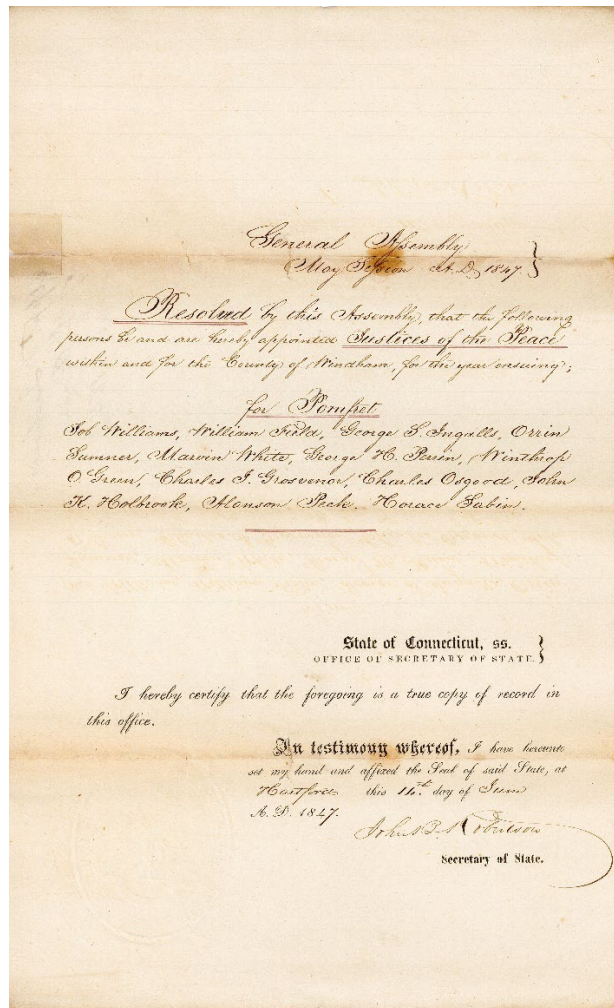


HISTORIC DOCUMENTS PRESERVATION PROGRAM

PRESERVING THE PAST, PROTECTING THE FUTURE

Annual Report on the
Historic Documents Preservation Grant Program

FY 2023



Connecticut State Library
Hartford, Connecticut
January 1, 2024

CONNECTICUT STATE LIBRARY

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Justice of the Peace Appointments, 1847, Connecticut State Library, State Archives, RG 062:112, Town of Pomfret records, box 4, folder 20

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 2023, the State Library awarded targeted grants to 151 municipalities totaling \$955,500, comprised of 120 Cycle 1 awards totaling \$773,000 and 31 Cycle 2 awards totaling \$182,500.

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
Ansonia	Preservation/Conservation Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Ashford	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Beacon Falls	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Berlin	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Bethany	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Bethel	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Bloomfield	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Bolton	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Bozrah	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Branford	Preservation/Conservation Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Bridgewater	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Brookfield	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Burlington	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Canaan	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Canterbury	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Canton	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Chaplin	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00

Cheshire	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Chester	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Colchester	Preservation/Conservation Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Colebrook	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Columbia	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Cornwall	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Coventry	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Cromwell	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Danbury	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$10,500.00
Darien	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Deep River	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Derby	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Durham	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
East Granby	Preservation/Conservation Storage and Facilities Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
East Hampton	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
East Hartford	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
East Haven	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
East Lyme	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Easton	Preservation/Conservation Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Enfield	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Fairfield	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Farmington	Program Development	\$7,500.00
Franklin	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Glastonbury	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Goshen	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Greenwich	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Guilford	Storage and Facilities	\$7,500.00
Haddam	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Hamden	Preservation/Conservation Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Hartford	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation Organization and Indexing Program Development	\$10,500.00
Hartland	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Killingly	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00

Killingworth	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Lebanon	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Ledyard	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Lisbon	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Litchfield	Storage and Facilities 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	Storage and Facilities	\$7,500.00
Marlborough	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Meriden	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Middlebury	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Middlefield	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Milford	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Montville	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
New Britain	Organization and Indexing	\$10,500.00
New Fairfield	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
New Hartford	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
New Haven	Organization and Indexing	\$10,500.00
Newington	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Newtown	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
North Branford	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
North Canaan	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
North Stonington	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Norwalk	Organization and Indexing	\$10,500.00
Norwich	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Old Lyme	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Old Saybrook	Program Development	\$5,500.00
Orange	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Plainfield	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Plainville	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Plymouth	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Pomfret	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Portland	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Prospect	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Redding	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Ridgefield	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Rocky Hill	Storage and Facilities	\$7,500.00
Salem	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Scotland	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00

Shelton	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Sherman	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Simsbury	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Somers	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
South Windsor	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Southington	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Stamford	Preservation/Conservation Storage and Facilities	\$10,500.00
Stonington	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Stratford	Storage and Facilities	\$7,500.00
Suffield	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
Vernon	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Voluntown	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Wallingford	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Warren	Organization and Indexing Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Washington	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Waterbury	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$10,500.00
Watertown	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
West Hartford	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
West Haven	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Westbrook	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Westport	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Wethersfield	Preservation/Conservation Program Development	\$7,500.00
Wilton	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Winchester	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Windham	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Windsor	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Windsor Locks	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Wolcott	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Cycle 1 Total		\$773,000.00

B. Cycle 2 Targeted Grant Awards

Municipality	Category	Amount
Andover	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Avon	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Barkhamsted	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Clinton	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Eastford	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
East Haddam	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
East Windsor	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Granby	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Griswold	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Groton	Preservation/Conservation	\$7,500.00
Harwinton	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Hebron	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Middletown	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
New Canaan	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
New London	Preservation/Conservation Storage and Facilities	\$7,500.00
New Milford	Organization and Indexing	\$7,500.00
Norfolk	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
North Haven	Storage and Facilities	\$7,500.00
Putnam	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Roxbury	Storage and Facilities Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Salisbury	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Sharon	Storage and Facilities Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Southbury	Organization and Indexing Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Stafford	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Sterling	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Thomaston	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Waterford	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Weston	Preservation/Conservation	\$5,500.00
Willington	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Woodbury	Organization and Indexing	\$5,500.00
Woodstock	Storage and Facilities	\$5,500.00
Cycle 2 Total		\$182,500.00

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 2023 were set at the same levels as established for the prior grant year.

FY 2023 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.

LeAnn Power, Public Records Administrator, administered the grant program through March 2023 when Nicole Besseghir was hired – Nicole now 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 2023:

Lisa Arpin, Town Clerk, Branford
Vera Dinneen, Cornwall Town Clerk
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
LeAnn Power, Public Records Administrator, Connecticut State Library
Patricia Riley, Town Clerk, Ledyard
Deborah Schander, State Librarian, State Library
Antoinette Spinelli, Town Clerk, Waterbury
Sharon Uricchio, Town Clerk, Clinton

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

For FY 2023, 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 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 2023, revenues decreased by 11% as compared to the prior year, likely reflecting the slowdown in home sales and refinancing due to rising interest rates.

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.

The State Library maintains a fiscally conservative approach in its management of the account. During this period, the State Library awarded the FY 2023 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 \$20 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 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 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 2023

Beginning Balance as of July 1, 2022	\$ 1,757,073
Revenue	\$ 1,552,431
Interest Earned	\$ 60,380
Total Receipts	\$ 1,612,811
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Total Available Funds	\$ 3,369,884
Grants Awarded	\$ 955,500
CSL Operating Expenses	\$ 615,302
Total Expenditures	\$ 1,570,802
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Year End Balance as of June 30, 2023	\$ 1,799,082

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.