

A Case for Funding Key Community Services – Statewide Library Courier

Colorado's statewide library courier is a KEY community service for nearly 300 public libraries, academic libraries, community college libraries, school libraries and correctional institution libraries. The courier system is paid for by participating libraries, with subsidy funding provided by a state appropriation earmarked for the Colorado Library Consortium (CLiC).

Through *library resource sharing*, communities of every size and geographic region benefit. Rather than being limited to what the "local" library owns, a library user can request and receive an item from another library located anywhere else in the state. *The courier system physically moves that item.*

Terrific ROI (Return on Investment)

Over the past 12 years...

- The CLiC Courier has picked up, sorted, and delivered more than 27.8 million items shared among libraries.
- This community service saved taxpayers \$100.8 million compared to US Postal Service costs, an average of \$9.3 million in savings every year.
- Colorado's library users actively sought, found and borrowed items owned by a library other than their "home" library – at an average of 2.32 million items every year.
- Cost per item for transporting on the courier has ranged from \$.31 per item to \$.56 per item – depending on the year, the volume of items handled, and the number of participating libraries/organizations. The average cost (over 12 years) is \$.40 per item. By contrast, USPS Media Mail prices start at \$3.19.

Challenges facing Libraries

- 12 years ago, participating libraries contributed 67% of the funding to pay for the statewide library courier infrastructure, with the remaining costs subsidized by CLiC. Libraries' share of courier costs has risen over the years, to an average of 84%.
- Reducing libraries' share of courier costs to 50% would require an increase of \$300,000 to the state appropriation. An increase of \$100,000 would reduce libraries' share to an estimated 74-78%.
- Contracted services associated with courier logistics (transportation and sorting) have increased nearly 41% during the past 12 years – an average of 3.4% each year.

State funds appropriated to CLiC have not been increased in more than 16 years.

These are funds utilized for all of the infrastructure services CLiC provides to participating libraries: Courier, AspenCat, Cooperative Purchasing, Talent Development/CE, and Colleague on Call Consulting



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