



## Budget Support Testimony FY2020 – FY2021

Given by Beverly Cain, State Librarian, on March 26, 2019 before the House Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education

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Chairman Carfagna, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the Committee, I am Agency Director and State Librarian Beverly Cain, and I am here today to provide testimony regarding the State Library's proposed budget for Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021.

[The State Library of Ohio](#) provides a wide range of library services including access to millions of print and electronic materials, expert reference and research assistance, serving as the official depository for state and federal government documents, and making five meeting rooms and an electronic classroom available at no cost for use by state agencies and libraries.

The State Library of Ohio administers programs and services that generate an annual savings of at least **\$425 million** for state agencies, libraries, and Ohio taxpayers. Many of the State Library's current efforts are aligned with Governor DeWine's priorities including Early Childhood Education and Literacy, Addressing the Opioid Crisis, Diversity and Inclusion, and Food Insecurity.

### Early Childhood Education and Literacy initiatives include:

- [Ohio Ready to Read](#), the ongoing collaboration of the State Library and the Ohio Library Council that helps public librarians educate Ohio's families on the importance of early childhood literacy and to help them learn how to ensure their children enter kindergarten ready to read and ready to learn.
- [The Children's Summer Library Program](#) provides Ohio libraries with high-quality materials for summer reading programs that encourage Ohio's children and young adults to maintain and/or increase their literacy skills during the summer.
- **Summer Library Program Grants** provide federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds to support libraries in the production of summer reading programs that engage and benefit their communities.
- **Literacy Grants**, funded with LSTA dollars, support the library's role in the learning experience where literacy is defined as the ability to read, write, and interact across a range of platforms and tools, and encompasses early literacy, digital literacy, functional literacy, and more.
- **STEM/STEAM Grants** assist libraries in preparing youth to be active learners and provide youth with a competitive edge as they prepare to join the workforce of tomorrow in a globalized, high-tech marketplace.



**Addressing the Opioid Crisis** – in 2017, NPR’s Scott Simon told listeners, “As this nation’s opioid crisis has exploded, the staff at the public library ... have become first responders.” Over the past two years, the State Library has worked to help libraries address this difficult issue.

- In CY 2018, State Library staff worked with staff from then Attorney General DeWine’s Office to develop and distribute educational posters focused on Ohio’s opioid crisis to every public library in Ohio.
- The State Library also partnered with OhioNET and the four Regional Library Systems to develop and host four [Opioids in Communities: Libraries in Response](#) programs held in key areas around the state and attended by 359 library staff. Additionally, the State Library provided LSTA funding to the Ohio Library Council to help sponsor an Opioid Symposium attended by 170 public library administrators.
- The State Library awarded LSTA grants for **Mental Health First Aid Training** to several public libraries, providing training to over 1,200 library staff and community members. Mental Health First Aid Training is designed to instruct librarians, school personnel, and community members how to help a person who is experiencing a mental health or addictions challenge.

The State Library strives to provide equity of access to information to all Ohioans. Examples of key initiatives in the area of **Diversity and Inclusion** are:

- [Library Services for the Blind and Physically Disabled](#), which ensure equity of access to state residents who are blind or physically disabled, including over 1,200 military veterans and 402 children with vision impairments through the **Ohio Talking Books Program**.
- [The Ohio Deaf Culture and American Sign Language \(ASL\) Collection](#) in the Ohio Digital Library includes fiction and non-fiction eBooks and videos for children and adults.
- [The State Library’s Deafness and Outreach Collection](#) is a collection of print and other materials, targeted toward interpreters, American Sign Language students, parents, and professionals working within the Deaf community.
- **The Annual Student Art Show for the Ohio State School for the Blind** provides students with the opportunity to display their works of art in the public exhibit space at the State Library of Ohio.

In an effort to help reduce **Food Insecurity** among Ohio’s children and teens, the State Library has worked with the Ohio Department of Education and Ohio public libraries to provide information and to expand the number of public libraries serving as feeding sites for the **Summer Food Service Program**. Since the State Library became involved in 2014, there has been a 73% increase in the number of public libraries serving as feeding sites.



The State Library plays a unique and vital role in providing services to Ohio libraries and maximizes the use of public funds by facilitating resource and information sharing among Ohio's public libraries through programs that include:

- [The Serving Every Ohioan \(SEO\) Library Consortium](#), which includes 93 library systems in 47 Ohio counties sharing a catalog of over 8 million items.
- [The Ohio Web Library](#), which makes a collection of thousands of digital publications and research materials available to all Ohio libraries, schools, universities, and residents at no cost to them.
- [The Statewide Delivery System](#) supports statewide resource sharing among Ohio's public libraries and college and university libraries by delivering nearly 9 million books and other library materials to Ohio library users each year.
- State and federal mandates require the State Library to annually collect and report data regarding the finances and use of Ohio's public libraries. Last year, State Library staff developed [Libraries by the Numbers](#), a new data visualization tool that allows public libraries to create customized infographics to help share key information about the library.

The administration of federal **Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA)** funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is a primary responsibility of the State Library. LSTA dollars are used to fund Competitive Grants to Libraries, which are awarded to all types of libraries for a wide variety of projects, and to support several statewide programs including:

- [The Ohio Digital Library](#), which provides downloadable eBooks and other digital content to library customers, and
- [Guiding Ohio Online](#), a workforce development initiative, which provides digital literacy training to adults living in rural areas.

The State Library of Ohio intends to be involved in ensuring a complete count for Ohio in the **2020 Census**. In 2020, the Census will take place primarily online for the first time, although many Ohioans still lack home internet access. This will likely impact public libraries and their technology resources as staff work to help people participate in the Census.

None of this work is possible without adequate funding. The State Library's General Revenue Fund (GRF) Operating Budget was reduced by 13.57%, or \$1.4 million, for the current Biennium. This reduction in funding has resulted in reductions in staff, library materials, and services. Five State Library staff positions were eliminated and another ten were left unfilled at the end of FY 2017, requiring work on some initiatives to be reassigned to other staff or dropped altogether.



The State Library currently has a staff of just 60 positions, including 5 positions assigned to OPLIN. This represents a reduction of 19% over the past ten years and an overall reduction of 54% since FY 2002.

The significant reduction in the availability of funds to purchase library materials has required the State Library to cut resources in both digital and print formats that were frequently used by state government employees. One such resource was **Gale Courses**. The loss of this resource came as a blow to the Department of Public Safety, which was using it to help employees attain or improve skills in core competency areas.

The Governor's Executive Budget for FY 2020 and FY 2021 recommends maintaining GRF funding for the State Library of Ohio at the FY 2019 level. This will require the State Library to make additional reductions in staff, programs, and resources. Of particular concern is the issue of rent for the State Library facility at 274 E. First Avenue. At the proposed level of funding for FY 2021, after meeting projected payroll costs, the State Library will be \$130,457 short of being able to meet the rental obligation.

The critical programs the State Library of Ohio supports with federal LSTA funds are also at risk due to the president's proposed budget for Federal Fiscal Year 2020, which calls for these funds to be eliminated. Even if the threat of complete elimination of the LSTA program is avoided, continued erosion in GRF funding for the State Library could have an adverse impact on the ability to meet federal match and Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirements necessary to maintain Ohio's current level of LSTA funding.

Several library-related organizations are funded as line items in the State Library's budget. These organizations include [OPLIN](#), [the Ohio Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled](#), Ohio's four [Regional Library Systems](#), and the Ohioana Library. My colleague, David Weaver, will provide testimony for the Ohioana Library so I will not address that here. Funds made available for OPLIN and the Ohio Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled through the Public Library Fund have remained stable, so while neither has benefitted from any growth in funding, each has been able to continue funding critical services for Ohioans.

However, the four Regional Library Systems have experienced ongoing reductions in funding, including a reduction of 14% for the current Biennium, that have made it increasingly difficult to provide essential training and technology support for Ohio's libraries. Rapidly changing technology, evolving community needs, and the high turnover in library personnel occurring over the last five years due to retirements, have made ongoing training for library staff more important than ever.

In closing, I respectfully request that GRF funding for the State Library be increased by 4.5%, or \$204,440, and that GRF funding for the Regional Library Systems be increased by 10%, or \$50,000, for each year of the Biennium.



Thank you for considering the State Library's budget proposal, which has been carefully developed in an effort to maximize limited state resources to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of critical information resources and services to Ohio government, libraries of all types, and Ohio residents. I will be happy to answer any questions that you have. Thank you.