

Ohio Government Telecommunications FY 2018-2019 Budget Testimony
Senate Higher Education Finance Subcommittee
Dan Shellenbarger, Executive Director, OGT

Chairman Gardner, Ranking Member Williams and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. My name is Dan Shellenbarger, and I serve as Executive Director of Ohio Government Telecommunications. I am here today in support of the budget submitted to you by BEMC and endorsed by the Alliance for Public Telecommunications. Our state support is included in the overall BEMC budget.

An appropriately funded agency and strong television and radio stations are essential partners in our ability to serve the state by reaching out to the citizens of Ohio.

Mr. Phillips and Mr. Rieland have discussed other portions of the budget request, but let me focus on OGT.

Ohio Government Telecommunications was created in 1996 to assist state government with its multimedia needs and to provide greater access to and understanding of state government. As part of its major duties, OGT:

- Provides audio/video coverage to all 3 branches of state government
- Broadcasts and web streams all events
- Programs and manages the Ohio Channel, Ohio's 24 hour public affairs channel on PBS
- Manages OhioChannel.org
- Coordinates all media services for state elected officials
- Provide media links to all caucus communication offices
- Provides teleconferencing access to Ohio schools
- Provides technical assistance for Statehouse News Bureau and other media outlets
- Distributes coverage throughout the Statehouse campus
- Produces videos for all state agencies mostly at no cost
- Assists legislative members with any multimedia needs
- Provides both dubs and archives of all events on tape and the Internet

OGT is 21 years old. When we started in 1996 we had 5 full time workers, covered only the legislature, were available only for 12 hours a week on cable, and had a budget just shy of \$2,000,000. Now we have 19 full and part-time employees, cover all three branches of state government and are broadcast 24/7 across the state. And, we are doing it for less than we started with, that is doing more with less

How have we done this?.. Technology, efficiency and partnerships.

The cost of making television costs less. When you meet in session we are available across the state on all visual mediums: air, cable, and streaming. Our 15-year relationship with Ohio's

Educational Television Stations has allowed this. There are benefits to our partnership with PBS Stations and BEMC that are not quantifiable.

The PBS brand is continuously voted as America's most trusted source of public affairs information. OGT and the state benefits from this brand identification. BEMC has been instrumental in helping us program the Ohio Channel. We have also partnered with the Legislative Information Service to provide all of our web development and streaming. Capitol Square Board gives us our facilities.

Other states with operations like ours are spending millions more for these services. As we have been helped with our partnerships we continue to help other state agencies with their video and streaming needs. We usually do not charge for these services to them. We save them hundreds of thousands of dollars in production costs.

Our reach is significant. We are available, in some form, in every single household across the state. We just completed a significant investment in online storage solutions eliminating the need for tape and directly digitizing everything. We have more than 10,925 hours of footage archived, indexed and readily available on-line.

The administration budget provides flat funding for OGT and the House Budget showed a reduction. However, we are endorsing the budget request that would provide **\$1,502,089** for OGT in **FY 2018** and **\$1,552,098 for FY 2019**. This request is to account for the additional resources needed to maintain our online storage system and to increase coverage of official state and emergency events.

Thank you for your consideration.

Additional Ohio Government Telecommunications Information

OGT Stats

Yearly over the air & Cable viewers:	1.6 million
Yearly OhioChannel.org views:	3 million
Ohiochannel.org views (all time):	25 million
House video only views (all time):	4.7 million
OGT total video hours:	10,925
OGT total videos:	12,168

OGT Services

The Ohio Channel

OGT in conjunction with Ohio Public Broadcasting, OGT manages the Ohio Channel which is distributed on the available digital broadcast signals from public broadcasting stations statewide through the BEMC facility. This is the only channel dedicated to Ohio government, public affairs, culture and history.

OhioChannel.org

Through its web site, anyone can watch floor sessions, Supreme Court sessions, and Governor's events live. All footage is archived and is searchable. The site also features educational programming, including *Remarkable Ohio*, which tracks the more the 1,200 historical markers around the state, vast programming archives from the Ohio Channel, hundreds of interviews with Ohio veterans, outdoor enthusiasts, artists, and writers and links to all parts of state government.

OGT Facilities

OGT is in the process of completing a complete rewiring of all of the public rooms in the Statehouse from copper to fiber. OGT Master Control, which is on the ground floor of the Statehouse, is connected to all public rooms throughout the Statehouse and to parts of the Riffe Center, Rhodes Tower, and the Ohio Judicial Center. Elected officials can "go live" from anywhere on the Statehouse campus and be connected to anywhere in the world. OGT also provides assistance with member's programming, *Ohio In Focus*, which is a half-hour public affairs show hosted by legislative members and distributed to cable access stations around the state