

TALKING POINTS

State Budget: 2012-13

- The Governor has proposed a 5% reduction in the Public Library Fund in each of the next two years, using the FY11 PLF distribution as the base.
- While the 5% reduction may appear to be small compared to other cuts made to state-funded services, this cut is in addition to reduced PLF revenues almost every year since 2001 – with a nearly 23% reduction in funding over the past two years.
- Libraries are currently operating on the same level of state funding received in 1996.
- We are relieved that these cuts did not go deeper, but they will still have impact on libraries, especially those libraries with no local levy.
- The cumulative effect of years of PLF reductions has taken their toll on public libraries by reducing staffing levels, hours, and materials.
- As the General Assembly considers this budget, we're asking legislators not to let public library funding erode even further.
- There are libraries that will have significant additional impact because of the changes in Tangible Personal Property Tax (TPPT).

General

- State funding supports cooperation and collaboration between public libraries. Ohioans can use the resources of any public library.
- Statewide, public libraries have reduced their staffing by 15%, and materials budgets by 18%. In addition, there have been reductions in hours of operation and branch closures.
- There is an increased usage of public libraries in tough economic times.
- An increasing number of public libraries have local levies. However, in most cases these levies don't replace all of the funding cuts by the state. Even though libraries have been able to keep their millage requests relatively low, there are some areas of the state where levies cannot be passed. In addition, more and more local issues are on the ballot, and communities begin to experience "levy fatigue." Finally, one of the unintended consequences of levies is that they tend to discourage collaboration – voters will not want to share materials or staff with other communities.
- Public libraries have become an integral part in economic development and job searches by providing Job Help Centers, resume writing materials, Internet access for job searches, and a variety of other services.
- Libraries have become a main conduit for E-government – providing the Internet connectivity for patrons to access all of the governmental services that are available online.

Other Legislation

HB 88/SB 120 – County Prosecutor Bill

- Clarifies that the prosecuting attorney of a county is the legal adviser of all tax-supported public libraries.
- This is important and necessary service for every public library in the state.

HB 69/SB 3 – Public Employee Retirement System Reform (OPERS)

- The OLC supports the recommendations made by OPERS and the Ohio Retirement Study Commission that ensure the solvency of OPERS.

SB 5 – Collective Bargaining

- Expands the list of subjects that are inappropriate for collective bargaining.
- Permits public employers to not bargain on any subject reserved to the management and direction of the governmental unit, even if the subject affects wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment.

Issues for Public Employees:

- Creates salary ranges by removing the steps from the salary schedules.
- Requires merit-based pay for most public employees, including board and commission members, and makes other, related changes.
- Requires performance-based pay for teachers.
- Caps vacation leave for certain public employees at 7.7 hours per biweekly pay period.
- Reduces sick leave accrual for most public employees from 4.6 hours to 3.1 hours per biweekly pay period.
- Limits public employer contributions toward health care benefit costs to 85%.
- Requires health care benefits provided to management level employees to be the same as any health care benefits provided to other employees of the same public employer.
- Prohibits a public employer from paying employee contributions to the five public employee retirement systems.