

Ohio Libraries Connect

Talking Points

The following are talking points to be utilized in communication with your legislators and their staff. First and foremost, we want to thank them for making Ohio's 251 public libraries a priority in last year's state budget. Our partnership with the state, and the funding from the Public Library Fund, will help libraries continue to do what they do best, and that is serving their communities.

Return on Investment (ROI)

- Ohio's public libraries have the highest usage per capita in the nation and return \$5 to Ohioans for every \$1 they spend.

Use OLC's ROI Calculator to measure the ROI for your public library. Share that information with your legislator so that they understand your library's economic value to your community.

Technology / Digital Divide / Digital Literacy

- Access to the internet today is essential and unfortunately there are still—two years into the pandemic—individuals, and parts of the state without it. Wi-Fi usage and digital downloads by public library customers are increasing.

Provide examples of how your library provides Wi-Fi and computer connectivity to your customers. Share examples of what your library is doing related to Northstar, eGovernment, computer training, eMedia and eBooks. Be sure to include any specific lending programs with devices and connectivity. This may include Wi-Fi hotspots, tablets, and partnerships with PCs for People and Broadband Ohio.

Response to the Pandemic

- In March 2020, Ohio's libraries quickly pivoted and adjusted their service delivery models to continue to meet the needs of their local communities.

Share examples of how your library is engaging your community and working with state and local partners to respond to the pandemic – for example how your library is working with schools to address the pandemic educational gaps we are seeing in Pre-K and Kindergarten as well as minority populations and economically disadvantaged communities. How your library is assisting with workforce development efforts to help displaced workers take online courses and apply for employment. Additionally, share how your library has voluntarily assisted the Ohio Department of Health with efforts to connect with communities on the distribution of COVID-19 rapid at-home test kits.

Library Infrastructure Needs

- Libraries in Ohio are community institutions and have been for hundreds of years. The demand for library resources and services by the public has never been greater. To meet that demand, libraries are having to figure out how to address aging buildings and equipment to ensure safety, accessibility, and innovation.

Share an example of a major infrastructure need by your library. This may include, HVAC, technology, elevators, etc. Also point out the fact that Ohio libraries are not directly receiving federal ARPA money that cities, counties, and townships are receiving.