



March 29, 2017

Metropolitan Libraries of Ohio

Testimony before the House Finance Committee

Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Ryan, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you in support of Ohio's public libraries. My name is Mick Munoz, and I am here to briefly share why I believe the Public Library Fund must be maintained at 1.7% of the General Revenue Fund.

I am a lifelong library customer, visiting Cuyahoga County Public Library throughout my childhood. I spent almost every day after school at the library, where my local librarian fostered my personal love for reading. As an adult, I am heartened to see my young nieces' enthusiasm when I regularly take them to Fairview Park Branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library to check out a big stack of books.

These experiences reflect the way many see their public library – a place filled with books for readers – but I have seen firsthand the powerful role that the library can play in helping individuals secure a job.

When I returned home from service as a Marine in the first Gulf War, I attended Cuyahoga Community College and went on to obtain my degree at Baldwin-Wallace University. I then moved to DC and New York City, where I worked for more than a decade. In 2014 I returned to Cleveland, but I did not have a job. As I embarked on my job search, I was surprised to learn that the library offered a variety of job and career programs – everything from an “Over 40 Job Seeker” series to Behavior-based Interviewing Skills to one-on-one coaching.

It was convenient to participate in the library workforce programs due to the variety of offerings and the library's accessibility in my local community. I discovered that the job search process can be lonely and isolating, but the library programs helped connect me with others while delivering truly exceptional service.

I was thoroughly impressed by the quality of the programs and the individual support I received at the library. I worked with Megan Kittrick, one of the full-time career counselors at the library, to develop my personal job search strategy. She shared tips for enhancing my resume and helped me design a specific plan for networking. With the library's and Megan's help, I secured the job I have today, where I work with veterans to connect them with education resources and services at Tri-C.

I was one of hundreds of job seekers that the Cuyahoga County Public Library works with each year, but CCPL is not unique in providing workforce development support. Public libraries across Ohio serve as a place where people turn to strengthen their technology skills so they can be competitive in today's labor market; libraries are the place where people go to complete online job applications if they don't have a home computer or reliable Internet connection.

There are many aspects of the job search process that are frustrating and challenging. The public library is often a familiar, welcoming place in the community. For the unemployed and underemployed engaged in a job search, the library serves as a convenient touchpoint that does, in fact, play a direct role in helping put people to work. The difference between maintaining the 1.7% funding provided last year and the proposed 1.66% in the Governor's budget equates to more than 18,000 hours of library service provided by people like Megan and her highly trained colleagues across the state. I strongly urge you to maintain the level of funding for libraries in the budget so they can continue to support workforce development across the state.

For me, the library was not the first place I thought of when engaging in my job search, but it turned out to be the absolute best place for advancing my career. I would not be in the professional position I am today without the library. I was lucky enough to share my story regarding the library's profound impact on my life in a [video](#)¹ published by the national Public Library Association. Thank you for the opportunity to testify to the House Finance Committee today. I am happy to answer any questions from the Committee.

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DgJvUtbJINU>