

## **Public Library Fund Talking Points for Ohio Senate**

- The Ohio Library Council and Ohio's public libraries are extremely grateful to Gov. DeWine for raising the Public Library Fund (PLF) to 1.75% of the General Revenue Fund (GRF) in his state operating budget proposal for FY26-27. We are asking the Senate to restore the Governor's proposal.
- Ohio's public libraries experienced a \$27 million loss in state funding in Calendar Year (CY) 2024 as compared to CY 2023. This resulted in libraries being funded at the same level they were 25 years ago in the year 2000.
- Ohio's public libraries have had a partnership with the state to deliver services at the local level for almost 100 years and that funding is now at risk.
- The House's version of the budget reduces state funding for Ohio's public libraries by more than \$90 million over the biennium as compared to the Governor's proposal.
- The Public Library Fund makes up less than 0.5% of the total state budget.
- Every two years, we engage in this process to defend the Public Library Fund, advocating for the percentage allocated to libraries as well as highlighting the significant value and savings libraries provide to taxpayers.
- The demand for public library services at the local level is growing and expanding, usage is increasing, and the rising cost of inflation can no longer be absorbed or ignored.
- Ohioans love and use their public libraries. In 2023, Ohioans visited their local libraries more than 44.6 million times. That is the equivalent of 434 sold-out Buckeye football games at Ohio Stadium (102,780 capacity).
- 20% of Ohio's public library systems rely solely on the PLF for their primary source of funding and DO NOT have a local property tax levy (48 of the 251).
- 51% of the total funding for Ohio's public libraries comes from the state through the PLF.
- Education is at the heart of public libraries – whether it is early childhood literacy like Ready to Read and Ready for Kindergarten programs or wrap-around services like Homework Help Centers, Food Service Programs and GED programs. Ohio's public libraries support lifelong learning by serving Ohioans before, during, and beyond the K–12 experience.