

New Ohio Budget Includes Significant Cuts for Libraries, but Less Than Originally Proposed

An open letter to Dayton Metro Library supporters,

The two year state budget, signed July 17, 2009, includes \$84.3 million in cuts for Ohio's libraries. We are still studying the budget documents to see the exact impact on Dayton Metro Library but it appears to impose new cuts that total \$850,000 for 2009 and \$1.75 million for 2010. This is in addition to the \$3.5 million reduction already experienced this year due to declining tax revenues. In 2008, DML received \$18.7 million from the state of Ohio. As it stands now, I believe our state revenue for 2009 will be approximately \$14.3 million.

While this will be tough, especially on top of the deep cuts already experienced in 2009, it is not as painful as the original \$227.3 million in cuts proposed a few weeks ago.

These cuts come at a time when we are busier than ever as families depend on the library to stretch their budgets and job hunters count on our resources to help find employment. It's tough to make deep cuts during times of historic growth. We are reviewing every possible option to meet the budget shortfall and still provide the quality service our users expect.

We are relieved that the deeper cuts were not enacted, thanks to the overwhelming support of our library users. The Governor and legislators clearly heard the views of library supporters. The outpouring of calls and emails made a huge impact on our elected officials as they learned how important libraries are to the community.

I want to thank everyone who wrote, called, signed our petitions and spread the word. Their efforts helped restore millions over the next two years. I also want to thank the legislators and the Governor for listening to these library supporters. I recognize the challenging budget situation they are in but am glad they were able to reverse at least some of these additional cuts.

All of these state cuts really point out the significance of our local levy, which gives us some stability in tough times. The levy, which expires this year and will be on the ballot in November, provides 40% of the funding for the Dayton Metro Library.

If we want a strong library system that meets the needs of our local community, we cannot completely depend on Columbus. If we had cuts like this from the state without the local levy, we would be just a skeleton operation today.

Sincerely,

Tim Kambitsch
Executive Director
Dayton Metro Library