



Budget Support Testimony FY2026 – FY2027

Provided by Mandy Knapp, State Librarian, on June 5, 2025, to the
Senate Finance Committee

Chairman Cirino, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Committee, I am your State Librarian, Mandy Knapp, and I would like to provide additional testimony regarding the State Library of Ohio's proposed budget for Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027.

The version of the budget before you cuts the State Library's operating expenses by \$245,000 in FY 2026 and by \$331,000 in FY 2027 from what was proposed by the House (GRF, ALI 350321/PLF, ALI 350607). This cut would limit the State Library's ability to meet demand for services. Expenses associated with staffing, including pay raises that are negotiated statewide and the costs of health insurance, have increased dramatically. With these rising fiscal obligations, State Library anticipates an increase in payroll of \$434,811 from the current Fiscal Year 2025 to FY 2026, and \$97,942 from FY 2026 to FY 2027. In addition, the rent on our facility will increase by \$26,319 from FY 2025 to FY 2026 and FY 2027. State Library is already maximizing every dollar of funding. **Without the modest increase to State Library's operating expenses (GRF, ALI 350321/PLF, ALI 350607) that were included in the previous budgets, services will be reduced.**

This also comes at a time when our current rented facility is no longer suitable to house the State Library's collection. I ask again for a **one-time increase of \$525,000** in State Library's FY 2026 operating expenses to **assist with moving the State Library to a new location**. Due to the condition of our facility, we are unable to correctly preserve and care for precious and one-of-a-kind materials that show the important work of the state throughout its history.

Further, it has come to my attention that the operating expenses for the State Library have been moved under the Public Library Fund (PLF) instead of the General Revenue Fund (GRF). The **General Revenue Fund is the appropriate source of funding for the State Library**. Please allow me to explain why:

A state agency founded in 1817, the State Library operates a **research library** that is open to taxpayers to understand government information. This research library is not a public library, legally speaking. Public libraries are defined as political subdivisions of the State of Ohio under Sections [3375.06](#), [3375.10](#), [3375.121](#), [3375.14](#) of the Ohio Revised Code. Conversely, State Library is defined under section [3375.01](#). Allow me to illustrate the functional differences between the State Library as a research library and the functions of a typical public library, as there are many important distinctions:

First, the State Library's collection of books and other materials primarily contains government documents from both federal and state agencies. This includes every *Annual Report of the Ohio Auditor of State* going back to Ohio's founding in 1803. It also includes letters and manuscripts that predate Ohio's statehood such as the act that created Hamilton County in what was then the Northwest Territory. By law ([ORC 149.11](#)) State Library is required to receive and retain two copies of any document published by a state agency in the state of Ohio. State Library is given this

responsibility so that **citizens have access to the information their government creates**. In contrast, a public library's collection would include fictional novels, cookbooks, picture books, travel guides and other materials to support general lifelong learning.

Secondly, the activities of State Library staff are also very different than a public library's staff. The **primary users of our research library are policy makers**—such as staff from the Legislative Service Commission, Ohio Consumer Council, and the Ohio Department of Insurance—as well as scholarly researchers and members of the public with a specific interest in state or federal legislation. For example, one recent research question our expert staff received is “Would you be able to provide me with the history of the statute, any testimony surrounding the statute, and any statutes that preceded Ohio Revised Code 131.35?” State Library's experts provide resources, including print books and online materials such as articles, **so that taxpayers have full knowledge of a legislative or public policy issue**. In contrast, questions public library staff would be able to answer include questions of a general nature like if a particular fictional novel was recommended or where to get information on how to repair a car.

In addition to operating a research library, State Library also manages **a federally funded grant making program** through the federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). While public libraries benefit from this federal grant making program, by law these grants are open to and serve all types of libraries, including school libraries, law libraries, academic libraries and other institutions such as libraries in a correctional facility or museum. Here are two examples of recent federally funded grants:

- **Eastern Local School District (Pike County)** was awarded \$43,142 in federal funds to purchase materials and supplies that support implementation of the State of Ohio's new **Science of Reading** curriculum. The centerpiece of this grant initiative is a new Reading Decodables Resource Library. An important part of Science of Reading, decodable books are books that incorporate phonics and encourage sounding out words.
- **Ohio Northern University (Hardin County)** was awarded \$14,250 in federal funds to support a weeklong instructor institute. Over the course of the institute, faculty learned how to teach undergraduates research skills according to current information literacy principles and practices, how to write effective research assignments for today's information environment, and how to structure assignments so that they encourage the **ethical and appropriate use of AI tools**.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide more information on how the State Library operates. I ask you to **restore the State Library's operating expenses to the levels set in the previous budget drafts** and to move the State Library's operating expenses to the General Revenue Fund. The Public Library Fund (PLF) was created to support Ohio's public libraries as defined under the ORC. As the State Library is a state agency that operates a research library and supports a federally funded grant making program for all types of libraries, it is more appropriate to fund the State Library through the General Revenue Fund rather than the Public Library Fund.