



## Ohio Sunset Review Committee Agency Questionnaire

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

### **Agency's primary purpose and its various goals and objectives**

The Ohioana Library Association (OLA), since its founding by Ohio First Lady Martha Kinney Cooper in 1929, has represented a public/private partnership between the state of Ohio and a not-for-profit organization. Ohioana's mission is to collect, preserve, and celebrate Ohio literature and other creative endeavors.

Ohioana serves as the caretaker of Ohio's literary treasures, connects readers of all ages with Ohio writers and illustrators, and promotes and celebrates the Buckeye State as one of the nation's great literary centers, with programs including:

- The annual Ohioana Book Festival, held in April at Columbus Metropolitan Library's Main Library. The festival has grown from ten Ohio authors in 2007 to more than 120 this year; the audience has grown from a few hundred to more than 50,000 live and virtual attendees. It is now the state's largest event celebrating Ohio authors and books.
- The Ohioana Book Awards, established in 1942 and presented every fall in the Ohio Statehouse Atrium, are America's second-oldest state literary prize. Nearly every major Ohio author of the past 81 years has been honored, from James Thurber to Toni Morrison. Since 1982, we've also presented the Walter Rumsey Marvin Grant to an emerging Ohio writer age 30 or younger. The grant has helped launch a number of authors, such as Anthony Doerr, who went on to win the 2015 Pulitzer Prize in fiction.
- The Ohio Literary Trail, introduced in 2020, is comprised of more than 70 sites across the Buckeye State, shining the spotlight on Ohio's unique role in shaping culture and literature worldwide. The trail has helped spark literary tourism, an important source of economic growth and opportunity for the state.
- The *Ohioana Quarterly*, published since 1958 and a magazine on all-things literary in Ohio, is not only enjoyed by readers but is used by more than 100 public and educational libraries in the state as a resource in building their own collections.

- Educational partnerships, including Choose to Read Ohio with the State Library of Ohio and Ohio Center for the Book; the annual Poetry Out Loud competition for high school students in collaboration with the Ohio Arts Council; and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Ohio, a project spearheaded by Ohio First Lady Fran DeWine.
- Ohioana's Collection, the genesis of our library, called by Cleveland playwright Jerome Lawrence "Ohio's literary Fort Knox," is comprised of more than 80,000 items – books, sheet music, biographical files, papers, scrapbooks, and ephemera – all by Ohioans or about Ohio subjects.

In the current biennium, Ohioana has also begun to collaborate with the America 250-Ohio Commission as Ohio prepares for the celebration of the nation's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2026. Through its collection, publications, educational partnerships, and events, Ohioana serves more than 250,000 Ohioans every year.

### **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, Assistant Director, Librarian, 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. We also offer an annual paid internship to a college student, which is 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**

In FY2019, Ohioana's budget was \$515,000, with 58% of that (\$300,000) coming from the State of Ohio. In the five years since, the combined effects of the pandemic and inflation have greatly impacted Ohioana's budget. In FY2024, our operating budget is \$650,000, of which 48% (\$314,000) is coming from the State of Ohio.

Of this \$314,000 total, \$191,000 supports a portion of OLA's operating expenses associated with the management of the library's collection and programs. The remaining \$123,000 is rental support for the 7,681-square foot space Ohioana leases in the State Library. This provides environmental conditions to house Ohioana's archival collection of more than 80,000 books and other items; offices for Ohioana's staff and volunteers; and public space for researchers.

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

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 twenty-one trustees elected by the membership and four trustees appointed by the Governor of Ohio. The First Lady of Ohio serves as an ex-officio member of the board. All board members are volunteers and serve without compensation or stipend.

**Additional notes**

We're grateful to Governor DeWine, Lieutenant Governor Husted, and all the members of the Ohio House and Senate for seeing the State of Ohio and the Ohioana Library Association as a model of what a successful private/public partnership can be.

In 2024, the Ohioana Library Association marks its 95<sup>th</sup> year of service to the people and State of Ohio. We're looking forward to 2029, when we will celebrate our 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. And along the way, being an integral part of Ohio's celebration in 2026 of the nation's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Thank you.