



## Funding for local Libraries

Libraries offer access to books, digital resources, and research materials, ensuring that knowledge is available to all, regardless of income. They promote early childhood literacy, assist students with homework, and provide adult education and career development programs. Many libraries offer free internet access and technology training for those without digital resources. Furthermore, libraries host cultural events, book clubs, and educational workshops that strengthen community connections and encourage civic engagement.

The data highlights the crucial role libraries play within the community. According to the State Library Board, more than seven million residents in Ohio possess library cards, including 1.5 million children and nearly 6 million adults. Additionally, library computers are utilized over six million times annually.

Engaging with books, participating in community events, and accessing resources for personal growth enhance mental health and creativity. Community libraries are more than just book repositories—they are vital centers for education and social progress.

### Policy

Over the past two years, libraries have received 1.70 percent of the General Revenue Fund. State revenue supports local libraries and the State Library Board. State funding and strategic goals of the Library Board assist local libraries in enhancing their outreach and services. The State Library aims to provide local libraries and the public with access to books, a wide range of media, and technical support, all to reduce costs and improve the public's experience.

### Challenges

A budget cut to the share of General Revenue Funds for libraries will hinder their ability to expand their programs.

## Opportunity

Increasing state funding for public libraries in Ohio can yield numerous benefits that enhance education, community engagement, economic development, and overall quality of life. Here are several reasons why increasing funding is a sound investment:

1. **Enhanced Educational Opportunities:**

Public libraries are essential for everyone. They provide access to books, digital resources, and literacy programs that aid learning. More funding allows libraries to expand their services, ensuring students and job seekers have the necessary resources to succeed.

2. **Bridging the Digital Divide:**

In today's digital age, access to computers, high-speed internet, and digital literacy is essential. Many Ohioans in rural or underserved areas rely on libraries for these services. Increased funding can help libraries enhance technology, provide digital training, and offer free access to online educational resources.

3. **Community and Economic Development:**

Libraries serve as hubs for residents to gather, hosting public meetings, workshops, and cultural events. They promote community cohesion and civic engagement while supporting local economic growth by providing resources such as market research tools, business planning assistance, and networking opportunities for small business owners and entrepreneurs.

4. **Support for Vulnerable Populations:**

Libraries serve as refuge spaces for seniors and low-income families who lack access to essential services. Increased state funding can develop programs like language courses, job workshops, and social service referrals to address these communities' needs.

## Support Child Well-Being: Budget recommendations

Increase funding for libraries received from the General Revenue Fund from 1.7 to 1.9 % of the General Revenue Fund.

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