PLF Update
The Ohio Department of Taxation (ODT) posted the March 2024 Public Library Fund (PLF) distribution of $37,210,077 – which is $717,948 (or + 1.97%) above ODT’s original estimate that was issued in July 2023; and $751,022 (or + 2.06%) above ODT’s updated estimate issued in December 2023.

According to the Office of Budget and Management (OBM), overall state tax receipts for the month of February came in 1.8% or $38.4 million above estimates. OBM has indicated that this is in line with their expectations.

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 March 2024 can be found on the OLC website.

Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform
This joint legislative committee was a provision in the state budget bill (HB 33) which passed last June. The committee is made up of five Senators and five Representatives who are authorized to hold hearings and make recommendations on pending legislation related to property taxation. A final report from the committee must be submitted to the General Assembly by December 31, 2024, making recommendations on reforms to property tax law. The committee is being co-chaired by Rep. Bill Roemer (R-Richfield) and Sen. Louis Blessing (Colerain Twp.). In addition to the co-chairs, the committee comprises Sen. George Lang (R-West Chester Twp.), Sen. Sandra O’Brien (R-Rome), Sen. Hearcel Craig (D-Columbus), Sen. Bill DeMora (D-Columbus), Rep. Dan Troy (D-Willowick), Rep. Tracy Richardson (R-Marysville), Rep. Tom Young (R-Dayton) and Rep. Bride Rose Sweeney (D-Cleveland). More will be discussed at the board meeting.

HB 344 – Replacement Levies
HB 344 is legislation introduced by Reps. Mathews (R-Lebanon) and Hall (R-Middletown) seeking to eliminate the authority of political subdivisions to levy replacement property tax levies beginning with elections held on or after Oct. 1, 2024. The rational for eliminating this option is to alleviate voter confusion over whether they are the same as a renewal levy. This provision was previously included in HB 33, as passed by the House, but taken out of the budget bill while being considered in the Senate. OLC provided testimony in opposition to HB 344 on January 23. More will be discussed at the board meeting.

HB 257 - Virtual Meetings Bill
HB 257 is legislation sponsored by Rep’s Hoops (R-Napoleon) and Claggett (R-Newark) to provide certain public boards, including library boards, with the opportunity to have virtual meetings. Since its introduction a few amendments have been added to help clarify certain provisions of the bill. One of the changes includes a requirement for public bodies to define
in their virtual meeting policy what would constitute a “major nonroutine expenditure” or “significant hiring decision,” which are factors that can trigger a requirement to meet in person.

Another change requires a virtual meeting notification to be distributed 72 hours prior to the meeting with an agenda. Objections to agenda items must be sent to the president of the board at least 48 hours before the meeting. If two or more members or the board object to an agenda item, the issue can be discussed, but the public body cannot take action on that item during the virtual meeting. HB 257 was voted out of the House on Nov. 29 and is now being heard in the Senate Government Oversight Committee. Currently, trustees of library boards are still required to have their meetings in-person.

One-Time State Funding (OTSCIF)
OLC is attempting to reframe the conversation at the Statehouse on funding Ohio Public Library Facilities. In February, OLC hosted a webinar on the state’s Capital Bill, One-Time Strategic Community Investment Fund (OTSCIF) and how libraries can submit requests for funding. Ray DiRossi, Budget and Finance Director with the Ohio Senate Majority Caucus discussed the requirements and answered questions from library directors and fiscal officers. If you missed the live presentation, a recording and additional resources are available on the [OLC website](#).

All Senate offices are using the [Ohio Senate Capital Budget/One-Time Strategic Community Investment Fund Application Form](#) for the submission of project requests. We are asking libraries to copy OLC on any communications and proposals submitted so that we can help advocate for these project(s). More will be discussed at the Board Meeting.

Voices for Libraries 2024 – Congressional Fly-In
OLC participated in the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) “Voices for Libraries 2024” event in Washington DC. COSLA collaborated with ALA in this advocacy event to promote support for LSTA funding from congress. Those attending from Ohio included, State Librarian Wendy Knapp, Otterbein University Library Director Tiffany Lipstreu, Lorain Public Library Director Anastasia Diamond-Ortiz, and Jay Smith. Meetings were held with both Ohio senate offices, Rep. Beatty, and Rep. Latta on Thurs., March 7.

OLC Library Legislative Day – Save the Date!
This year’s Library Legislative Day is scheduled for Wed., April 24 at the Sheraton on Capitol Square. This year we’re planning to begin early with a welcome and legislative briefing beginning at 8:15 a.m. The legislative briefing will also be repeated at 10:30 a.m. In addition, we are looking forward to having a property tax legislative panel discussion with Sen. Bill Blessing, Co-Chair of the Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform, and Rep. Dan Troy, ranking member on the House Ways and Means Committee. Additionally, our keynote speaker is Steve Dackin, Director of the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce. More information about this year’s event will be discussed at the board meeting.