



THE
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Press Release

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Governor Proposes 50% Additional Cut to Public Library Funding
Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County Faces Extreme Cuts
Up to 20 Local Branch Libraries Could Close

On Friday, June 19, Governor Strickland proposed an additional cut of 50% in the Public Library Fund (PLF), which is the primary funding source for public libraries in Ohio. The cost to the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, which has already been reduced 25% since 2001 would be an additional \$6 million in 2009 and \$12 million more in 2010.

“Cuts of this size would be devastating,” said Kim Fender, Executive Director of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. “We are struggling to stay open with the cuts we have already made. If passed, as early as September this year, area residents could see up to 20 of our 40 branch libraries closed, dramatic reduction in Main Library hours, 250 additional Library jobs lost, computer access reduced by over 30%, fewer new materials available, elimination of services to residents of all ages, fewer children’s programs, and less qualified staff to help.”

“These drastic cuts come at a time when our Library is experiencing unprecedented increases in demands for services with usage reaching a record high 15.6 million circulation in 2008 with more than 5.6 million visits to a Library location. Libraries are a vital lifeline for job seekers, providing free Internet access for finding employment opportunities and applying for jobs online. Libraries are an integral part of education, and offer critical services for small businesses, seniors, and those looking for information,” said Fender.

The governor’s proposal must be approved by the Conference Committee of the Ohio Legislature, which is currently working out differences between the Senate and House budget bills. They have to complete their work by June 30. “We are urging everyone to contact their representatives in the Ohio House and Senate to oppose this catastrophic further cut. We must save our libraries.”

The Library has already made major cuts in spending. Since 2000, public hours have been reduced by 10%, staffing has been cut by 18.5%, capital expenditures have been postponed, and materials purchases reduced.

The Library receives no funding from the City of Cincinnati or Hamilton County and is the only metropolitan library in Ohio to receive no local tax support.

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