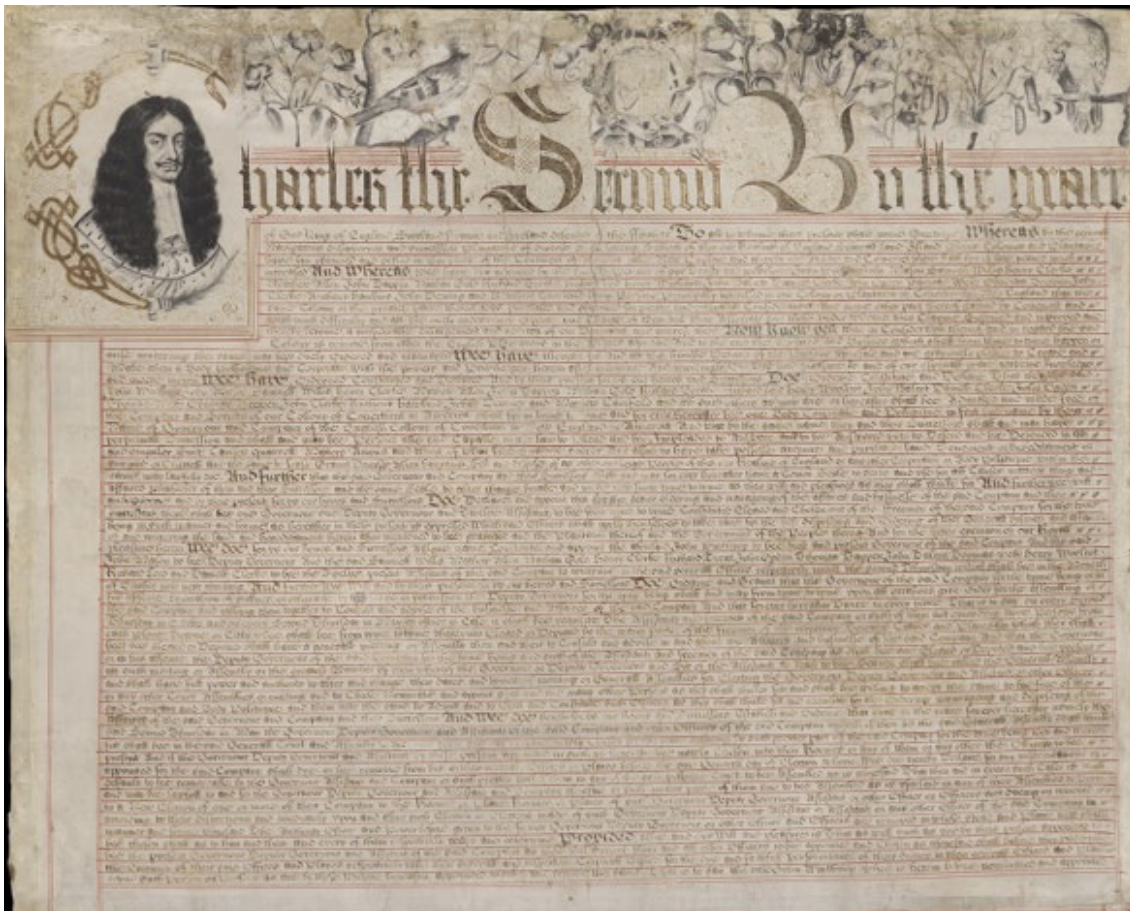


HISTORIC DOCUMENTS PRESERVATION PROGRAM

PRESERVING THE PAST, PROTECTING THE FUTURE

Annual Report on the Historic Documents Preservation Grant Program

FY 2025



Connecticut State Library



Hartford, Connecticut
January 1, 2026

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FRONT COVER

The Charter of the Colony of Connecticut, 1662, Connecticut State Library, State Archives, RG 001. View the entire digitized version of the Royal Charter in the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA): <https://hdl.handle.net/11134/3877882>.

Issued in accordance with Conn. Gen. Stat. §11-8m(b)

**Annual Report to the
Joint Standing Committee on Government Administration
on the Historic Documents Preservation Grant Program**

I. Historic Documents Preservation Program

The Historic Documents Preservation Program supports the preservation and management of local government records throughout Connecticut. The program was established under Public Act No. 00-146, *An Act Concerning Real Estate Filings and the Preservation of Historic Documents* and is codified in *Connecticut General Statutes* (CGS) §11-8i through §11-8n, effective July 1, 2000.

Seventy per cent of the account is allocated for municipal grant awards “to enhance or improve the preservation and management of historic documents,” pursuant to CGS §11-8l(d). As required under CGS §11-8m(b), this annual report describes the municipal grant awards and provides a summary of the State Library’s activities and recommendations concerning the grant program.

Thirty per cent of the program account is allocated for “(1) the preservation and management of historic documents maintained by the State Library, and (2) the expenses of administering the historic documents preservation grant program,” pursuant to CGS §11-8k(c). As required under CGS §11-8k(c), a separate annual report is submitted each year to describe the activities carried out by the State Library with these allocated funds.

II. Municipal Grant Awards

The primary intent of the program is to provide financial assistance to Connecticut’s 169 towns and cities to improve the preservation and management of public records. The grant program allows funds to be pooled and distributed, ensuring that every municipality has the resources to carry out a significant records project each year.

The program provides a targeted grant to every municipality that applies for an eligible project. The program also offers records disaster recovery grants dependent upon the availability of funds at the time of application.

The targeted grant program funds a wide variety of eligible projects. The Office of the Public Records Administrator has identified needs and expanded the types of projects eligible for funding beyond the early emphasis on preservation and conservation of land records. The program currently funds projects in the areas of Preservation and

Conservation, Organization and Indexing, Storage and Facilities, Inventory and Planning, and Program Development.

In FY 2025, the State Library awarded targeted grants to 147 municipalities totaling \$916,500, comprised of 102 Cycle 1 awards totaling \$649,000 and 45 Cycle 2 awards totaling \$267,500.

Targeted grants were awarded in the amounts of \$5,500 for small towns (population less than 20,000); \$7,500 for medium towns (population between 20,000 and 69,999); and \$10,500 for large towns (population of 70,000 or more).

With these grants, municipalities have completed many valuable records projects, including preserving early town records; scanning records to improve public access; microfilming records to ensure long term security; purchasing records storage equipment, software, and hardware; and improving the organization and management of their public records.

A. Cycle 1 Targeted Grant Awards

Municipality	Category	Amount
Andover	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Beacon Falls	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Berlin	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500
Bethany	Preservation/Conservation Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Bethel	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500
Bloomfield	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500
Bolton	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500
Bozrah	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Bristol	Storage and Facilities	\$7,500
Canton	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Chaplin	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Cheshire	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500
Colchester	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Colebrook	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Columbia	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500
Cornwall	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Coventry	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500

Cromwell	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500
Darien	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500
Deep River	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Durham	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
East Granby	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
East Hampton	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
East Hartford	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500
East Lyme	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
East Windsor	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Enfield	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500
Fairfield	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500
Farmington	Program Development	\$7,500
Glastonbury	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500
Granby	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Greenwich	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500
Griswold	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Groton	Preservation/Conservation Organization and Indexing	\$7,500
Guilford	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500
Haddam	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Hampton	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Harwinton	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Killingly	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Lebanon	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Ledyard	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Lisbon	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500
Litchfield	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Lyme	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Madison	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Manchester	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500
Mansfield	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500
Marlborough	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500
Meriden	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500
Middlebury	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Middlefield	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Milford	Preservation/Conservation Organization and Indexing	\$7,500
Montville	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Naugatuck	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500

New Britain	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$10,500
New Fairfield	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500
New Hartford	Organization and Indexing Storage and Facilities	\$5,500
Newington	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500
Newtown	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500
North Branford	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Norwalk	Preservation/Conservation	\$10,500
Norwich	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500
Old Lyme	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Orange	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Plainfield	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Plainville	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500
Pomfret	Storage and Facilities Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Portland	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500
Putnam	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Redding	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Ridgefield	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500
Rocky Hill	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500
Salem	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Salisbury	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Seymour	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Shelton	Organization and Indexing Storage and Facilities	\$7,500
Sherman	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Somers	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Southington	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500
Stamford	Preservation/Conservation	\$10,500
Sterling	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Stonington	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500
Stratford	Storage and Facilities	\$7,500
Suffield	Preservation/Conservation Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Tolland	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Torrington	Organization and Indexing Storage and Facilities	\$7,500
Trumbull	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500
Vernon	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500
Voluntown	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500

Wallingford	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500
Warren	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Waterbury	Organization and Indexing	\$10,500
Waterford	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Westbrook	Program Development Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Weston	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Wethersfield	Preservation/Conservation Program Development Organization and Indexing	\$7,500
Wilton	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500
Windham	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500
Windsor	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500
Windsor Locks	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Wolcott	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500
Woodstock	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Cycle 1 Total		\$649,000

B. Cycle 2 Targeted Grant Awards

Municipality	Category	Amount
Ansonia	Preservation/Conservation Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Avon	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500
Barkhamsted	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Bethlehem	Preservation/Conservation Storage and Facilities Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Branford	Preservation/Conservation Organization and Indexing	\$7,500
Bridgewater	Preservation/Conservation Storage and Facilities	\$5,500
Brookfield	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Burlington	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Canaan	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Canterbury	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Clinton	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Derby	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500

East Haddam	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
East Haven	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500
Easton	Preservation/Conservation Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Essex	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500
Franklin	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Goshen	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Hebron	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Morris	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500
New Canaan	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500
New Milford	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500
Norfolk	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
North Canaan	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
North Haven	Program Development	\$7,500
North Stonington	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500
Plymouth	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500
Preston	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500
Prospect	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Roxbury	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500
Scotland	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Simsbury	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500
Southbury	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500
South Windsor	Preservation/Conservation Organization and Indexing	\$7,500
Sprague	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Stafford	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Thomaston	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Washington	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Watertown	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500
West Hartford	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500
Westport	Organization and Indexing Storage and Facilities	\$7,500
Willington	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Winchester	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500
Woodbridge	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500

Woodbury	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500
Cycle 2 Total		\$267,500

III. Grant Program Administration

The program is administered through the Office of the Public Records Administrator. State Library staff generally meet three times each year with the program’s Advisory Committee, which includes town clerks representing small, medium, and large municipalities and all geographic regions of the state.

Grant funding levels are determined each year by the State Librarian in consultation with the Director of Operations, based on mid-year evaluation of revenue and expenditure projections. Based on this evaluation, grant award levels for FY 2025 were decreased by \$500 from the levels established for the prior grant year – FY 2025 grant award levels were set at \$5,500 for small towns, \$7,500 for medium towns, and \$10,500 for large towns.

Disaster recovery grants are available for an amount up to \$10,000, subject to the availability of funds, with a provision for approval of an amount over \$10,000 should circumstances warrant.

Nicole Besseghir, Public Records Analyst, administers the grant program for the State Library.

The following individuals served as members of the Advisory Committee for the Historic Documents Preservation Program during FY 2025:

- Lisa Arpin, Town Clerk, Branford
- Mark Bernacki, Town Clerk, New Britain
- Vera Dinneen, Town Clerk, Cornwall
- Heather George, Town Clerk, Sterling
- Richard McQuaid, Town Clerk, Norwalk
- Lizette Pelletier, State Archivist, State Library
- Anna Posniak, Town Clerk, Bloomfield
- LeAnn Power, Public Records Administrator, Connecticut State Library
- Patricia Riley, Town Clerk, Ledyard
- Deborah Schander, State Librarian, State Library
- Antoinette Spinelli, Town Clerk, Waterbury
- Patricia Spruance, Town Clerk, Windham

Sharon Uricchio, Town Clerk, Clinton
Kate Wall, Town Clerk, Berlin
Elizabeth Waters, Town Clerk, Bolton
Sandi Wieleba, Town Clerk, Rocky Hill

IV. Locally Funded Projects

A portion of the program's land recording fee is retained directly by the town clerk office in each town and used for the preservation and management of historic documents, pursuant to CGS §7-34a(d). The available funding varies significantly from town to town based on the market activity and the volume of land recordings within each town.

Town clerks use these funds for a variety of records preservation and management projects as well as related staff training and continuing education. These local funds allow clerks to address both immediate and long-term records management needs when budgetary constraints might otherwise limit these important and ongoing efforts.

V. Findings and Recommendations

As described in Section I, the Historic Documents Preservation Program is funded through a fee collected on municipal land recordings. There have been several changes to the program's fee structure over the years. As originally established FY 2001, municipalities collected a \$3 recording fee for records preservation and management, retaining \$1 for the local town clerk fund and remitting \$2 for deposit to the program account.

Effective July 15, 2013, pursuant to Public Act No. 13-184, a new distribution model was set for the land recording fee on Documents with Nominees, excluding this fee from distribution to the program account and significantly reducing program revenues. In the 2014 and 2015 legislative sessions, the State Library requested that the program's portion of the recording fee on Documents with Nominees be credited to the account to keep the fund whole but the proposals did not move forward.

During the 2017 session, however, the legislature approved a significant increase in funding for the program, doubling the land recording fee that generates revenues for the account. Effective December 1, 2017, pursuant to Public Act No. 17-2, municipalities began collecting a \$6 fee for records preservation and management and an additional \$4 fee for deposit to the state's General Fund. From the \$6 fee, municipalities retain \$2 for the local town clerk fund and remit \$4 for deposit to the program account.

At the same time, the proportion of Document with Nominee recordings increased during this time period due to greater utilization of the Mortgage Electronic Registration System (MERS). As described by MERSCORP Holdings, MERS is a “national electronic database that tracks changes in mortgage servicing rights and beneficial ownership interests in loans secured by residential real estate” and it serves as a nominee. In recent years, another such database, DART Collateral Manager LLC (DART), has also entered the Connecticut market as a nominee. As noted above, fees for these documents are no longer credited to the program account and the program continues to be impacted by this legislative change – losing almost 18% over the last fiscal year and an average of over 18% each year since 2013.

As the program fee is tied to land recording volumes, program revenues are also impacted by changes in the real estate market. In FY 2025, revenues decreased by 6% from the previous year; when considering the past two years, revenues declined 16%, on top of the 11% decrease in FY 2023. Some factors that may have contributed to the decrease include a low housing inventory, steep home prices, high mortgage rates, and inflation.

The State Library maintains a fiscally conservative approach in its management of the account. During this period, the State Library awarded the FY 2025 municipal grants; accessioned and preserved archival records; supported the continuation of the New Haven judicial records project “Uncovering New Haven” and other significant records projects; provided records training and outreach; and supported professional development in archives and records management.

Since its establishment, the Historic Documents Preservation Program has distributed over \$22 million in grants to municipalities. These grants support towns in preserving public records while also increasing efficiencies; reducing costs; and improving public services, including electronic access to land records and other public records.

Funding to support these services proved even more critical during the COVID-19 pandemic, with many municipalities reporting that because of ongoing grants from this program they were well-prepared to provide electronic access to the land records and maps when town halls were closed to the public. This ability to provide online access helped ensure that towns continued to maintain one of their essential services, the legal recording of property transactions across the state. Since COVID, the grants have allowed towns to continue to expand their ability to provide electronic access to land records as well as undertake invaluable records management and preservation projects for municipal records.

The preservation and management of public records is an essential function of municipal government. Records such as land recordings, maps, minutes, and vital records, serve to

protect and document the rights and interests of individuals and entities throughout the state. The Historic Documents Preservation Program continues to provide significant benefits to the citizens of Connecticut by providing outreach, support, and funding for municipal records management and preservation programs.

VI. Financial Statement: Historic Documents Preservation Account – FY 2025

Beginning Balance as of July 1, 2024	\$ 1,417,589
Revenue	\$ 1,281,627
Interest Earned	\$ 53,711
Total Receipts	\$ 1,335,338
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Total Available Funds	\$ 2,752,927
Grants Awarded	\$ 916,500
Unexpended Grant Funds Returned	\$ (10,069)
CSL Operating Expenses	\$ 610,083
Total Expenditures	\$ 1,516,514
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Year End Balance as of June 30, 2025	\$ 1,236,413

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §11-8l(d) and §11-8k(c), 70% of this account is reserved for municipal grant awards and 30% is reserved for administrative expenses.