

## 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



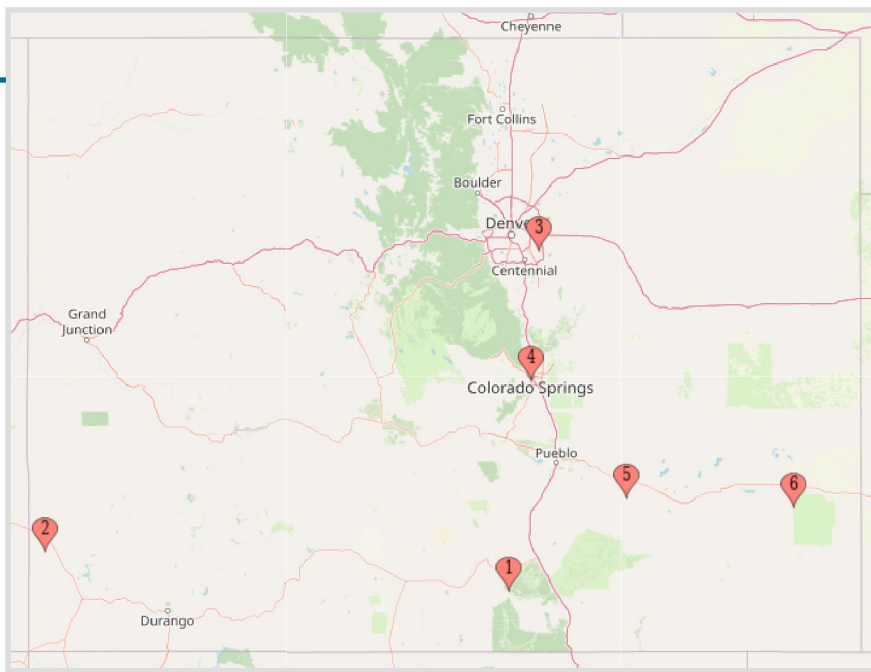
Connecting. Energizing. Inspiring.  
Services for libraries throughout  
Colorado.

[www.clicweb.org](http://www.clicweb.org)

# Courier Impact Stories

## 1 LA VETA PUBLIC LIBRARY

As a small library in an isolated area, ***the courier is a lifeline for our patrons and a core part of our services.*** Our patrons represent an astonishing range of life experiences and interests: from a former Speaker of the Colorado House of Representatives, to artists whose work is exhibited internationally, to working families finding common ground on family movie nights, to people living on the margins seeking an anchor amidst the storms. Statewide resource sharing connects them to the wider world and supports their intellectual and creative pursuits. ***The courier makes our library collection feel unlimited to our patrons.***



## 2 DOLORES COUNTY PUBLIC/SCHOOL LIBRARY

***We are a small, low-income, rural library -- so the courier has opened an opportunity*** to receive books, DVDs and materials that we don't own. ***It has helped students*** to receive items that we don't have, helping them get more information on a subject and therefore improving their grades!

## 3 STRAUSS LIBRARY, CU ANSCHUTZ

The courier service is crucial in our library's ability to provide service to the faculty, staff and students. The Strauss Library cannot purchase every item our users need, and ***we are regularly borrowing items from other libraries throughout the state.*** The courier service is an easy, reliable, and cost-effective way for us to transfer materials between libraries in the state. This became apparent to us during COVID when we had to ship items while the courier was down. ***It would be more complicated and financially challenging if the courier service did not exist*** and we had to ship items through the USPS.

## 4 WIDEFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT 3

While we have made use of the courier for a number of years, ***the greatest impact for us at this time is access to vital resources.*** Our SPED (special education) teachers reach out to SWAAAC on a regular basis to bring in tools and resources to support their SPED students. These materials allow our students to receive higher levels of support and service. The courier service allows us to make use of these valuable outside resources, ***which they would not have access to otherwise.***

## 5 FOWLER PUBLIC LIBRARY

Fowler is a wonderful place to live. Part of the charm of a small rural town is the size. That being said, we are a pretty small library. ***We are so grateful to share items with other larger library districts.*** This service is used on a weekly basis. ***Yes, we count on the courier system*** and applaud all that make it run so efficiently.

## 6 LAMAR COMMUNITY COLLEGE

My community college library is in a remote part of the state. ***If it were not for the courier, our interlibrary loan costs would be prohibitive.*** Through courier we can offer students a network of millions of library holdings wherever they happen to be. ***I will be forever grateful to this service for what it does for rural education.*** It is irreplaceable.

## SERVING MORE THAN 280

Public Libraries, Colleges & Universities and Schools across Colorado

*A Fantastic Return on Investment (ROI) of Taxpayer \$\$*