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House Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education
House Bill 33 Testimony
March 14, 2023

Good afternoon, Chair Manning, Ranking Member Jarrells, and members of the Subcommittee on Higher Education. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill (HB) 33 on behalf of Ohio's public libraries.

My name is Michelle Francis, and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Library Council. Joining me today for testimony is Jay Smith, OLC's Director of Government and Legal Services. The Ohio Library Council is the statewide association representing Ohio's 251 public library systems (rural, urban, and suburban) and the 7.7 million library cardholders they serve.

We are here to share our thoughts on certain provisions in the budget proposal related to the Public Library Fund (PLF) and we hope to give you a glimpse of the services provided to Ohioans throughout the state by their local public libraries.

Based on state and national data, we know that Ohio's public libraries are extremely popular and in high demand with the highest usage per capita in the nation. Libraries are open to all and a resource that Ohio's citizens increasingly turn to for vital services. Our success is dependent on the strong partnership between the State and the local library systems.

Library Services

Public library services are essential to the communities we serve. This was already evident pre-pandemic and became even more profound in recent years. Our members will always have books on the shelves, but our services today go far beyond books. We meet patrons where they are – if they are at home, at school or outside of our buildings. Libraries today provide a wide range of services to Ohio's citizens based on the needs of each individual community (see attachment A). In your local communities, we serve as a critical resource by providing connectivity to the Internet and computers for personal, employment and student use. Libraries provide wrap-around services through homework help centers (both virtual and in-person) and serve as feeding sites for both children and adults impacted by food insecurity. Ohioans utilize their local libraries for job search assistance, online training and to start small businesses.

Our libraries have pivoted and adjusted their service delivery models to continue to meet the needs of their local communities. Here are just a few specific examples of those services provided throughout the pandemic that continue today:

- At-Home Covid Test Kits – More than 3.7 million distributed over the past two years.
- COSI STEM Kits – More than 37,000 distributed over the past two years.
- Wi-Fi on library property
- Wi-Fi hot spots
- Digital resources (see attachment B)
- Online educational courses through LinkedIn Learning/Lynda.com
- Homework help/tutoring
- Tech assistance
- Food distribution and assistance
- Blood drives
- Outreach to seniors and nursing homes
- Job search assistance and training
- Both in-person and virtual meeting rooms
- Tax services
- Polling locations

Attachment C shows a small snapshot of what's happening in your local districts.

Addressing the Learning Gap
Unlike other local governments and schools, Ohio's public libraries did not receive direct federal funding through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). However, our libraries have been working to address the pandemic educational learning gaps. The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) scores released last fall confirmed what we already knew – the pandemic had a significant impact on learning. Ohio's scores in reading and math came back lower than prior to the pandemic. To address the learning loss and help Ohio's students, more than 40 public library systems are receiving the Libraries Accelerating Learning Grants through the Ohio Department of Education. Attached is a list of public libraries participating in the program (see attachment D). While these grants are not included in HB 33, they are a good example of how public libraries can continue and expand the work they are already doing to help students overcome the learning loss.

Imagination Library
HB 33 funds the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Ohio at $8 million in each fiscal year. As public libraries, we know the importance of early childhood literacy and laying

the foundation for future success. Our members have both sponsored and promoted this program at the local level and we continue to support its efforts. We truly appreciate the Governor and the First Lady making literacy a priority and ensuring children ages 0-5 have access to the program.

Broadband

Ohio's public libraries recognized the need for broadband connectivity long before the pandemic. We know that a significant number of Ohioans still lack access to this basic utility. In 2021, Ohioans utilized public library computers and our Wi-Fi more than 38.7 million times. We know that the digital divide and the need for access to broadband connectivity is real. It has been our pleasure to partner at the state level with BroadbandOhio and the Department of Development to address this issue. In recent months, public libraries helped Ohioans to challenge the latest connectivity maps from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). With billions of federal dollars at stake, it is incredibly important that we have accurate information about where broadband service is not available. We were happy to help in this effort.

As BroadbandOhio begins its listening tour this week to update the state's Broadband Strategy Plan, Ohio's public libraries will provide a venue for those conversations around the state and are helping to get the word out in local neighborhoods (see attachment E).

Public Library Fund

The demand for library services is continuing to expand and increase. In 2021, Ohioans borrowed, downloaded or streamed public library materials 158.2 million times. Keeping up with the growing demand for services is only possible with adequate funding.

We would like to formally thank the General Assembly for your work in recent budget cycles to restore state funding to Ohio's public libraries through the Public Library Fund (PLF). In addition, we would like to thank Gov. DeWine and Lt. Gov. Husted for setting the PLF in permanent law at 1.7% of the General Revenue Fund (GRF) in the Executive proposal for FY24-25.

The Public Library Fund is not a line-item appropriation like the numerous programs and state agencies before you in HB 33. It is in permanent law and is a set percentage of the state's monthly tax receipts that go into the General Revenue Fund (GRF). It ebbs and flows each month depending on state revenues and is currently set in temporary law at 1.7% of the GRF for FY 2023 (see attachment F).

It is also important to note that funding for both the Ohio Public Library Information Network (OPLIN) and the Library for the Blind are deducted from the PLF – these two programs together account for about $5 million each year, but artificially inflate the figures you see in the Blue Book. Even though these two line-items appear under the State Library, they are actually deducted from the Public Library Fund.

State funding through the PLF is critically important because it remains a primary source of revenue for public libraries. Statewide, more than 51% of the total funding for Ohio's public libraries comes from the state through the PLF. In addition, 20% of Ohio's public library systems (49 of 251) do not have a local property tax levy and rely solely on their state funding as their main source of revenue for day-to-day operations. As a reminder, our libraries are separate political subdivisions, similar to our local government partners, but we do not have taxing authority to implement a local sales tax or income tax. Also, unlike counties, cities and school districts, public libraries do not receive casino revenue. Therefore, our reliance on the PLF is even greater than those that rely on the Local Government Fund (LGF).

Inflation
You have already heard from several witnesses about the impact of inflationary costs and Ohio's public libraries are no different. For example, public libraries have seen a 41% increase in digital book circulation (eBooks and audiobooks) in recent years and a 61% increase in costs. This significantly impacts library budgets in addition to other expenses, supply purchases and maintenance on buildings.

Infrastructure
While we greatly appreciate Andrew Carnegie's infrastructure investments in the early 1900's, many of our facilities today are beginning to crumble and are not equipped to meet the demand for 21st century services our 7.7 million library cardholders have come to expect. Some systems have been able to pass bond levies to update their facilities, but the majority do not have the resources to repair their roofs, elevators, flooring, boilers, and HVACs. They do not have the funds to update their security systems and proper walls to accommodate today's technology and equipment that is required. In addition, a significant number of our buildings have accessibility issues which is extremely concerning as we provide services to seniors and others.

It is important to note that many public libraries are forced to use their operating funds for maintenance and capital expenditures. In fact, many have delayed much needed repairs over the years which is leading to the perfect storm. We have increased usage, failing buildings and added inflationary costs. This is causing many of our buildings to reach the breaking point.

Conclusion

In conclusion, investing in public libraries is critical as the usage and demand for our services is growing and broadening – especially as we assist in Ohio's recovery efforts. None of the services Michelle mentioned earlier would be possible without our state funding. Making public libraries a priority in this budget and funding the PLF at 1.7% of the GRF in permanent law at a minimum is a step in the right direction.

Because there are still several unknowns regarding Ohio's economy and the budget process between now and June 30 that could impact the state's GRF base (indirectly reducing the PLF), we are urging the Ohio House to maintain the PLF in permanent law at a minimum of 1.7% of the total GRF. If additional changes are made to the budget that would indirectly reduce the PLF, we are respectfully asking the General Assembly to increase the PLF to offset those reductions.

The Ohio Library Council and Ohio's public libraries look forward to working with you as you work your way through the budget process. Thank you for your time and we will be more than happy to answer any questions.

Attachment A

Public libraries offer Ohioans a wide variety of programs, services, and materials based on the needs of their local community, including, but not limited to:

Examples of Lending	*Examples of Services*
Personal Wi-Fi Devices	Wi-Fi
Tablets and iPads	3-D Printers
Musical Instruments	Homework Help Centers
Digital Materials (eBooks, eAudiobooks, etc.)	MakerSpaces
Artwork	eGovernment Assistance
Bicycles	Income Tax Assistance/Tax Form Booklets
Auto Code Readers	Job Search Assistance
Tools (Air Quality Monitors/Energy Check)	Resume Assistance
Toys (Including Adaptive Toys)	Storytime
Physical Books, Music, Movies	Food Service Program Feeding Sites
Kitchen Equipment	Musical & Theatrical Performances
Memory Kits	Passport Services
Maker Kits (for adults and children)	Summer Reading Programs
Telescopes	Early Literacy Programs (Ready to Read)
Board Games	Early Childhood Programs (Ready for Kindergarten)
Early Learning Kits	Educational/Computer/Technology Programs/Classes
	GED/ACT/SAT Test Preparation Programs
	Meeting Room Space
	Polling Locations & Training
	Computers
	Online Educational Courses

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Use your Ohio library card to access these amazing resources!

Online Courses

Linked in LEARNING
WITH **Lynda.com** CONTENT

NORTHSTAR
DIGITAL LITERACY ASSESSMENT

ACT & SAT Test Prep

rb digital

Books & Audiobooks

OverDrive libby hoopla

Magazines & News

Flipster

pressreader

Music

freegal music

Movies

kanopy

Visit your library's website for a full list of digital resources and databases.

Use your Ohio library card to access the following digital services:

Name	Services Provided	Devices Supported
Flipster	Magazines	Computers Mobile Devices (App)
Freegal	Music	Computers Mobile Devices (App)
Hoopla	Books Audiobooks Comics Music Movies TV	Computers Mobile Devices (App)
Kanopy	Movies	Computers Mobile Devices (App)
Libby	Books Audiobooks Magazines	Mobile Devices (App)
LinkedIn Learning	Online Classes	Computers Mobile Devices (Browser)
Northstar	Digital Literacy	Computers Mobile Devices (Browser)
Overdrive	Books Audiobooks Movies Magazines	Computers Mobile Devices (App)
PressReader	Newspapers Magazines	Computers Mobile Devices (App)
RBdigital	ACT & SAT Test Prep Movies TV	Computers Mobile Devices (App)

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What's Happening in Ohio's Public Libraries	**March 2023**

Ohio enjoys a national reputation for library service and use. Our libraries are in the national spotlight again. This time for the number of Ohioans who have downloaded eBooks. From record-breaking digital lending to college and career fairs, there's a lot happening in Ohio's public libraries.

Latest News

Ohio libraries top global list of most digital downloads

While eBooks were steadily gaining popularity in public libraries prior to the pandemic, Ohioans have embraced eBooks and audiobooks in recent years. In 2022, a record-setting 129 library systems surpassed one million digital checkouts, including:

- The Ohio Digital Library – 8 million checkouts
- Digital Downloads Collaboration – 5 million checkouts (includes Columbus Metropolitan Library)
- CLEVNET – 4 million checkouts (includes Cleveland Public Library)
- Cincinnati & Hamilton County Public Library and Cuyahoga County Public Library – 3 million checkouts
- Dayton Metro Library and Toledo Lucas County Public Library – 1 million checkouts.

Ready...set...engineer!

The best learning happens in families and Ohio's public libraries offer a variety of programs for all ages. Lorain Public Library System is hosting Family Engineering Nights this spring. School-age children enjoy a fun, friendly engineering competition that challenges their STEM skills.

The library is also launching its Phenomenal Learners program this month. Free tutoring is available for all ages, (kindergarten through 12th grade) in a multitude of subjects at the Main Library or South Lorain Branch.

Find your future

Dayton Metro Library is helping teens figure out their next steps with its annual College and Career Fair. On March 4, the library hosted two informational sessions to help students plan their future:

- Understanding the Cost of College and How to Pay for It
- Choosing the Right School: Find the Right Fit

Throughout the day, teens met with representatives from colleges, universities, trade and apprenticeship programs, and the military. Like other Ohio libraries, Dayton Metro Library also offers ACT/SAT practice test programs.

Off to a great start

Newborns at OhioHealth Grant Medical Center received a special surprise last week to commemorate the Columbus Metropolitan Library's 150th birthday. Each patient was given a gift bag from the library with onesies, books and games.

For years, North Canton Public Library has been delivering materials to patrons who cannot visit in person due to physical limitations. Now the library has expanded home delivery service to new parents!

Show employers what you know

Ohio's public libraries, like the Mary Lou Johnson Hardin County District Library are helping job seekers who may lack the digital literacy skills needed to seek, obtain, and retain employment.

The library's Northstar Digital Literacy classes define the basic skills needed to perform tasks, such as using email, Windows OS, Mac OS, Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Google Docs, and more. Ohio's public libraries offer digital literacy classes online and in-person. Patrons can earn a certificate by having their assessment proctored at the library. These certificates provide an important credential for employment.

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Libraries Accelerating Learning

Awardee List

The following library projects have been selected for funding:

Library	County	Project Description
Ashland Public Library	Ashland	The Ashland Public Library will convert their Storytime Room into a STEAM Lab by adding new storage space and STEAM tools and add a STEAM component to several existing and well-established programs.
Brown County Public Library	Brown	Brown County Public Library will launch 5 initiatives which include: ABC Story Time, Tutoring/Homework Help, STEAM-focused Summer Reading Programs, Summer Reading Outreach, and a Teen Intern Program.
Cleveland Public Library	Cuyahoga	On the Road to Reading (OTRR) takes library services and literacy training to early care and education programs (preschools, day cares, home care providers, pediatric settings, and community events) to assist adults working with and caring for young children by delivering literacy-based programming and loans of materials.
Columbiana Public Library	Columbiana	A joint program with Salem Public Library to provide regular tutoring services by experienced licensed teachers for grades K-12 along with after-school enrichment programming two days per week. Enrichment programs will allow students to learn in a hands-on environment and will focus on science, technology, and mathematics.
Columbus Metropolitan Library	Franklin	Columbus Metropolitan Library's (CML) Reading Buddies program will be expanded by taking the program into elementary classrooms during both summer school and the school year at the request of local school districts. The program will provide 1:1 reading support to students in grades K-3.

Library	County	Description
Community Library - Sunbury	Delaware	Community Library in Sunbury will launch a Student Writers and Illustrators program and provide after-school writing support to students in grades 7-12.
Cuyahoga Falls Library	Summit	Cuyahoga Falls Library will be offering in-person and remote literacy and tutoring resources to students. The library will also offer age-appropriate learning spaces to students throughout the library to accelerate learning and increase achievements.
Cuyahoga County Public Library	Cuyahoga	To support students in overcoming learning disruptions caused by the pandemic, Cuyahoga County Public Library (CCPL) proposes the addition of new accelerated learning opportunities through the library's existing Family Engagement and Student Success Programs.
Dayton Metro Library	Montgomery	This "Accelerating Learning at the Library" program will expand the Kindergarten Club to all 18 Dayton Metro Library locations by September 2024, to prepare area children and caregivers for success in kindergarten.
Dorcas Carey Public Library	Wyandot	Dorcas Carey Public Library will start a biannual UpSTREAM Club (after school and summer learning) for preschool through elementary age students.
Euclid Public Library	Cuyahoga	Euclid Public Library will partner with eight library systems in Cuyahoga County as well as partnership organizations to knowledge of literacy resources and supports available, increase the number of students and parents reading books, audiobooks, and eBooks from library print and online resources as compared to the year prior, provide interactive literacy spaces and programs within each of the partnering libraries, and conduct survey research to ensure that strategies are successful and helping students close learning gaps.
Fairfield County District Library	Fairfield	Fairfield County Library will provide Discovery Kits to families to enable learning enrichment opportunities for students pre-kindergarten through grade 5.
Findlay-Hancock County Public Library	Hancock	The Findlay-Hancock Library will provide a summer reading intervention program to extend learning for students beyond the school year at no cost to parents and families.

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Library	County	Description
Greene County Public Library	Greene	The Greene County Public Library will expand their system-wide K-12 tutoring program, Level Up to programs in community libraries located in Beavercreek, Bellbrook, Cedarville, Fairborn, Jamestown, Xenia, and Yellow Springs.
Heights Libraries	Cuyahoga	"On the Same Page" community reading program will incorporate a traditional shared reading of an anchor text and incorporate innovative STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) experiences so children in Cleveland Heights and University Heights can apply their literacy skills to new, project-based disciplines.
Henderson Memorial Public Library	Ashtabula	Henderson Memorial Public Library will launch a collaborative after-school tutoring program with the Jefferson & Rock Creek Elementary Schools that will be offered during the school year and into the summer.
Ida Rupp Public Library	Ottawa	The library plans to accelerate learning by engaging students with technology in the library with computers, with the lending audio enabled books and with an Ottawa County Reads event.
Kingsville Public Library	Ashtabula	A Kindergarten Transition Program will be offered at a local childcare facility and is a continuation and expansion of an existing Early Literacy Intervention program.
Licking County Library	Licking	Licking County Library will establish the Library Lab as a space for self-directed exploration of STEM subjects through drop-in program opportunities for youth ages 8-18.
Lorain Public Library System	Lorain	The Launching Phenomenal Learners program will provide out-of-school learning opportunities and tutoring services to students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Operating on a 3-tiered system, students will receive (1°) homework support, (2°) reading and literacy tutoring, and (3°) enrichment activities to support learning engagement by fostering inquiry processes and creativity.

Ohio | Department of Education

Madison Public Library	Lake	The library is offering five different hands-on experiences through the grant cycle, giving students the opportunity to check out books related to their experience topics.
Marysville Public Library	Union	Marysville Public Library will launch a tutoring program for students in kindergarten through 12th grade.
Mentor Public Library	Lake	The Mentor Library will support programs that support children, teens and families including, Early Readers, SAT/ACT training, arts, field trips, and STEM career connections.
Milan-Berlin Library District Library	Erie	The Milan-Berlin Library District (MBLD) will offer a bookmobile mobile library. A bookmobile will allow MBLD to more directly connect K-12 students to the library's resources through school visits and establish new educational and digital resource outreach opportunities to rural/low-income neighborhoods without a permanent library location.
Normal Memorial Library	Fulton	Normal Memorial Public Library will provide essential resources to parents and families to promote literacy and provide the necessary resources to interactively engage students.
Perry Public Library	Lake	Providing programming to assist parents of English Learner (EL) students in supplementing the learning of early literacy skills with their children at home.
Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County	Mahoning	The Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County (PLYMC) will expand a successful program series with First Lego League (FLL). FLL programs will be offered in branches throughout Mahoning County and offsite at local schools and afterschool/summer programs
Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County - Partnership with Salem Library	Mahoning	Funding will support Kitchen Literacy, a program that invites learners of all ages to join in making healthy, fun snacks while also developing stronger literacy, resiliency, math, teamwork, kitchen safety, and sequence skills.
Stark Library in Partnership with Akron-Summit County Library	Stark/Summit	The partnership will support The Summer Fun Enrichment project to accelerate literacy and learning and promote school readiness in Akron Public Schools, Canton City Schools, and other poverty-stricken areas within the area.

Ohio | Department of Education

Tipp City Library	Miami	Tipp City Library, in conjunction with Tipp City Schools, will provide a walk-in tutoring program for students to accelerate learning.
Troy-Miami County Public Library	Miami	Troy-Miami County Public Library will offer a multi-faceted summer and winter reading program and provide access to books in support of children, teens, parents, teachers, and tutors.
Warren-Trumbull County Public Library	Trumbull	The Warren-Trumbull County Public Library (W-TCPL) will launch a Student Engagement Initiative that uses pop-up library services which will expand literacy in the community and reach young people who may not have the opportunity to use the library otherwise. With the implementation of pop-up services, W-TCPL will significantly broaden the potential for establishing and strengthening partnerships with area schools, students, and community organizations that serve youth.

Ohio | Department of Education

BroadbandOhio

Do you have thoughts on bringing high-speed internet to your community?

BroadbandOhio wants to hear from you.

Broadband.Ohio.gov

Join us at upcoming listening sessions

**Mt. Gilead Public Library,
Mt. Gilead**
March 16

**University of Rio Grande
(Bob Evans Farms Hall), Rio Grande**
March 21

**Guernsey County District Public Library
Crossroads Branch, Cambridge
Cambridge Performing Arts Center, Cambridge**
March 23

**Xenia Community Library,
Xenia**
March 30

**Toledo Lucas County Public Library
Main Meeting Room, Toledo**
April 4

**Findlay-Hancock County Public Library,
Findlay**
April 6

**The Midtown Tech Hive,
Cleveland**
April 13

**Eastgate Regional Council of Governments,
Youngstown**
April 20

Ohio | Department of Development

Fiscal Year PLF Distributions
FY08 – FY22 ($ in Millions)

Fiscal Year	PLF Percentage of GRF Taxes	PLF Distributions
2008	2.22%	$418.2
2009	2.22%	$414.2
2010	1.97%	$340.6
2011	1.97%	$367.6
2012	Freeze w/95%	$352.2
2013	Freeze w/95%	$344.3
2014	1.66%	$341.0
2015	1.66%	$360.5
2016	1.7%	$377.6
2017	1.7%	$378.5
2018	1.68%	$384.6
2019	1.68%	$402.8
2020	1.7%	$393.1
2021	1.7%	$452.0
2022	1.7%	$489.9
2023	1.7%	

Public Library Fund (PLF)
General Revenue Fund (GRF)

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FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions about Library Funding

1. How are public libraries funded by the state of Ohio?

Currently, public libraries receive funding from the state through the Public Library Fund (PLF). Each month, the PLF receives 1.7% of the state's total tax revenue received during the previous month in the General Revenue Fund (GRF). State tax revenue that goes into the GRF comes from multiple sources, including the state personal income tax, sales and use tax, business taxes, etc. Therefore, state funding for public libraries ebbs and flows with state revenues.

2. Do all of Ohio's public libraries have a local property tax levy?

No, 49 public libraries do not have a local property tax levy and rely on state funding through the PLF as their primary source of funding for day-to-day operations and providing services to their communities.

3. Do public libraries receive local county sales tax revenue, local city income tax revenue or Casino revenue?

No, public libraries do not have taxing authority to implement a local sales tax or income tax. Also, unlike counties, cities and school districts, public libraries do not receive Casino revenue from Ohio's casinos.

4. How much funding for public libraries comes from the state?

Collectively, 51% of the total funding for Ohio's public libraries comes from the state through the PLF.

5. Are Ohio's public libraries receiving federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding like other entities such as counties, townships, and municipalities?

No. In Ohio, public libraries are separate political subdivisions and not a division under city or county government. Therefore, libraries are not eligible to receive the billions of dollars that our local government partners and schools are receiving directly through ARPA.