

**Ohio Library Council  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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ITEM NO.: **6.C**

MEETING DATE: **Jan. 17, 2025**

SUBJECT: **OPLIN Report**

SUBMITTED BY: **Don Yarman**

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**REPORT FOR INFORMATION**

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NTIA Grant Updates

Broadband Ohio received federal funds for the state's digital opportunity plan in December. They will release the RFP for a digital literacy training platform (Northstar or equivalent) by January 21. After sixty days, OPLIN will be part of the evaluation committee to select the platform that will be available from public libraries and will support the state's digital literacy education efforts in correctional facilities.

The first round of NTIA competitive grant awards was announced. No Ohio-specific proposals were awarded in the first round, but Ohio is included in a few multi-state proposals, including projects from National Black Tech Ecosystem Association to establish digital hubs, National Digital Inclusion Alliance to expand digital navigator programs, and National Lead For America Inc. to build a program that reminds me very much of the State Library's Guiding Ohio Online cohort. We're still hopeful that our "Building Gigabit Network Capacity for Ohio Libraries" project will be funded in a future round.

E-Rate Miscellany

- The 471 Window to request services for July 2025 – June 2026 opens January 15 at noon and will close on Wednesday, March 26. If you still need to file a 470 to request services, it must be posted by February 26.
- OPLIN received three proposals—from AT&T, Kajeet/CDWG, and T-Mobile—for library hotspots in response to our statewide call for bids. Libraries can submit requests for funding against these bids, or issue a 470 to gather bids separately. The link and login credentials were emailed to our library E-Rate administrator contacts, but you can request login information by contacting OPLIN Support.
- Bids for the branch connections OPLIN will manage for libraries are due January 17. Between new branch circuits and our regular upgrades/renewals, we expect to place 137 circuit orders for July.
- The Supreme Court will review the 5th Circuit's findings that USF is a "tax" and that the FCC's delegation of admin responsibilities to USAC is unconstitutional. Appellate courts in the 6th and 11th Circuit courts had previously upheld the USF funding system as constitutional. A decision from the Supreme Court is likely before June 30, 2025.