PLF
The Ohio Department of Taxation (ODT) posted the September 2020 PLF distribution of $39,101,851 – which is $3.4 million (+ 9.52%) above ODT’s original estimate that was issued in July 2019. The distribution came in at $3.44 million (+ 9.64%) above ODT’s latest estimates that were just issued at the end of June.

This is the second month in a row where the actual PLF distribution has exceeded the estimate by a significant margin. However, the PLF CY 2020 year-to-date total is $304,315,772 which is $6.8 million (-2.18%) below what we were anticipating pre-pandemic. A look at the PLF distribution for the past three years and a link to an Excel spreadsheet listing each county’s distribution total for September 2020 can be found on the OLC website: [http://olc.org/funding/](http://olc.org/funding/).

ODT Issues Initial CY21 PLF Certification
The Ohio Department of Taxation (ODT) posted its initial county-by-county certifications for the Public Library Fund (PLF) for calendar year (CY) 2021. Each county's estimated entitlement is available at: [https://tax.ohio.gov/static/revenue_accounting/lgf%20and%20plf/certifications/PLF%20%202021%20est%20July%202020.pdf](https://tax.ohio.gov/static/revenue_accounting/lgf%20and%20plf/certifications/PLF%20%202021%20est%20July%202020.pdf)

Please read the information carefully. The CY 2021 entitlement estimates are based on the PLF percentage being set at 1.7% of the state General Revenue Fund (GRF) for fiscal year (FY) 2021 which ends on June 30, 2021. Therefore, the CY 2021 estimates were calculated with the PLF at 1.7% (temporary law) for Jan.-June and at 1.66% (permanent law) for July-December. ODT's initial statewide PLF distribution estimate for CY21 is $367,373,829, which is $15.2 million less than the latest estimate for CY20. As required by law, these estimates will be updated again in December 2020.

This is a great opportunity to remind everyone about the importance of statewide advocacy for the PLF and that next year will be an extremely important state budget year!

Rep. Bob Cupp elected Speaker of the Ohio House
In July, Rep. Bob Cupp (R-Lima) became the new Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives following a vote to remove Larry Householder (R-Glenford) from the position. Householder, however, does remain in his legislative seat following his arrest on federal charges surrounding the passage of nuclear bailout legislation (HB 6).

Amended Substitute Senate Bill (SB) 10 - Theft in Office
SB 10, sponsored by Sen. Steve Wilson (R-Maineville) increases the penalty for the offense of “theft in office” when the value of property or services stolen is $150,000 or more. The maximum penalty under current law is a third degree felony if the value of property or services stolen equals $7,500 or more. Under the bill, the penalty would be raised to a second degree felony if the value of stolen property equals $150,000 - $749,999.99. If the value exceeds $750,000, then the level of the offense would be raised to a first degree felony. The bill further requires the offender to pay restitution for the costs of auditing any public entity that suffered a loss as a result of the theft.

Am. Sub. SB 10 was passed out of the House on June 9 by a vote 90-0. The Senate recently voted not to concur with changes made by the House which sends the bill to a conference committee for further action to work out the differences.
HB 606 - Civil Immunity Legislation
HB 606, sponsored by Rep. Diane Grendell (R-Chesterland), seeks to address civil liability for certain healthcare and service providers during a government-declared disaster. The legislation grants a person providing services for businesses and operations civil immunity for injury, death, or loss to person or property caused by the transmission of COVID-19. The bill does not provide immunity for those acting with malicious purpose, acting recklessly, or in bad faith.

HB 606 provides qualified immunity to "persons", which include nonprofit institutions. This would cover association libraries in Ohio. It also includes within the definition of "person," "governmental entities," which includes public libraries. A "service provider" under the bill is any "person" providing any services, and so because a library is a "governmental entity" (or "nonprofit"), it is a "person" and therefore is also a "service provider" to whom the bill’s immunity provisions apply.

Am. Sub. HB 606 went to conference committee following a vote to not concur with the version passed by the Senate. As a result, the committee made two changes to the legislation before being accepted by both the House and Senate. One change extends the provisions of the bill through September 2021 and the other change removes the emergency clause that was originally contained in the bill.

Local Government CARES Act funding – SB 357
SB 357 was recently introduced by Sen. Matt Dolan (R-Chagrin Falls) to provide for the distribution of additional federal CARES Act funds for counties, townships, and local municipalities. Like the funds released earlier this year to these local governments, they are not distributed to Ohio’s libraries. However, some libraries are working with their local city or county officials to receive some portion of their allocated funding. SB 357 distributes $650 million on a per capita basis, unlike the previous disbursements that allocated the funding based on the Local Government Fund model. The bill passed out of the Senate and now awaits action in the House.

Substitute HB 13 – Residential Broadband Expansion Program
HB 13, sponsored by Rep. Rick Carfagna (R-Westerville) and Rep. Michael O’Brien (D-Warren), seeks to expand broadband coverage to unserved residential areas around Ohio. The bill as passed by the House provides $20 million from the Facilities Establishment Fund in the Ohio Development Services Agency to the newly created Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grant Program Fund in the Ohio Department of Commerce. The bill encourages internet service providers to apply for grants to address the lack of broadband access in specific locations. These areas lacking broadband access can be identified by local governments and publicized by the Department of Commerce.

OLC has been a strong proponent of HB 13 from the beginning and has testified multiple times in the House in support of the legislation. The legislation passed the House by a vote 81-8. On July 21, the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee held its first hearing on the bill.

“Road Ahead” Tour Virtual Meetings in October
Throughout the month of October, OLC will be hosting virtual meetings in coordination with the Legislative Network and the Government Relations Committee. Our goal is to encourage all libraries within each Senate District to participate and learn about the importance of advocacy, important talking points that need to be shared with decision makers, and what lies ahead as we look towards next year’s biennial budget process.

OLC Survey
OLC issued a survey to get information on public library services during the pandemic. This information is extremely important for our advocacy efforts on the PLF and is related to ongoing conversations we are having with the Lt. Governor’s Office and BroadbandOhio.

Approximately 217 public library systems have completed the OLC survey. The goal of the survey is to show how Ohio's public libraries are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic within their communities. Data from the survey will help convey to Gov. DeWine and legislators the value, strength, and importance of libraries in Ohio.

In addition to the survey information, the Lt. Governor’s office is focused on the following key areas under digital literacy:

5.H.1: Government and Legal Services Report
- Tech tutor/one-on-one assistance
- K-12 partnerships with schools/K-12 support for teachers, parents and students
- Workforce Development/job and career assistance/job searching/software to work/LinkedIn Learning/pipeline for TechCred
- Entrepreneurs/building an online presence/Grow with Google

More information will be shared at the Board of Directors meeting.

Virtual Trustee Dinners
Due to the pandemic, the OLC Trustee Dinner events that were postponed in the spring are now being held virtually this fall. This year we have invited a few legislators to participate and offer a legislative update and their perspective on what lies ahead. Rep. Rick Carfagna participated in the Central/Southwest event on Sept. 3, Rep. Haraz Ghanbari participated in the Northwest event on Sept. 10, House Minority Leader Emilia Sykes is invited to participate in the North/Northeast event on Sept. 17, and Rep. Don Jones is invited to participate in the East/Southeast event on Oct. 1.

Voter Registration Webinar with the Ohio Secretary of State’s Office
On Aug. 19, OLC hosted a voter registration webinar with key staff from the Office of Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose. Those presenting were Emily Bright, Deputy Elections Administrator, Patricia Currie, NVRA Coordinator, and Jeff Hobday, Senior Elections Counsel. A recorded version of the webinar is now available on OLC’s website.

In addition, OLC is partnering with the Ohio SOS to promote the Heroes for Democracy program. Ohio needs 35,000 people to serve as poll workers on election day and the OLC is supporting the state’s recruitment efforts by approving 6.0 hours of continuing education credit for the Ohio Public Librarian or Ohio Public Library Staff certification program. For those working toward renewing their Certified Public Librarian (CPL) or Certified Public Library Staff (CPLS) certification, volunteering as a poll worker on Tues., Nov. 3 will count as 6 hours of credit under Category C. Library staff who are interested in volunteering, can sign up at VoteOhio.gov/DefendDemocracy.

Library Mental Health Webinar
We are only now coming to terms with how common trauma really is; a landmark Kaiser Permanente and Center for Disease Control study that surveyed patients receiving physicals found that almost two-thirds had experienced at least one form of abuse, neglect, or other trauma as a child (1998). Although much of the study’s impact originated in the fields of health and human services, trauma-informed care is a framework that holds great promise for application to library work both in how we serve and respond to patrons as well as how we respond to taking care of ourselves.

Combine this landmark study with current events like COVID19 and social unrest, and there is the potential to disrupt our sense of control, connection and meaning. This webinar will assist participants understand why we suffer, how we might better interact with others in our system and how we can support and empower persons and ourselves toward personal wellness. Join Kim Kehl, Trauma-Informed Care Coordinator, and Vicki Montesano, Bureau Chief of Mental Health Treatment, from the Ohio Mental Health and Add iction Services on Oct. 14 at 10am. Registration for this free webinar is now available on OLC’s website.

OLC Construction Webinar
A virtual construction mini-workshop/webinar has been scheduled for Oct. 21. The content of the workshop will include presentations on construction financing options, public bidding requirements, and prevailing wage obligations. Presenters will include Becky Princehorn and Laura Bowman from Bricker & Eckler, and Stephen Clegg and Sean Sibert from the Bureau of Wage and Hour within the Ohio Department of Commerce.

$18.3 Million in CARES Act Funds available to Ohio’s Public Libraries
Ohio’s public libraries can apply for the $18.3 million in Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds that were approved by the Ohio Controlling Board. The funds are being distributed by the Ohio Office of Budget and Management (OBM) through the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) – Public Library Assistance Program. The funds are to be used to help offset the unanticipated costs of safely operating library facilities during the pandemic. Each library system may request up to $25,000 for each main and branch
location(s). As a reminder, these funds are separate and independent from both the CARES Act grants through IMLS and the CARES Act Mini-Grant program through the State Library of Ohio. Also, these are NOT General Revenue Fund dollars and they will be restricted.

OLC has been working with OBM and the State Auditor’s Office to assist libraries with questions related to the funding and we are sincerely grateful for their partnership in this effort. More information to assist libraries, including a webinar hosted by OLC with OBM and the AOS, can be found on OLC’s website.