), and to educate them on how best to provide legal information to public library patrons.

CT Saves

CT Saves is the local campaign of America Saves run by the UConn Extension. For a week in February, CT Saves promotes good savings habits, goal setting, and events to help the greater community, including a personal pledge to encourage people to save for a specific goal as well as in-person and online events. The CT State Library, since 2014 has been a partner in CT Saves along with

UConn Extension, the CT Department of Banking, the Better Business Bureau along with community agencies and local banks.

Hartford HealthCare

The CT State Library DLD's new partnership with Hartford HealthCare (HHC) is working to ensure that health services and health information are accessible to all. In June 2021, DLD partnered with HHC to connect with CT libraries to set up COVID-19 mobile vaccination clinics as well as conduct virtual or in-person COVID-19 vaccine information sessions with HHC experts and providers. DLD and HHC know there are a myriad of ways to together address the healthcare and health literacy needs of the communities both are serving, and thus they look forward to expanding this collaborative work beyond the pandemic.

Libraries and Veterans National Forum

The Libraries and Veterans National Forum created the [Libraries and Veterans Toolkit](#) which includes resources created by experts in veteran services to help organizations develop meaningful and accessible programs for veterans and military families in their community. It is aimed at organizations that want to connect and support the members of the veteran and military communities with targeted outreach. The toolkit includes programs and services that can be copied exactly as they are or adapted to an organization's specific needs.

Military Saves

Military Saves is a component of America Saves and is a participant in the Department of Defense Financial Readiness Network which seeks to motivate, support, and encourage military families to save money, reduce debt, and build wealth. Public libraries are a trusted and valued community resource and are uniquely positioned to assist veterans and military families in accessing resources and services for which they may be eligible. DLD is pleased to partner with CT public libraries to disseminate this information to veterans and military families in their communities.

Money Smart Week

Money Smart Week is a national initiative that the CT State Library DLD has participated in since 2013. For a week in April, libraries can promote and host financial literacy programming and resources. DLD has hosted events for librarians to attend to learn about the programming, local partners, and resources they can work with during this week.

STEM Equity Framework Initiative

Cornerstones of Science in partnership with the Institute of Innovative Learning, the University of Missouri School of Library, and Information Science, OCLC/WebJunction, and nine state library agencies including the CT State Library, will develop a STEM Equity Framework for libraries and a library leadership training program. These efforts will strengthen library leaders' skills and expertise to deliver equitable, inclusive, culturally responsive services in partnership with local leaders that address science-based issues of concern to local community members, particularly those from underserved and underrepresented groups. This project is supported with funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Collections

CT Digital Library and eResources

researchIT CT is designed to benefit all individual users in the state, and the Connecticut Digital Library Advisory Board (CDLAB) helps to select statewide databases and electronic resources based on patron needs at public, academic, and school libraries. They are also guided by input from the eResource Task Force. These groups track database usage on an annual basis. Trends indicate that databases that support the school and college curriculum are the most utilized, along with genealogy. The eGO CT program is also monitored by the eResource Task Force. The eGO CT program is in the process of

being rolled out to public libraries utilizing the Place Project app. A new program called eGO CT Community Share is being undertaken to extend the CT State Library's reach to school libraries. It is noted that researchIT CT has a discoverability issue and needs to promote its resources better. CDLAB will continue to monitor use of the statewide databases and eBooks and allocate future resources accordingly.

NASA @ My Library

Connecticut was one of fourteen state library agencies selected to receive resources, training and support through NASA @ My Library, a STEM education initiative to increase and enhance STEM learning opportunities for library patrons throughout the nation. NASA @ My Library aims to engage diverse communities in STEM learning, including communities that are underrepresented in STEM fields. DLD continues to promote and utilize these resources through the availability of the NASA @ My Library Kits available to borrow by all CT libraries. In addition, the collection of STEM kits has grown to include makerspace, science, and technology offerings.

Welcoming Library Kits

The Welcoming Library was developed by the Portland, Maine based nonprofit organization, I'm Your Neighbor Books. The Welcoming Library is a pop-up conversation toolkit on immigration driven by a collection of 30 acclaimed picture books featuring New Arrival and New American families. Readers of all ages "meet" these families on the page and explore the commonalities shared by all families using the I'm Your Neighbor Books-created discussion questions as well as companion programming and education materials. Available as of October 2021, four Welcoming Library Kits with their pop-up display bookshelves is available for borrowing by public, school, and academic libraries in CT to foster an environment of welcoming and belonging.