

State Library of Ohio Collaborates with State Agencies

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As many Ohio residents faced difficult times and budget shortfalls in 2010, they turned to their public libraries for help in accessing information and resources. As Ohioans face unemployment or underemployment, home foreclosures, bankruptcies, competition for fewer jobs and numerous other struggles facing our state, libraries are increasingly becoming the one-stop-shop for finding help in tough times.

The 2010 advocacy efforts to reduce state funding cuts for public libraries brought people together from all over Ohio in support of libraries. The fight to save Ohio libraries had a multifaceted outcome. In addition to raising awareness with policy makers and voters about the vital role of libraries, it also caught the attention of several state agencies as they discovered the potential for more residents to access their online resources at the library.

As a result, the State Library is collaborating with more state agencies and departments to provide information to libraries about how to help residents find and get started using online services. In the past, state agencies typically have accessed our [library directories](#) for sending information pamphlets, flyers, and posters to public libraries. Now, they also request our help distributing announcements, documents, and links via our website, email, and social networking tools.

Collaborations include the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' (ODJFS) partnership with the State Library to incorporate a link to the LearningExpress Library on their *Ohio Here to Help* website and the relocation of the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS) clearing house to the State Library.

Links to announcements in 2010 include the following from the [Ohio Department of Insurance](#), [Ohio Veterans Services Commission](#), the [Ohio Department of Job and Family Services](#), and the [Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services \(ODADAS\)](#).

In addition, five library directors from small and rural libraries participated in a conference call with ODJFS to discuss ideas for collaboration last month. The state can no longer afford to have the number of offices it once had around the state to serve residents. An increasing number of ODJFS customers are using public libraries to access ODJFS's online information and resources. ODJFS, like all state-funded entities, is striving to make the most of scarce resources. They want to know what they can do (within their own budget constraints) for libraries to make the process for using ODJFS more effective for both the libraries and customers. They are interested in learning what resources might be useful to libraries.

The next step is to develop a draft survey. I'm working with ODJFS to develop the survey and will then send it to the small and rural libraries' representatives. When the survey is ready, it will be sent to public libraries to solicit their feedback on potential collaborations with ODJFS.