

# Ohio's Public Libraries: Essential Services Ohioans Rely On



**Ohio's public libraries are vital to local communities, delivering literacy, workforce support, and connectivity to millions of Ohioans through services residents depend on year-round.**

Across the state, people turn to their libraries for help, opportunity, and connection — to learn, work, apply, search, and get help for the needs and problems they face.

Among the most trusted and heavily used public institutions in the state, Ohio's libraries are free, welcoming hubs that support people at every stage of life. With the **second-highest visits per capita in the nation**, they serve millions each year while doing more with less (the fourth lowest in terms of expenditure per library transaction).

A library isn't a luxury — it's an everyday problem solver, a place people turn when they need help, answers, opportunity, or a way forward. Ohio libraries fulfill this role by delivering a broad range of important services:

## **Supporting Children, Students, and Families**

Libraries support learning at every stage—offering early literacy, homework help, tutoring and after-school programming. They provide spaces where kids and teens can learn, grow, and stay engaged year-round.

## **Strengthening Ohio's Workforce and Local Economies**

Libraries are a front door to opportunity, helping residents search and apply for jobs, build résumés, and access career resources. They support job seekers, entrepreneurs, and small businesses with training, technology, meeting space, online courses, and one-on-one assistance that fuels employment and local economic growth.

## **Bridge the Digital Divide and Access to Information**

Libraries provide free access to books, e-books, research tools, learning materials, and media—along with essential technology like Wi-Fi, computers, printers, scanners, and hands-on tech support—so every Ohioan can participate fully in modern life.

## **Deliver Everyday Services People Rely On**

Libraries offer practical services residents depend on, including printing, faxing, notary services, passport processing, and access to critical digital and government resources.

## **Serve as Trusted Community Anchors**

Libraries are welcoming, neutral gathering places—open to everyone—where programs and partnerships are shaped locally to meet the specific needs of each neighborhood.

### **Libraries are among the most heavily used institutions in Ohio**

48.1 million library visits each year

7.4 million Ohioans hold library cards

251 public library systems

153.7 million items borrowed or downloaded annually

23.4 million Wi-Fi sessions

and 6.3 million computer uses per year.

## Public support for libraries is broad, deep, bipartisan and measurable

According to research conducted in January 2026:

- **90% of Ohioans** say public libraries are important to their local community.
- **More than two-thirds (69%)** can recall a specific time their library helped them personally.
- **An overwhelming 87%** say they get their money's worth from library services for the taxes they pay.
- **64%** of Ohio voters say they or a family member used a library service within the past few months.
- **71%** believe libraries provide many of the most basic services people rely on in their daily lives
- Nearly nine-out-of-ten Ohio voters (**87%**) believe they get their money's worth in services from their local libraries for the taxes they pay, including 83% of Republicans, 85% of Independents and 93% of Democrats.
- Residents consistently ranked libraries among the highest-rated local public services.

## Local Property Taxes Fund Libraries – and Losing Them has Real Consequences

**Across Ohio, public libraries rely on locally approved property tax levies, which now account for more than half of their overall funding statewide.** A proposed constitutional amendment is being circulated that would eliminate property taxes statewide, beginning as early as 2027. No replacement funding source has been identified. As such, **eliminating that funding source would have severe consequences:**

- **Essential services would face immediate reductions,** including canceled programs, reduced hours, and potential library branch closures.
- **Local control would be lost.** Abolishing property taxes takes power away from the voters stripping communities of their decision-making ability to shape library funding based on local needs and values.
- **Community partnerships would weaken.** Libraries stretch limited dollars by working closely with schools, workforce agencies, food banks, arts organizations, and social services. Funding cuts unravel those networks and reduce their reach.

## PROTECT WHAT COMMUNITIES DEPEND ON. Ohio's Libraries: Trusted. Local. Essential.

**Libraries deliver exceptional value for taxpayers.** Independent analysis shows that every \$1 invested in Ohio's public libraries returns more than \$4 in value to Ohioans — and more than \$3 billion in direct economic impact statewide.

**They are locally supported, widely used, and deeply trusted. Protecting them means protecting the local services residents rely on.**