



ohio library council

Promoting our libraries. Inventing our future.

Standards for Public Library Service in Ohio

2010 Revision

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Revised 3/23/10

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A separate compliance checklist has been developed to assist public libraries in evaluating their compliance with the *Standards for Public Library Service in Ohio*.



Acknowledgements

This revision of the Standards for Public Library Service in Ohio was the work of the past and present members of the Library Development Committee of the Ohio Library Council:

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Introduction

This edition of Standards for Public Library Service in Ohio, updated by the Library Development Committee* of the Ohio Library Council (OLC), is organized to reflect changes libraries have experienced since publication of the 2002 edition. The standards define a basic level of library service and give Ohio libraries of all sizes a tool to assess their strengths, identify areas for improvement, plan for and deliver service, and set goals and objectives for improving public library service.

Minor changes have been made, but this edition continues to focus on service standards in five core areas: Governance, Resources, Dissemination of Resources, Cooperation, and Communications. Each standard is accompanied by a set of guidelines to serve as examples and suggestions. Some standards have been revised to reflect increased demands for and capabilities of new information technologies, developments such as statewide resource sharing, and increased public expectations for both traditional and new library services.

Additionally, a checklist has been added to help libraries evaluate their level of compliance with each standard as well as develop a plan for improving compliance.

The standards continue to have the following goals. They:

- ❑ reflect the view of those using library services
- ❑ allow for local autonomy in planning for library services
- ❑ present a useful tool in planning
- ❑ are measurable or demonstrable
- ❑ reflect output rather than input
- ❑ are based on the current realities and opportunities in public library service in Ohio.

The Committee recognizes that not every library will meet every standard. Nevertheless, the standards provide focus and direction for evaluation and accountability. Help is available to meet these standards.

The Ohio Library Council and the Library Development Committee* hope these standards will assist staffs and trustees throughout the state in managing their libraries.

*The Library Development Committee of the Ohio Library Council merged with the Library Education Committee. The *Standards for Public Library Service in Ohio* will be reviewed annually. Please send comments, questions, or suggestions to the OLC's [Library Education Committee](#).



I. GOVERNANCE

Standards

A. State and Federal Law

The library complies and keeps current with appropriate state and federal laws pertaining to public libraries.

B. By-Laws

The library has a board-approved set of written by-laws governing the conduct of the board of trustees and its relationship to the library and the staff.

C. Policies and Procedures

The library has a board-approved set of written policies and procedures which control library operations.

D. Long-Range Plan

The library has a board-approved written long-range plan.

E. Evaluation

The library conducts a regular and standardized evaluation of library operations, services, and collections.

F. Financial Accountability and Stability

The library maintains financial accountability and stability through accurate reporting measures and the procurement of necessary operating funds.

I. Governance

A. State and Federal Law

The library complies and keeps current with appropriate state and federal laws pertaining to public libraries. The library as defined by the [Ohio Revised Code \(ORC\)](#) is subject to certain Ohio laws pertaining to public institutions. It is the legal duty of every library to be aware of and follow all legal restrictions. The list below is not comprehensive and changes often. The OLC recommends that library administrators review the [sample policies](#) provided on the OLC website.

Guidelines

- I.A.1 The library complies with [Ohio Open Meetings and Open Records Laws](#) and has a written policy specifying, at a minimum, how trustee board meetings and meetings of board committees are publicly posted, how other types of notification are made, and how the public attends and may participate in board and committee meetings.
- I.A.2 The library has a written policy that specifies procedures for library and CUSTOMER record confidentiality.
- I.A.3 The library has a written [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) policy.
- I.A.4 The library has a written equal employment opportunity policy.
- I.A.5 The library has a written and publicly posted copyright compliance procedure (17 USC 108) ([United States Code](#)).
- I.A.6 The library has a written Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) policy, if applicable, or other policies that address family leave.
- I.A.7 The library has a written workers' compensation procedure.
- I.A.8 The library has a written records retention and disposal policy.
- I.A.9 The library provides to each employee and new trustee a copy of [Chapter 102 of the ORC](#) (the Ohio Ethics Law) and of [Section 2921.42 of the ORC](#) (the Criminal Ethics Statute), as required in the [ORC Section 102.09](#).
- I.A.10 The board of trustees has established, by policy, the amount of the fidelity bond required before the fiscal officer (and any assistant fiscal officer) enters upon his or her duties, and the library has obtained such as bond from a surety approved by the board ([ORC 3375.32](#)).

I. Governance

B. By-Laws

The library has a board-approved set of written by-laws that govern the conduct of the board of trustees and its relationship to the library and staff. By-laws provide the library board of trustees with guidelines that allow for consistent, organized, and productive meetings and operations. The OLC recommends that library administrators review the [sample policies](#) provided on the OLC website and refer to the [Ohio Public Library Trustees' Handbook](#).

Guidelines

- I.B.1 The library's by-laws include the responsibilities and job descriptions for board of trustees, officers, and board committees.
- I.B.2 The library's by-laws include the library's mission statement and a section on trustee ethics.
- I.B.3 The library's by-laws include sections that define and regulate trustee meetings, committees, staff relationships, and selection of trustees.
- I.B.4 The library trustees regularly review the by-laws to ensure the library board is operating under the by-laws' guidelines and to ensure that the by-laws meet current organizational needs.



I. Governance

C. Policies and Procedures

The library has a board-approved set of written policies and procedures which control the operations of the library. Policies (board-approved guidelines that define library operations and services) and procedures (specific rules that allow a policy to be carried out) provide the library with tools to create consistent levels of service excellence to the community. Policies and procedures should be reviewed regularly. The OLC recommends that library administrators review the [sample policies](#) provided on the OLC website.

Guidelines

- I.C.1 The library has a written policy on the job qualifications for the director and fiscal officer. The director should have a Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) or equivalent degree from an [American Library Association](#) (ALA) accredited institution and Ohio Public Library Certification.
- I.C.2 The library has a written collection development and maintenance policy.
- I.C.3 The library has a written policy on personnel and employment practices.
- I.C.4 The library has a written technology plan.
- I.C.5 The library has a written policy for patrons to request reconsideration of materials.
- I.C.6 The library has a written policy defining in-house and outreach services, fees, and use/access of materials, equipment, and facilities.
- I.C.7 The library has written policies that address staff and customer conduct.
- I.C.8 The library has a written policy identifying who is responsible for public relations and issues related to the publicity of the library.
- I.C.9 The library has a written disaster plan.
- I.C.10 The library has a written policy that addresses the ALA [Bill of Rights](#) and [Code of Ethics](#).
- I.C.11 The library has an Acceptable Use Policy for customer use of the Internet.

I. Governance

D. Long-Range Plan

The library has a board-approved written long-range plan. The plan helps the library allocate resources, clarify the library's role in the community, and evaluate library services and collections.

Guidelines

- I.D.1 The library's long-range plan is based on input from library trustees, administration, staff, customers, and community stakeholders.
- I.D.2 The library's long-range plan includes mission and vision statements.
- I.D.3 The library's long-range plan includes specific goals and objectives that are tied directly to the library's mission statement and help move the library toward its vision statement.
- I.D.4 The library's long-range plan addresses the realities of its service area including local economic conditions, demographics, politics, and informational/recreational needs.
- I.D.5 The library's long-range plan, at a minimum, addresses personnel, materials, technological changes, finances, services, programming, and facilities.
- I.D.6 The goals and objectives of the library's long-range plan include means for evaluation and measurements of success.

I. Governance

E. Evaluation

The library conducts regular and standardized evaluations of library operations, services, and collections. Evaluating the services, materials, and plans of the library on a regular basis helps establish an efficient, cost-effective organization that meets community needs.

Guidelines

- I.E.1 The library trustees formally review and evaluate the long-range plan on an annual basis.
- I.E.2 The library trustees perform a written evaluation of the director and fiscal officer on an annual basis.
- I.E.3 The library director and appropriate administrators perform written evaluations for all staff and volunteers on an annual basis.
- I.E.4 The library conducts a community analysis at least every five years.
- I.E.5 The library conducts a customer survey at least every three years.
- I.E.6 The library trustees review all policies at least every three years.
- I.E.7 The library conducts regular, ongoing inspections of the physical facilities, equipment (technology plan), and materials (weeding).

I. Governance

F. Financial Accountability and Stability

The library maintains financial accountability and stability through accurate reporting measures and multiple funding sources. Maintaining accurate records, providing stable funding, and providing adequate financial safeguards enable the library to provide the services for which it was established.

Guidelines

- I.F.1 The library complies with state budget reporting requirements.
- I.F.2 The library develops ongoing financial resources in addition to the Public Library Fund (PLF) which might include levies, grants, endowments, and various other funding campaigns.
- I.F.3 The library approves an annual budget and appropriations that accurately reflect the needs of the library and the community.
- I.F.4 The library complies with all standards and directives associated with regular state-mandated audits.
- I.F.5 The library establishes a state-recommended audit committee.
- I.F.6 The library provides detailed monthly financial reports that reflect income and expenditures.
- I.F.7 The library bonds all staff responsible for library finances.

II. RESOURCES

Standards

A. Materials

The library collects current circulating and reference materials in a wide variety of formats (including audiovisual and electronic) appropriate to the needs of the community.

B. Facilities

The library has a well-maintained physical building(s) that is geographically and physically accessible to members of the community. Each facility is secure, comfortable, and inviting to customers of all ages and physical abilities.

C. Staff

The library has a competent, well-trained staff who provide high-quality service in a friendly and courteous manner. The number of staff members is sufficient to support all appropriate services.

D. Technological Infrastructure

The library has a functional, up-to-date technological infrastructure to support access to all library services. This infrastructure includes an automated library system with a circulation module and an online public access catalog, sufficient workstations for customers and staff, and the Ohio Public Library Information Network (OPLIN) Internet service.

E. Hours

Conforming to community needs, the library is open sufficient hours, including evenings and weekends, to provide customer access to facilities.

II. RESOURCES

A. Materials

The library collects current circulating and reference materials in a wide variety of formats (including audiovisual and electronic) appropriate to the needs of the community.

Guidelines

- II.A.1 The library has a written collection development and maintenance policy. This policy includes criteria for selection, replacement, and weeding of library materials, including electronic resources. This policy is adopted by the library board.
- II.A.2 The library has an up-to-date circulating collection. Circulating materials published within the last five years make up at least 25 percent of the collection.
- II.A.3 The library's reference collection—both print and electronic—is current. Staff is regularly trained in the usage of each. General reference materials published within the last five years make up at least 75 percent of the collection.
- II.A.4 The library has allocated at least 20 percent of its total annual operating expenditures for materials, including electronic resources, as reported in its annual report to the State Library of Ohio.
- II.A.5 The library considers the diversity of community needs, interests, and demands for titles and formats in the materials selection process.
- II.A.6 The library has a written policy detailing procedures for the review of materials added and withdrawn from the collection based in part on customer input. This policy includes criteria for accepting donations and for responding to concerns over the content of library materials and their suitability for the collection.

II. RESOURCES

B. Facilities

The library has a well-maintained physical building(s) that is geographically and physically accessible to members of the community. Each facility is secure, comfortable, and inviting to customers of all ages and physical abilities.

Guidelines

- II.B.1 The library ensures that all buildings have the required emergency facilities provided in accordance with the appropriate codes: fire alarms and extinguishers, emergency evacuation routes and exits, first aid supplies, and a designated tornado shelter.
- II.B.2 The library has adequate interior lighting, temperature/humidity controls, and appropriate furnishings to provide an atmosphere conducive for customers and staff as well as preservation of materials.
- II.B.3 The library has provided for convenient and safe accessibility to well-lit parking areas on or adjacent to the library's site. Free parking is available within one-tenth of a mile from the library at least 80 percent of the time the library is open.
- II.B.4 A written self-evaluation regarding the library's facilities compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has been performed and the library has made appropriate accommodations for physical accessibility. Compliance should extend to the library's website and to in-house computers in numbers appropriate to need and demand.
- II.B.5 The library conducts a study of the utilization of space in each facility at least once every five years. This assessment should evaluate current space requirements, current community analysis, and estimated changes in technology, size of collections, and types of materials.
- II.B.6 The library reviews the value and replacement cost of its buildings and their contents on a regular basis and has made an informed decision to either self-insure or purchase property and casualty insurance in an amount adequate to protect the library in the event of loss or damage to such property.

II. RESOURCES

C. Staff

The library has a competent, well-trained staff who provide high-quality service in a friendly and courteous manner. The number of staff members is sufficient to support all appropriate services.

Guidelines

- II.C.1 The library has written job descriptions and conducts regular employee evaluations. The descriptions clearly define all staff positions and include essential job functions, responsibilities, educational requirements, and necessary experience. Evaluations are based upon these descriptions.
- II.C.2 The library provides adequate training for staff members to fulfill the requirements of their job descriptions and to improve their knowledge and skills to work in their particular library.
- II.C.3 The library encourages and supports staff members to continue their education through programs and activities outside the library. The library has provisions for release time, registration fees, travel expenses, etc., to allow employees to attend educational programs and participate in local, state, and national library organizations.
- II.C.4 The library employs the appropriate number of professional librarians (i.e., staff with the Master of Library and Information Science degree and [Ohio Public Librarian Certification](#)) for its size and needs. Eligible library staff should possess Ohio Public Librarian Certification.
- II.C.5 The library has a staff member fully trained in providing reference and referral services at each facility during service hours.

II. RESOURCES

D. Technological Infrastructure

The library has a functional, up-to-date technological infrastructure to support access to all library services. This infrastructure includes an automated library system with a circulation module and an online public access catalog, sufficient workstations for customers and staff, and the [Ohio Public Library Information Network](#) (OPLIN) Internet service.

Guidelines

- II.D.1 The library has a written, board-approved technology plan for the implementation and maintenance of all hardware, software, and electronic resources. This plan is reviewed every three years.
- II.D.2 The library has allocated funds from the budget to implement the technology plan and has a sufficient reserve for unanticipated new technologies and repair and replacement.
- II.D.3 The library provides a sufficient number of staff-only workstations and services (such as electronic mail) so that they may fully utilize the library's automation system and OPLIN Internet services.
- II.D.4 The library provides remote access 24 hours per day, seven days a week, to the library's catalog and other electronic resources.
- II.D.5 The library contracts with outside consultants and vendors to resolve technology problems that are beyond the skills of in-house technology staff and assist in the technology planning process as needed.

II. RESOURCES

E. Hours

Conforming to community needs, the library is open sufficient hours, including evenings and weekends, to provide customer access to the facilities.

Guidelines

- II.E.1 Library hours include morning, afternoon, evening, and weekend hours and are based on local community needs.
- II.E.2 The library develops cooperative/complimentary scheduling with neighboring libraries to permit maximum user access.

III. DISSEMINATION OF RESOURCES

Standards

A. Circulation

The library extends its borrowing privileges to all Ohio residents, regardless of age and without charge.

The library attempts to fill requests for materials not available locally.

B. Information Services

The library provides accurate and timely reference and readers advisory services to residents of all ages during all hours the library is open.

C. Access

All Ohio residents should receive information and materials in a reasonable time, regardless of location or format of the information and materials.

D. Programming

Customers have available educational, recreational or cultural programs sponsored by the library or sponsored in conjunction with other community organizations as determined by community needs.

III. DISSEMINATION OF RESOURCES

A. Circulation

The library extends its borrowing privileges to all Ohio residents, regardless of age and without charge. The library attempts to fill requests for materials not available locally.

B. Information Services

The library provides accurate and timely reference and readers advisory services to residents of all ages during all hours that the library is open.

Guidelines

- III.B.1 Customers receive correct answers to their questions with 80 percent of those questions answered by the end of the business day as measured with reference fill rate.
- III.B.2 Customers can obtain or are directed to current information about the community and its services.
- III.B.3 The library regularly receives all local newspapers.
- III.B.4 The library has the latest copies of local codes and ordinances.
- III.B.5 The library has a community information file or a close working relationship with the local Information and Referral (I & R) community. It provides access to a local I & R file via the Internet.
- III.B.6 The library has at least one public access workstation with Internet access and a printer.
- III.B.7 The staff assists customers with the effective use of technologies needed to access non-print resources.

III. DISSEMINATION OF RESOURCES

C. Access

All Ohio residents should receive information and materials in a reasonable time, regardless of location or format of the information and materials.

Guidelines

- III.C.1 Customers receive immediate access to 50 percent of specifically requested titles and authors as measured with title and author fill rate.
- III.C.2 Customers receive immediate access to materials for 90 percent of their subject requests as measured with subject fill rate.
- III.C.3 Customers receive 80 percent of the requested materials not immediately available within seven days, as measured with a document delivery survey.
- III.C.4 The library has an on-line public access catalog (PAC) which indicates the holdings, locations, and availability of all materials in all of the library's service outlets to customers.
- III.C.5 Customers have remote access to the catalog via the Internet 24 hours per day, seven days per week.
- III.C.6 Customers are able to use materials without the library placing restrictions on content, format, or treatment, i.e., the library imposes no restrictions of any kind, including age of borrower, on any library materials.
- III.C.7 All materials are accessible all hours the library is open.
- III.C.8 All basic library services are available whenever the library is open.
- III.C.9 All customers with disabilities are able to access library resources and services through the provision of assistive technology and alternative formats.
- III.C.10 All customers receive the following services without charge: print materials, non-print materials, Internet access, information services, programs, reserves, and interlibrary loan.
- III.C.11 The library serves all population groups in the community. Appropriate services may include services for the homebound, for childcare facilities, schools, and other institutions, books-by-mail service, or bookmobile service.
- III.C.12 Customers are able to reach their library by telephone, fax, and electronic mail, i.e.,
 - a. each library outlet has a telephone and fax equipment including one voice and one data line;
 - b. each outlet is accessible via a toll-free call within its service area;
 - c. each outlet has a listing in the alphabetical and classified pages of the local telephone directory; and
 - d. the library has an electronic mail address.

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- III.C.13 When the library is closed, telephone callers hear a recorded message with library hours and the web address.
 - III.C.14 Library facilities are readily available to all residents of the service jurisdiction within a 30-minute drive.

III. DISSEMINATION OF RESOURCES

D. Programming

Customers have available educational, recreational, or cultural programs sponsored by the library or sponsored in conjunction with other community organizations as determined by community needs.

Guidelines

- III.D.1 The library is the primary contributor of time, money, or people in the planning or presentation of programs which introduce those attending to any of the broad range of library services and activities, or which directly provides information through the presentation of talks, films, drama, class visits, story hours, etc. Programs need not take place in the library.

IV. COOPERATION

Standards

A. Statewide Resource Sharing

All Ohio residents are able to request an item from any Ohio library and check it out from their home library.

B. Cooperation with Other Agencies

The library cooperates with other (non-library) agencies to offer information, services, and programs to residents.

C. Multi-Type Library Cooperation

The library cooperates with other public, school, academic, and special libraries to offer information, services, and programs to residents.

IV. COOPERATION

A. Statewide Resource Sharing

All Ohio residents are able to request an item from any Ohio library and check it out from their home library.

Guidelines

- IV.A.1 The library shares any circulating resource with any Ohio library customer.
- IV.A.2 The library uses the statewide resource sharing delivery system and pays for contracted delivery costs.
- IV.A.3 The library makes resource sharing an integral part of library service to its customers and commits to staff and customer training.
- IV.A.4 The library absorbs the cost of any lost or damaged materials.
- IV.A.5 The library processes statewide resource sharing requests daily.
- IV.A.6 The library designates a statewide resource sharing contact person and provides this information to the State Library of Ohio.

IV. COOPERATION

B. Cooperation with Other Agencies

The library cooperates with other (non-library) agencies to offer information, services, and programs to residents.

Guidelines

- IV.B.1 The library works with other agencies to plan hours of service and the acquisition of materials and resources.
- IV.B.2 The library collaborates with other agencies on technological development.
- IV.B.3 The library provides library tours.
- IV.B.4 The library provides space for meetings and programs of other agencies.
- IV.B.5 The library provides educational, recreational, or cultural programs sponsored by the library or co-sponsored with other agencies.
- IV.B.6 The library provides current information about the community and its services.
- IV.B.7 The library cooperates with other agencies to develop and organize local information and materials.
- IV.B.8 The library is represented and participates in local government.
- IV.B.9 The library works with local schools in providing services to the community.

IV. COOPERATION

C. Multi-Type Library Cooperation

The library cooperates with other public, school, academic, and special libraries to offer materials, information, services, and programs to residents.

Guidelines

- IV.C.1 The library participates in the Ohio Public Library Information Network (OPLIN).
- IV.C.2 The library participates in formally organized library cooperatives, consortia, or associations at the regional, state, and/or national levels.
- IV.C.3 The library staff meets at least annually with other library staff in the county and/or region.
- IV.C.4 The library develops consistency in policies among the libraries serving the same clientele.
- IV.C.5 The library works with other libraries to establish guidelines for the equitable distribution of funds.
- IV.C.6 The library ensures that community information needs are being met and that services are not being unnecessarily duplicated.

V. COMMUNICATIONS

Standards

A. Public Relations

All Ohio residents should be made aware of and encouraged to use the public library's services. The library provides a coordinated effort to communicate a positive image of the library and to promote the availability of the library's materials, programs, and services.

B. Annual Report

The library will publish an annual report informing the community of the library's activities and progress in meeting the library's goals as identified in its long-range plan. The report also offers an opportunity for publicity and promotion and furnishes accountability to the community and funding sources.

C. Website

The library will maintain a website which provides electronic access to information about services and programs and to Libraries Connect Ohio databases provided through the Ohio Public Library Information Network (OPLIN) so that a customer can "enter" the library remotely.

D. Public Comment

All Ohio residents should have the opportunity to provide input into the design and development of library services within their community.

V. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Public Relations

All Ohio residents should be made aware of and encouraged to use the public library's services. The library provides a coordinated effort to communicate a positive image of the library and to promote the availability of the library's materials, programs, and services.

Guidelines

- V.A.1 The library has an active, ongoing, planned, and coordinated approach to public relations.
- V.A.2 The library provides information in a variety of formats and approaches about the services and programs of the library and distributes the information broadly.
- V.A.3 The library allocates funds for public relations activities.
- V.A.4 The library includes goals that promote its public relations program in the library's long-range plan.
- V.A.5 The library designates a staff member to coordinate public relations activities within the library.

B. Annual Report

The library will publish an annual report informing the community of the library's activities and progress in meeting the library's goals as identified in its long-range plan. The report also offers an opportunity for publicity and promotion and furnishes accountability to the community and funding sources.

Guidelines

- V.B.1 The library formats the annual report to include an accounting of the library's goals and objectives for the year.
- V.B.2 The library annual report provides a quantitative picture of library activities through statistics.
- V.B.3 The library annual report provides a financial accounting of income and expenditures.
- V.B.4 The library annual report highlights programs and activities.
- V.B.5 The library distributes its annual report to the community at-large as well as community leaders.



V. COMMUNICATIONS

C. Website

The library will maintain a website which provides electronic access to information about services and programs and to Libraries Connect Ohio databases provided through the Ohio Public Library Information Network (OPLIN) so that a customer can “enter” the library remotely.

Guidelines

- V.C.1 The library maintains an up-to-date website that includes library hours, telephone numbers, services, and other basic information.
- V.C.2 The library allocates resources for website maintenance.
- V.C.3 The library provides a mechanism for customer comment on its website.
- V.C.4 The library provides web access to its catalog.

D. Public Comment

All Ohio residents should have the opportunity to provide input into the design and development of library services within their community.

Guidelines

- V.D.1 The library has a procedure to acknowledge and respond to complaints, suggestions, and comments.
- V.D.2 The library creates public awareness of the procedures for registering and receiving replies to concerns about library policy, services, programs, and materials.
- V.D.3 The library provides effective mechanisms for customer comments.
- V.D.4 The library trains staff to receive and respond appropriately to comments and complaints.
- V.D.5 The library has a written board agenda item for customer participation or comment at each meeting.
- V.D.6 The library engages in a formal planning process which includes citizens, trustees, and staff.
- V.D.7 The library conducts a community needs assessment.
- V.D.8 The library conducts a community analysis.



List of Abbreviations

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ALA	American Library Association
I & R	Information and Referral
MLIS	Master of Library and Information Science
MORE	Moving Ohio Resources Everywhere
NCIP	NISO Circulation Interchange Protocol
OLC	Ohio Library Council
OPLIN	Ohio Public Library Information Network
<i>ORC</i>	<i>Ohio Revised Code</i>
PAC	Public Access Catalog
PLF	Public Library Fund
SIP	Standard Internet Protocol
SLO	State Library of Ohio
UAN	Uniform Accounting Standard
<i>USC</i>	<i>United States Code</i>

