



Ohio Sunset Review Committee Agency Questionnaire

Agency Name **OLA - Ohioana Library Association**
Point of Contact **David Weaver, Executive Director**
Date **January 21, 2020**

Agency's primary purpose and its various goals and objectives

The Ohioana Library Association (OLA), founded in 1929 by Ohio First Lady Martha Kinney Cooper and chaired today by First Lady Fran DeWine, represents the model of a successful public/private partnership between the state of Ohio and a not-for-profit organization. Last year marked the library's 90th anniversary.

Ohioana's mission is to collect, preserve, and celebrate Ohio literature and other creative endeavors. Through its collection, publications, educational partnerships, and events, including the annual Ohioana Book Festival and Ohioana Awards, Ohioana connects readers and Ohio writers while promoting Ohio as one of the nation's great literary centers. It directly serves more than 150,000 Ohioans leading literary centers while serving all citizens as the caretaker of Ohio's rich literary heritage.

With operating support from the State of Ohio, our priorities in the current biennium are to:

- Promote Ohio as one of the nation's leading literary centers.
- Connect Ohio readers and Ohio writers through the annual Ohioana Book Festival, Ohioana Awards, and other live and media events.
- Increase awareness of Ohio authors and literature through the Ohioana Quarterly, Ohioana Newsletter, Ohioana website, and social media.
- Develop, maintain, and make accessible to the public a growing collection of more than 80,000 items by Ohioans or on Ohio subjects.
- Support reading, writing, and literacy through educational partnerships with agencies and organizations throughout the state.

We are also working with First Lady Fran DeWine to promote one of the important new initiatives of the DeWine Administration – the Ohio Governor's Imagination Library.

Specifically, state funding helps Ohioana staff to leverage private support to:

- Produce the annual Ohioana Book Festival at Columbus Metropolitan Library's Main Library (where moved to in 2019) with participation from 150 authors, 4,500 attendees, and an outreach audience of more than 50,000 annually.
- Produce the annual Ohioana Awards event to recognize outstanding achievement by Ohio writers and on Ohio subjects; with a live and virtual audience of 10,000 each fiscal year.
- Publish the *Ohioana Quarterly*, published since 1958, which serves as a resource for readers on new books by Ohio authors and on Ohio subjects, and has a print and online readership of 8,000 people per issue, including more than 120 Ohio libraries which use it as a guide for building their own Ohio collections.
- Maintain and develop the Ohioana Collection of more than 80,000 items; research, solicit, process, and catalog 350 to 500 new books each year for the collection; provide access and service to more than 4,000 users of the collection each fiscal year.
- Collaborate with the State Library of Ohio and the Ohio Center for the Book at Cleveland Public Library to distribute 5,000 copies of the new Ohio Literary Map to schools, libraries, and the general public.
- Promote and participate with Ohio authors in live literary events and media programs around the state, reaching a live and virtual audience of nearly 30,000 people.
- Partner with the Ohio Arts Council on the Poetry Out Loud program and the State Library of Ohio on the Choose to Read Ohio program. Annually, these educational programs serve more than 12,000 students statewide.
- Use the Ohioana website and social media to communicate with Ohio readers, schools, libraries, and the general public about Ohio authors, books, literary events, and literary sites; reaching more than 40,000 people each year, including visitors from all 50 states and 112 foreign countries.

Agency's past and anticipated workload, number of staff required to complete workload, and total number of staff

Ohioana has gone from a full-time staff of six prior to the Great Recession to a current full-time staff of four: an Executive Director, Office Manager, Library Specialist, and Program Coordinator.

Ohioana employees are not state employees. They do not participate in PERS or other benefits available to state employees.

Ohioana augments its staff by contracting help during major projects such as the Ohioana Book Festival, and by offering two paid internships to college students. These internships are supported by an endowment fund at the Columbus Foundation.

We are also fortunate to have more than 100 volunteers, led by the Ohioana Board of Trustees. These volunteers work on projects ranging from helping library patrons to putting together mailings to helping with events such as the Ohioana Book Festival. The value of their contribution of time would run into tens of thousands of dollars.

Agency's past and anticipated budgets and its sources of funding

As recently as FY2007, the State of Ohio's operating support represented 65% of Ohioana's total operating budget. In FY2020, the State of Ohio's operating support of \$180,000 represents 45% of total operating budget.

In addition, Ohioana's 7,600-square feet of space, which houses our collection, offices, and public meeting area, is covered by a state allocation of \$120,114. Both our operating and rental allocation appear as a single line item under the State Library of Ohio budget, a move that was enacted for the first time in the FY2018-19 budget. Prior to that, Ohioana's operating support appeared as its own line item in the state budget, while our rental payments alone were included under the State Library.

Our FY2020 budget is \$515,774. The largest expense is to cover salaries and benefits for our full-time staff of four. These personnel expenses total \$240,350, and it is to this we apply our state operating support, which covers about 75% of the expense.

Ohioana leverages its state allocation to generate support from individuals, foundations, and organizations throughout Ohio. This includes major corporations such as Honda, Huntington Bank, PNC Bank, the Ariel Corporation in Mount Vernon, the Reinberger Foundation in Cleveland, the Greater Columbus Arts Council, and the Ohio Humanities Council.

In addition to cash contributions and sponsorships, Ohioana receives more than \$100,000 in donated goods and services, ranging from media coverage of events to the donation of books and other materials for our collection.

Number of members of its governing board or other governing entity and their compensation, if any

Ohioana is governed by its Board of Trustees, comprised of 20 trustees elected by the membership and four trustees appointed by the Governor of Ohio. First Lady Fran DeWine serves as Honorary Chair and as an ex-officio member of the board. All board members are volunteers and serve without compensation or stipend.

Agency-recommended legislative changes to improve organizational efficiency:

We believe that an increase in funding would help improve organizational efficiency by adding one more full-time person to the staff. This would not only help us in serving the public, but also in securing greater support from private sources throughout the state.

Additional notes

We believe that the State of Ohio and the Ohioana Library Association has been a collaboration that has served the people of Ohio well. As stated in our opening, ours is a model of what a successful private/public partnership can be.

Twelve Ohio Governors and 35 consecutive General Assemblies since 1949 have acknowledged Ohioana's important work and affirmed the public value of this unique partnership by providing annual operating support, as authorized under the Ohio Revised Code (3375.61) and providing for the appointment of four trustees by the Governor (3375.62)

It has also been affirmed by the active involvement and support of every First Lady of Ohio since we were founded by one – Martha Kinney Cooper – in 1929. We are especially grateful that First Lady Fran DeWine has become an engaged and active ambassador for Ohioana in this past year. We in turn are excited to support her and the Governor's efforts to promote reading, especially for Ohio children.

We would like to close with words from Pulitzer Prize-winning author Anthony Doerr. A native of the small town of Novelty in Geauga County, Tony won the 2000 Ohioana Walter Rumsey Marvin Grant for Ohio writers age 30 or younger who've not yet published a book. From winning that grant, Tony has gone on to become one of the world's greatest contemporary authors. Here is the closing paragraph from a letter Tony sent to Governor Kasich in 2017:

“In a nation where reading is challenged on almost every front, from competing cultural entertainments, from deteriorating schools, from hyper productive work schedules, and in an era when some state governments are basing estimates for their future prison populations on the literacy rates of their third-graders, the Ohioana Library Association is doing vital work to promote reading and writing all across Ohio, and they're doing it on an already razor-thin budget. With their collections, quarterly journal, book festival, grants, and awards, they enhance, secure, and bind both the literary community of Columbus and the great state of Ohio.”

Thank you.

*David Weaver
Executive Director
January 21, 2020*