

Laptop Connect

Participation Guide for Libraries

A program by



In partnership with



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1. Overview

The Laptop ConneCT Program (the “Program”) is a statewide initiative administered by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and implemented in partnership with the Connecticut State Library (CT State Library). Participating public libraries will operate local device lending programs in accordance with Program requirements and state guidance.

The Program is funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Capital Projects Fund (CPF) and is designed to expand equitable access to broadband-enabled devices for Connecticut residents facing affordability barriers.

Although broadband infrastructure has expanded across the state, many residents lack access to appropriate devices needed to fully participate in online education, workforce development, telehealth, and essential services. These challenges disproportionately affect low-income households, seniors, students, jobseekers, individuals with disabilities, and residents of communities with persistent economic distress or other indicators of critical digital access need. This Program addresses that gap by providing broadband-enabled laptops through Connecticut’s public libraries.

All activities under this Program must comply with ARPA CPF requirements and applicable state and federal laws.

2. Program Administration and Roles

The Program is administered through a coordinated partnership between the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), the Connecticut State Library, and participating public libraries:

- **DEEP** serves as the Eligible Entity for the Capital Projects Fund and is responsible for overall program oversight, federal compliance, and reporting to the U.S. Department of the Treasury.
- **The Connecticut State Library** acts as the Program subgrantee and statewide coordinator, managing device distribution, maintaining statewide inventory oversight, providing implementation guidance and digital skills resources, and collecting program data and compliance reports. The CT State Library retains ownership of all Program-funded devices through December 31, 2031.
- **Principal public libraries** in each municipality serve as the local program leads, receiving device allocations and coordinating participation among other public libraries within their municipality. Participating libraries implement the device access program locally by managing inventory, qualifying participants, providing required digital skills support, and ensuring program devices are used for public purposes.

3. Program Participation Process for Libraries

Participation in the Program is not competitive. Devices are allocated using a formula-based methodology designed to ensure equitable statewide distribution. However, principal public libraries must confirm their interest and capacity to participate in order to be included in the allocation pool. Participating libraries must maintain compliance with program requirements throughout the federal interest period, which terminates on December 31, 2031.

Request to Participate

Principal public libraries that wish to participate must submit a completed Library Participation Request Form to Dawn.LaValle@ct.gov by August 3, 2026.

Submission of the form confirms that the principal public library:

- Intends to participate in the Program
- Has the ability to manage program devices and maintain basic inventory controls
- Can implement required participant qualification procedures
- Can collect and report required program data
- Is willing to coordinate participation with other public libraries within the municipality

Only principal public libraries, as defined in Connecticut General Statutes § 11-24a, may submit the Request to Participate.

Eligibility and Participation Confirmation

Following submission, the CT State Library will review forms to confirm participation eligibility and notify libraries of their acceptance. The review is intended to ensure that participating libraries can meet minimum program requirements.

Libraries may be asked to demonstrate the following if requested:

- Existing device inventory controls
- Basic device lending or usage policies
- Capacity to collect and report required program data

Libraries that cannot demonstrate minimum administrative or operational capacity may be deferred from the initial device allocation until identified issues are addressed.

Additional information about device allocations and distribution is provided in Section 6.

4. Timeline

Phase	Milestone	Timing	Description
Program Launch & Commitment	Program Announcement	July 2026	DEEP and the CT State Library release Program guidance and participation materials.
	Intent to Participate Submission Period	August 3, 2026	Principal public libraries submit Library Participation Request Form, including requested allocation and percentage in first shipment. Forms received after this date will still be considered but initial allocations cannot be guaranteed.
	Allocation Confirmation	August 2026	The CT State Library confirms device allocations and estimated delivery windows.
Device Distribution & Public Access Begins	First Allocation Delivery	August 2026	Initial shipment of devices to principal public library receiving hubs. Devices may be made available to qualified borrowers upon receipt.
	Remaining Deliveries	September - October 31, 2026	Remaining shipments of devices. Devices may be issued to qualified borrowers upon receipt.
Ongoing Public Use & Reporting	Public Use and Reporting Period	Upon receipt – December 31, 2031	Devices must remain designated for public use. The CT State Library retains ownership through December 31, 2031.
	End of Public Use Requirement	December 31, 2031	End of required public-use period.

5. Loan Structure

Libraries are generally expected to use their device allocation for a combination of long-term home loans and on-site public use. Libraries may also elect to implement shorter loan periods if consistent with local needs. Libraries seeking to keep more than 50% of their allocation on site for public use and programming will be asked to provide a justification as part of their library participation request form.

Libraries must develop and maintain written policies addressing the following if they do not have applicable policies already:

- Return procedures
- Renewal or reissuance processes
- Tracking and inventory controls

The CT State Library will retain ownership of the devices and is responsible for ensuring that all devices remain tracked and designated for public use through December 31, 2031.

6. Device Allocation and Distribution to Libraries

Allocation

1. First, a minimum allocation of 10 laptops per principal public library will be allocated regardless of size or location. An additional 10 laptops will be allocated to principal public libraries located in a Distressed Municipality and/or Alliance District.
2. Next, DEEP has determined the number and percentage of households without a computer in each municipality based on American Community Survey (2024) data and ordered them by their ownership rates. Communities with lower ownership levels will receive a greater number of additional devices through a simple weighting system. This weight is combined with the number of households without computers to create a score that reflects both the size of the need and the severity of the digital access gap. This approach ensures every town with some need receives devices, while directing more resources to communities where the divide is most significant.

An allocation table by municipality can be found on DEEP's website. If any devices remain due to nonparticipation by certain libraries, they will be re-allocated based on critical need factors, including population served and demonstrated interest.

Distribution

The participating principal public library will serve as the primary receiving hub for device shipments on behalf of all libraries within that municipality. Municipalities without a designated principal public library should coordinate with their contracted principal public library to serve as a receiving hub.

Participating libraries can request up to 75% of their total device allocation to receive in the first shipment. The remaining balance of devices will be distributed at a later date. All allocated devices must be delivered to the participating principal public library by October 31, 2026.

To support timely statewide distribution and ensure all devices are delivered by the October 31, 2026 program deadline, participating libraries are encouraged to submit their Request to Participate form by August 3, 2026. Requests received after this date may still be considered,

pending device availability, but fulfillment of the requested allocation cannot be guaranteed. DEEP and the Connecticut State Library will establish and communicate a final submission deadline at a later date, after which no new Requests to Participate will be accepted.

Laptops that are not requested or otherwise become available will be redistributed among participating libraries. Redistribution decisions will be based on the needs and interest identified in each library's Request to Participate form, the library's demonstrated capacity to successfully implement the program, and overall device availability.

7. Device Recipient Eligibility

To receive a device, residents must be at least 18 years old, have a valid library card, participate in a qualifying state or federal assistance program, and attest that they do not have access to a sufficient personal computer at home. An adult may also receive a device on behalf of a minor in their household. No household may receive more than two laptops.

Library Card Requirement

Borrowers must hold a valid library card issued in the same municipality as the distributing library in order to receive a device (unless a neighboring town has contracted on their behalf). Libraries are responsible for verifying library card status prior to distribution. If an individual does not have a library card, libraries may assist the individual in obtaining one, consistent with local library policies.

Qualifying State and Federal Assistance Programs

Programs include:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP)/Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Medicare
- HUSKY Health (Medicaid/The Children's Health Insurance Program)

Documentation of Eligibility

Applicants must provide documentation demonstrating current participation in a qualifying program. Acceptable forms of verification include:

1. Proof of Benefits or Budget Letters
 - Official Benefit or Budget Letters issued by the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) are the preferred form of documentation.
 - Applicants may obtain these letters through the DSS client portal or request them directly.
2. Notice of Action Letters

- Issued when benefits are approved or renewed.
- Typically include certification period dates (e.g., “approved from [date] to [date]”).

Applicants are encouraged to use the DSS Client Portal, where they can create an account, view current benefit status, and download official documentation. Applicants who do not have a permanent address may use the address of a DSS office or provide the address of a caseworker.

Libraries may assist applicants in accessing the portal and retrieving required documentation when capacity allows.

Onboarding Sessions

Participating libraries are required to hold at least two sessions for each resident receiving a device:

1. **Eligibility & Intake:** A qualification session during which eligibility will be confirmed by library staff and required forms completed by the resident; and
2. **Skills Training & Device Distribution.** A digital skills development and device pickup session during which residents will receive training and be issued their device.

Training for library staff will be provided by the Connecticut State Library. Libraries must ensure that participants complete the required training prior to receiving a device.

8. Device Specifications and Support

This section outlines the technical specifications of Program devices, the methodology used to allocate devices to municipalities, and the process for distributing devices to participating libraries.

Device Specifications

Laptop Model

Dell Pro 16

Notable features:

- **New devices:** Laptops are new, not refurbished equipment.
- **16-inch display:** Larger screen size supports ease of use, readability, and participation in online services, classes, telehealth, job searches, and digital skills activities.
- **Windows operating system:** Devices run on Windows, supporting familiarity and compatibility with common applications and services.
- **Optional touch screen:** Certain configurations include a touch screen option to support easier navigation and accessibility for some users.
- **Built-in camera:** Supports video calls, virtual appointments, online classes, and other remote participation needs.

- **Numeric keypad:** Provides easier data entry for forms, applications, budgeting, and other tasks.

Accessories

Laptops distributed through the Program will include a power adapter and charging cable as well as a protective carrying case, subject to availability:

Additional accessories may be provided on a case-by-case basis to meet the needs of program participants. Participating libraries may determine when additional accessories are appropriate based on individual user needs. These may include:

- Wired mouse
- External keyboard
- Headset
- Stylus

Technical Support and Warranty

Device recipients will be responsible for contacting the device supplier directly for technical support, warranty claims, or device issues. A supplier phone number and support information will be provided with each device. Libraries are not responsible for providing hardware troubleshooting or repair services.

Devices will include AGi Protect Plus warranty coverage to help reduce repair costs, battery replacement costs, and device downtime over the life of the program. The warranty provides a 5-year term, unlimited accidental damage repairs, 5 years of battery coverage with unlimited replacements, prepaid shipping, and an expected repair turnaround time of 3–7 days. AGi also offers an online claim portal with instant approval, a dedicated account manager, and flexibility to support claims through a dedicated phone number so participants are not limited to using the online portal.

The Program does not guarantee replacement of lost, stolen, or damaged devices. Decisions regarding replacement will be made on a case-by-case basis subject to availability by the loaning library, consistent with Program policies.

9. Oversight, Monitoring, and Compliance

Libraries may be required to report information to the CT State Library including, but not limited to:

- Number of devices distributed
- Limited demographic information of device recipients
- Program utilization data
- Impact information or participant outcomes (as feasible)

Additional reporting guidance will be provided by the CT State Library. Consistent with Connecticut law (Conn. Gen. Stat. § 11-25), libraries must maintain the confidentiality of library records that identify individual borrowers or users. Personally identifiable information about laptop borrowers will not be reported to the U.S. Department of the Treasury as part of routine Program reporting. Reporting will consist of aggregated, non-identifying information, except where an individual voluntarily elects to provide information (such as a testimonial or program impact statement), which may be anonymized prior to sharing.

DEEP will conduct ongoing programmatic and compliance monitoring to ensure that Program activities are implemented in accordance with CPF requirements. Monitoring may include review of reports, documentation, inventory records, and other compliance materials, as well as corrective action if necessary.

DEEP will retain ultimate responsibility for Program compliance and reporting to the U.S. Department of the Treasury and will take appropriate action to address any noncompliance identified during the life of the Program.

10. Asset Ownership and Use Requirements

All devices acquired through the Program will be dedicated to public use through participating public libraries for the duration of the Program. The CT State Library will retain ownership of the devices in accordance with state policy and CPF requirements through December 31, 2031.

Participating libraries will serve as custodians of Program-funded devices and will be responsible for day-to-day lending, care, and appropriate use of the assets in accordance with Program requirements.

Devices must be used to serve the public. Laptops may be retained at a library for on-site use by patrons. Devices may not be designated for staff-only or administrative use.

DEEP has established requirements related to inventory control and asset tracking; lending and use policies; and loss, damage, theft, or early retirement of assets. Failure to comply with requirements may result in corrective action, including recovery of assets or other remedies permitted under law.