



Report to the State Library Board

March 22, 2021

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This report is prepared bi-monthly in conjunction with the regular meetings of the Connecticut State Library Board. The report, which will be included in the minutes of the March 22, 2021 meeting of the Board, covers the period of January 26, 2021 through March 19, 2021. It focuses on key accomplishments of agency staff and is a summary of the work activities described in unit reports submitted to me by the managers. These reports are available upon request.

Office of the State Librarian

In the past few months, I have continued my immersion into the work of the State Library. Having met with many of our library partners in the first month on the job, I have now also connected with representatives from: the Commission for Educational Technology, Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council, the National Library Service, Connecticut Humanities, Connecticut Digital Archive, Connecticut Historical Society, Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, and the State Historian. My first library tour was at the Hartford Public Library and my first ribbon cutting event was at the Milford Public Library, which received a construction grant and has a bright and welcoming new Children's Department and meeting rooms. In addition, I met with the staff in each of the State Library's units and have begun a series of roundtables with the Connecticut Library Association's six regions. In other professional activities, I served as a judge for Connecticut History Day, was a panelist for a webinar on library leadership, and have been appointed to the State of the Profession Report Committee, both for the American Association of Law Libraries.

The Connecticut State Library (CSL) met with members of the Appropriations Committee to discuss the Governor's proposed budget for FY22-23 on March 9 and with the Education Subcommittee on March 19. The budget proposes a \$100,000 cut to borrowIT CT, annualizing a \$53,749 FY21 recission, and a \$49,800 savings from a proposed move of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH). In my testimony, I presented our request to retain all of the funds, as our budget overall remains extremely tight. In addition to my testimony, 44 people/groups submitted written testimony and 13 people gave oral testimony in support of the State Library's budget.

Some staff members have begun to receive vaccines, and we anticipate more being able to sign up soon. The State Library remains closed to visitors, but we continue our conversations and plans to resume in-person support as soon as possible.

Unit Activities

Programs & Trainings

Kevin Johnson presented the story of William Webb for the **January Third Thursday program**. Both Robert Kinney and Christine Pittsley helped produce this video at the Old State House. Kevin then answered questions in a live Q&A session following the video broadcast. Then on February 20, Kevin participated in the **Hartford District AME Zion Church Black History Presentation**. The theme of the presentation was “the struggle is real, but knowledge leads to power.” Kevin talked as Pvt. Webb showing the struggle for freedom through African Americans’ participation in the American Civil War. He also discussed the Freedom Trail Quilt Project. Six of the attending churches are displayed in squares on the quilts. Kevin highlighted the value and importance of primary documents at the Connecticut State Library. Robert Kinney arranged for the filming of William Webb and the quilts.

On February 3, Mel Smith gave a virtual presentation to members of the Silas Bronson Public Library Genealogy Tip Club about **Connecticut Divorce Records**. There were a dozen participants for this hour-long presentation. On February 17, Mel spoke to a class of 19 UCONN students on “**Tracing Your Family Tree.**”

Allen Ramsey and Susan Bigelow presented on the **ArchivesSpace collection management system** at the **Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council (CPGC)** virtual monthly meeting including how to navigate the website, search for archival collections, and other features.

Museum staff have completed preparations for upcoming virtual presentations with schools in Madison, Wolcott, and Newtown. Conversion and adaptation from in-the-classroom audience to social media have been achieved, using select objects, images, and documents on the **Charter Oak Story, Connecticut Colonial Life and functions of government**. History programs involving in-person, home-school group, outdoor visitation to local historical sites, titled “**Hikes Through History**” are being advertised. The offerings include: Hartford’s Cedar Hill Cemetery, Eastern Connecticut Revolutionary War and Industrial history and Norwich’s Uncas Leap Native American History Trail.

Dawn La Valle facilitated the **Hawaii Futures School Cohort** which also included a representative for American Samoa, which pleased the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), as the Pacific Region rarely can participate in national impact programs for libraries. Hawaii State Librarian, Stacey Aldrich, also American Library Association Presidential Candidate, was thrilled that Hawaii librarians were able to participate in this ground-breaking program, as the Future of Libraries is central to her American Library Association (ALA) Presidential platform.

Chris Gauvreau organized and presented at two **LSTA Grant information sessions** and publicized a third and fourth held on March 1. In addition, she coordinated a special workshop designed to help libraries determine community needs in advance of programming development. “What Patrons Really Want: Community Needs Assessment” was held on January 27. One attendee wrote in her evaluation that “This was one of the best, maybe the best, workshop I’ve attended. And timely. Well done!”

Others cited the training on empathy mapping and the scripting of a community conversation as extremely useful.

In January, the **Set the Stage pilot initiative** was launched. Throughout January and February, as part of the pilot, 21 children's librarians participated in 5 courses:

- Literacy Basics and the Mother Goose on the Loose Philosophy
- Programming for Infants/Toddlers and Their Caregivers
- Resources from Connecticut's Birth to Three
- Resources from Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center and Birth to Three
- Music and Movement Part 1 and 2

Dawn La Valle and Chris Gauvreau convened and helped to lead the first meeting of the Advisory Council for Library Planning and Development (ACLPD) **Digital Inclusion Task Force**, a group that, at DLD's initiative, has the goal of developing a State Digital Inclusion Alliance and a plan for state implementation of digital navigation teams, digital inclusion planning education for libraries, and an approach to fill the gaps in access that will involve libraries. The work of the Task Force has already drawn the interest of the Governor's Everybody Learns Strategic Initiatives team.

Dawn La Valle, **Access to Justice (ATJ) Commission** member and Workgroup on Public Libraries and Access to Justice Co-Chair, submitted with her co-chairs the Workgroup's prioritization plan to the Access to Justice Commission for review and approval. The Workgroup has prioritized recommendations surrounding education and outreach for public librarians and libraries for implementation.

Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island partnered to run the inaugural **Tri State Summer Reading Summit**. The event had over 220 attendees and sessions included:

- Keynote speaker, Connecticut Book Award winner Abdul-Razak Zachariah.
- Statewide Library Program Updates with all three state consultants
- Bend Don't Break: Library Flexibility in a Changing World
- Using Podcasting to Reach the Community
- Realizing Reading Realities: Reaching Across the Schools and Public Divide During the Pandemic
- Keeping it Fresh and Fun: Avoiding Summer Burnout

The Division of Library Development (DLD) offered the first of four **accessibility programs** for 2021 with Melissa Marshall, a Connecticut attorney nationally known for her expertise in disability civil rights law and her bias awareness workshops. She presented "Accessible Library Programs: Making the Virtual World Accessible to Everyone" on January 28 and will present "Accessibility is More Than a Ramp: Reducing and Interrupting Disability Bias in the Library" on May 27.

Collaborating with Kym Powe, Ashley Sklar worked to invite Verena Getahun from the Minnesota State Library to deliver her **Community Asset Mapping for the Curious workshop** to Connecticut libraries on March 8. She first delivered this as part of the national IMLS Training Teen Services initiative. Registration was full.

Resource Updates

Eighty one libraries have now gone live in the **SimplyE app**. Collection development was a major focus during the months of January and February. A total of 293 new items were purchased with a focus on antiracist titles, backlist bestsellers, children and young adult (YA), and Spanish language titles. DLD has purchased 4,930 new eAudio and eBooks since February of 2020 to coincide with libraries going live in the SimplyE app and rolling it out to their patrons. There are now 24,308 items available in SimplyE from the Connecticut State Library and our partners. Of the 191 public libraries in Connecticut, 151 are configured in the SimplyE app.

Remote access with temporary links to support hybrid and remote learning is still essential for both schools and libraries due to the pandemic. CSL fielded 67 specific support requests in January and February to assist schools and libraries in providing **remote access to the researchIT databases**.

As of January 2019, Newsbank no longer produces microfilm of **Connecticut newspapers** and instead supplies CSL with digital images and metadata on hard drives. Kandace Yuen is working with CSL IT Support to make these newspaper files available to all CSL Staff. Kandace is also negotiating with Newsbank for permission to allow the public to access this content.

Collection Services and Reference Service staff collaborated to process **71 new CT State Library card applications** during January and February. These cards provide our patrons with 24/7 remote access to many CSL and researchIT CT online databases.

Barbara Austen continued adding digital items to the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA). Of particular interest is a typescript of [Samuel Clemens' \(Mark Twain\) will](#). She also transferred the [Personal and Family Vital Records collection](#) from ContentDM to the State Archives collections in CTDA.

The **Connecticut General Assembly** session started on January 6. Steve Mirsky submitted a new CSL statement of services to the Bulletin staff, to ensure current information about services is included. Abigail Demke, the legislative aide, joined us in the bill room and will be with CSL through the end of the session. Lindsay Young, who indexes all Connecticut General Assembly (CGA) bills, resolutions, Legislative Commissioners' Office file copies, and other items had received approximately 2,500 bills by the end of February.

Glynis Georgie, Name Authority Cooperative program Connecticut Funnel coordinator since 2001, began training Laura Diller on **contributing authority records to the NACO database** (Name Authority Cooperative Program) through OCLC (Online Computer Library Center). NACO is a Library of Congress program through which participants contribute authority records for agents, places, works, and expressions to the Library of Congress/NACO Authority File. William Anderson and Stephen Slovasky are benefitting from this training by refreshing their knowledge of NACO practices.

Discovery Services began creating and printing call number **spine labels** using the functions inherent in the OCLC Connexion cataloging software. This allowed CSL Information Technology Unit to retire the computer we had been using for label production, which was running Windows 7.

LBPH circulated 19,751 **audio and braille books** in January. The Connecticut Volunteer Services for the Blind and Handicapped (CVSBH) **audio book program** now has over 150 new audio books on BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) with several dozen more in process. These books have been downloaded about 950 times since October by patrons across the nation.

Outreach and Engagement

Building on the work that Maria Bernier and Ashley Sklar are doing using the State Annual Report to create new tools, workshops, and resources, DLD created a **social media series** to be released on its channels – [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) – during the month of March that highlight important trends in the use and management of Connecticut public libraries. While many use measures fell in FY20 as libraries closed their buildings in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, libraries rose to the moment and continued to offer, and often expand, services to their communities, including curbside pickups, reference assistance, reader’s advisory, virtual programs, and expanded electronic collections. Each post contains a visual graphic illustration and a statistical trend from the report, "[Statistical Trends in Connecticut Public Libraries, 2020.](#)"

To solidify our engagement with new public library directors in Connecticut, Ashley Sklar created a **welcome email to new library directors** with DLD key resources. She is charged with sending the packet to each new director while copying and introducing them to their DLD Liaison, one of our core programs. In January and February, 5 new directors were onboarded with this welcome.

Lindsay Young and Jackie Bagwell sent a small announcement to *The Grapevine* about a **new, additional database of historical bills** available on our website, <https://ctstlibrarydata.org>. This database project has already proved useful and will be expanded in the future.

Office of the Public Records Administrator (OPRA)

The State Library announced the FY22 **Historic Documents Preservation Program** to Municipal CEOs and Town Clerks in early February. Based on its account projections, the agency has committed to funding \$1,057,500 in municipal grants for FY22. Grants will be offered in the amounts of \$5,500, \$7,500, and \$10,500 based on town population size. Funding levels were discussed with the program’s Advisory Committee on January 13th. The program’s account provides significant support to both the municipalities and the State Library. Grant applications are typically received from over 150 towns each year for projects to improve local government records management, preservation, and public access. Kathy Makover is currently assisting towns with FY22 grant applications and processing the FY21 payments, amendments and final reports.

Town of Chaplin **vault plans** for improved environmental storage conditions were reviewed and approved on February 11th. Kathy Makover is continuing to work with officials and contractors in several other towns in various stages of project planning and renovation/construction. Pursuant to statute, municipal records vaults must meet the State Library’s administrative regulations and receive agency approval.

An expansion at the state-contracted William B. Meyer records storage facility in Windsor was certified on February 10th to provide additional **off-site records storage** for state agencies. Elise Marzik managed the review and the virtual inspection, which was also attended by LeAnn Burbank and Kathy Makover. All off-site storage facilities must meet the requirements of Public Records Policy 03 and receive a certificate of approval to store state agency records.

Two municipalities reported **records damage** related to water leaks and mold growth. Kathy Makover provided guidance and recommendations, also reviewing documentation regarding the disposal of records that had not yet met retention requirements but were deemed unsalvageable. It was determined that most but not all of these original records likely have backup copies available as digital images.

Archives

Lizette Pelletier serves as Coordinator of the **State Historical Records Advisory Board (CT SHRAB)** and the State Library serves as the grant agency for any grants to the board from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). The board recently awarded **nine subgrants to local historical societies and cultural heritage agencies** to implement recommendations for improving the conditions of their archival records made in an earlier grant. The institutions receiving awards were:

- Sharon Historical Society
- Danbury Railway Museum, Inc.
- Amistad Center for Art & Culture located at the Wadsworth Athenaeum
- Avery-Copp House Museum in Groton
- US Coast Guard Academy Sponsored Programs and Research, Inc. in New London
- Finnish American Heritage Society in Canterbury
- Bethany Historical Society, Inc.
- Bridgeport History Center at the Burroughs-Saden Library
- Hagaman Memorial Library in East Haven

Work has begun in earnest on the **New Haven County Court Project** also funded by the NHPRC. Sarah Morin has processed 6 cubic feet of the New Haven County, County Court files from 1700-1729 [A-Z], 1730-1739 [A-L]. Todd Gabriel began scanning court cases involving **African Americans and Indigenous persons**. Lisa Lew is training on how to process the records. Sarah has developed a social media plan and drafted three initial blog posts. Project Director Damon Munz and Sarah have finalized the Advisory Committee member list.

Public Records and State Archives Joint Initiatives

Public Records and State Archives staff continue to collaborate to move forward with initiatives for the **management and preservation of statewide electronic public records**:

- Lizette Pelletier, Allen Ramsey, LeAnn Burbank, and Elise Marzik continued work with the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Bureau of Enterprise Systems and Technologies (BEST) and the Bureau of Materials Management of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) on implementing the IBM Enterprise Records (IER) module to **automate the review and disposition of records** from DEEP's electronic storage system. This includes workflows for

destruction of records and for the transfer of archival records to the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA).

- Lizette, Allen, LeAnn, and Elise met with DAS/BEST on February 18 regarding **Enterprise Content Management (ECM)** for state agencies. Discussions will be ongoing to continue the partnership between CSL and DAS/BEST and address how we can utilize advanced technology to support digital initiatives regarding records management.
- Allen, Elise, and Barbara Austen are working on an **electronic records policy** and have sent it to stakeholders outside CSL for review. The new policy will govern all digital imaging and electronic records management and preservation projects carried out by executive branch state agencies and municipalities.
- Public Records and Archives staff attended a full-day conference presented online by the National Association of Government Archives & Records Administrators (NAGARA) on January 29, titled “Winter 2021 Online Forum: Microsoft 365.” The sessions focused on the management of government records in the **Microsoft 365 environment**.

Museum of Connecticut History

In light of the riot at the U.S. Capitol Building and concerns about disturbances at State Capitols leading up to and on Inauguration Day, **the Fundamental Orders, the Constitution of 1818, and the Constitution of 1965** were removed from their display cases in the Museum and placed in secured vault storage. The **Charter of 1662** has remained locked in its vault since last March when the Library closed to the public. The three documents will be returned to their cases when a date for reopening the Museum has been determined. All firearms from the “Colt Gallery” and “Connecticut Collections” were also removed to secure storage. The removal highlighted some needed exhibit case and lock repairs. The firearms are also undergoing remedial cleaning and oiling before reinstallation. Museum staff and Archives staff coordinated with the Judicial Marshals to ensure the safe removal of all items.