

HISTORIC DOCUMENTS PRESERVATION PROGRAM

PRESERVING THE PAST, PROTECTING THE FUTURE

Annual Report on the
Historic Documents Preservation Grant Program

FY 2021



Connecticut State Library
Hartford, Connecticut
January 1, 2022

CONNECTICUT STATE LIBRARY

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FRONT COVER

Architectural drawing of the front of the Connecticut State Library and Supreme Court Building by Donn Barber and Edward Hapgood. Connecticut State Library History Collection, Connecticut State Library and Supreme Court Building Plans and Elevations, v. 2, call no. Probate Vault 727.8 C716d. Image from the Connecticut Digital Archive [CTDA]:
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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 2021, the State Library awarded targeted grants to 140 municipalities totaling \$882,000, comprised of 115 Cycle 1 awards totaling \$729,500 and 25 Cycle 2 awards totaling \$152,500.

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
Ashford	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
	Preservation/Conservation	
Avon	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Barkhamsted	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Beacon Falls	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Bethany	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Bethel	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Bloomfield	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Bridgewater	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Brookfield	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Burlington	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
	Preservation/Conservation	
Canaan	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Canterbury	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Canton	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Chaplin	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Cheshire	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Clinton	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Colchester	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
	Preservation/Conservation	
Columbia	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00

Cornwall	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Cromwell	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Danbury	Organization and Indexing	\$10,500.00
Deep River	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Derby	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Durham	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
East Granby	Program Development Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
East Haddam	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
East Hampton	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
East Hartford	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
East Haven	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
East Lyme	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
East Windsor	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Easton	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Ellington	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Enfield	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Farmington	Program Development	\$7,500.00
Glastonbury	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Goshen	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Greenwich	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Griswold	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Guilford	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Haddam	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Hartford	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$10,500.00
Hartland	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Killingly	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Lebanon	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Ledyard	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Lisbon	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Lyme	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Madison	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Manchester	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Mansfield	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Marlborough	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Meriden	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Middlebury	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Middlefield	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Middletown	Preservation/Conservation Storage and Facilities	\$7,500.00
Milford	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00

Montville	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Naugatuck	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
New Britain	Organization and Indexing	\$10,500.00
New Hartford	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
	Preservation/Conservation	
New Haven	Organization and Indexing	\$10,500.00
New London	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Newington	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Newtown	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
North Branford	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
North Canaan	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
	Storage and Facilities	
North Haven	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
North Stonington	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Norwich	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Old Lyme	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Orange	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Oxford	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Plainfield	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Portland	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Prospect	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Redding	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Ridgefield	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Rocky Hill	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
	Preservation/Conservation	
Salem	Program Development	\$5,500.00
Seymour	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Sharon	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Shelton	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
	Preservation/Conservation	
Sherman	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Simsbury	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Southington	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Stafford	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Sterling	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
	Preservation/Conservation	
Stonington	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Stratford	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Suffield	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Thomaston	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Thompson	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Tolland	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Torrington	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
	Preservation/Conservation	
Vernon	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00

Voluntown	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Wallingford	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Warren	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Waterbury	Organization and Indexing	\$10,500.00
	Preservation/Conservation	
Watertown	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
West Hartford	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
	Storage and Facilities	
West Haven	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Westbrook	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Weston	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Westport	Storage and Facilities	\$7,500.00
Wethersfield	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Wilton	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Winchester	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
	Preservation/Conservation	
Windham	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
	Preservation/Conservation	
Windsor	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Windsor Locks	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Wolcott	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Woodbridge	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
CYCLE 1 TOTAL		\$729,500.00

B. Cycle 2 Targeted Grant Awards

Municipality	Category	Amount
Andover	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Ansonia	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
	Storage and Facilities	
Branford	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Bristol	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Coventry	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Eastford	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Essex	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
	Storage and Facilities	
Granby	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Groton	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Hampton	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Hebron	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
New Canaan	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
	Storage and Facilities	
New Fairfield	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00

New Milford	Storage and Facilities	\$7,500.00
Old Saybrook	Program Development	\$5,500.00
Pomfret	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Scotland	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Somers	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
South Windsor	Storage and Facilities	\$7,500.00
Southbury	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
	Preservation/Conservation	
Stamford	Organization and Indexing	\$10,500.00
	Preservation/Conservation	
Waterford	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
	Preservation/Conservation	
Willington	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Woodbury	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Woodstock	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
CYCLE 2 TOTAL		\$152,500.00

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 Fiscal Administrative Officer based on mid-year evaluation of revenue and expenditure projections. Based on this evaluation, grant award levels for FY 2021 were set at the same levels as established for the prior grant year.

FY 2021 grant award levels therefore remained set at \$5,500 for small towns, \$7,500 for medium towns, and \$10,500 for large towns.

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

In response to the evolving situation with the pandemic and the impacts on both town and vendor operations, deadlines were shifted where possible for both FY 2020 and FY 2021 grants. For the FY 2021 grants, the grant program administrator worked with the Office of the Attorney General and utilized the Governor's Executive Order 7M to extend the Cycle 1 application and award deadlines by 90 days, ensuring that towns would have sufficient time to prepare their FY 2021 grant applications during the spring and summer of 2020.

Kathy Makover, Field Archivist, 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 2021:

Lisa Arpin, Town Clerk, Branford
Mark Bernacki, Town Clerk, New Britain
LeAnn Burbank, Public Records Administrator, State Library
Frank Calvi, Fiscal Administrative Manager, State Library
Heather George, Town Clerk, Sterling
Doralis Hernaiz, Fiscal Administrative Officer, State Library
Richard McQuaid, Town Clerk, Norwalk
Therese Pac, Town Clerk, Bristol
Lizette Pelletier, State Archivist, State Library
Anna Posniak, Town Clerk, Windsor
Patricia Riley, Town Clerk, Ledyard
Deborah Schander, State Librarian, State Library
Antoinette Spinelli, Town Clerk, Waterbury
Joanne Tiedmann, Town Clerk, Warren
Sharon Uricchio, Town Clerk, Clinton
Kate Wall, Town Clerk, Berlin
Elizabeth Waters, Town Clerk, Bolton
Sandi Wieleba, Town Clerk, Rocky Hill

For FY 2021, Allen Ramsey, Assistant State Archivist, served as recorder.

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 in 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.

As the program fee is tied to land recording volumes, program revenues are also impacted by changes in the real estate market. In FY 2021, revenues increased by 13% as compared to the prior year. This percentage rise was due in part to specific economic conditions related to the pandemic. A sudden decrease in recordings in the spring of FY 2020 was followed by exceptionally strong recording trends in FY 2021, likely reflecting higher volumes in both home sales and refinancing.

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. As noted above, fees for these documents are no longer credited to the program account. However, account revenues nonetheless increased by about \$190,000 in FY 2021 due to the overall rise in recording volumes.

The State Library maintains a fiscally conservative approach in its management of the account. During this period, the State Library awarded the FY 2021 municipal grants;

accessioned and preserved archival records; supported the publication of the *Public Records of the State of Connecticut* 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 \$19 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 has proven even more critical during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many municipalities have reported 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 could continue to maintain one of their essential services, the legal recording of property transactions across the state. Without these grants, many towns would have been unprepared to provide sufficient online access.

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 2021

Beginning Balance as of July 1, 2020	\$ 1,311,036
Revenue	\$ 1,653,770
Interest Earned	\$ 1,175
Total Receipts	\$ 1,654,945
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Total Available Funds	\$ 2,965,981
Grants Awarded	\$ 881,925
CSL Operating Expenses	\$ 583,326
Total Expenditures	\$ 1,465,251
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Year End Balance as of June 30, 2021	\$ 1,500,730

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.