

Library Skills Training for State Employees

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The amount of information available online is growing exponentially; when faced with this deluge of data, our patrons often have difficulty finding the best and most accurate information. Quick Google searches provide ample sources, but require users to sort through millions of websites with no guarantee that the information will be credible. As part of the State Library of Ohio's mission to provide assistance and access to information for state employees, we are an active member of OhioLINK and a partner in Libraries Connect Ohio. In addition to the core set of electronic databases we help fund and make available to all Ohio residents, state employees have access to additional electronic resources and online journals through OhioLINK and database subscriptions we provide for our patrons. These extensive collections provide valuable information but they can be intimidating to use. One aspect of my role at the State Library is to raise awareness about resources and services available to state employees and to help them learn to use them effectively.



The State Library resumed offering workshops to state employees via webinar in June. These webinars are designed to teach state employees how to quickly find accurate information using both subscription electronic resources and free resources available from the government and the general web. So far, 70 state employees have participated in these in-person workshops and online webinars through the State Library. In addition to these webinars, we have added to our collection of Ten Minute Tutors. These self-paced video guides demonstrate how to use our library resources. They are step-by-step guides for accessing electronic resources and conducting basic searches.

Along with these training sessions, the State Library offers both formal and informal State Library 101 workshops and presentations that highlight all of the services and resources offered by the State Library. We customize them to be relevant to an agency or department. To date, employees at the Bureau of Workers' Compensation, the Department of Administrative Services and the Department of Health have taken advantage of these introductory sessions to learn more about the State Library of Ohio. One of the staff members at the Department of Administrative Services said, "The group here cannot stop talking about the valuable resources the State Library has and the value it will add to our practice. I cannot thank you enough for the great presentation." Librarians at the State Library also work with state agencies and departments to develop additional advanced customized trainings.

As budget reductions persist, state agencies continue to look for ways to lower expenditures and to be more efficient with their time and resources. The webinars and workshops offered by the State Library provide opportunities for state employees to learn how to find information effectively and reduce duplication in database and journal subscriptions. More information about these webinars, including the scheduled webinars for winter and spring of 2011, can be found at <http://www.library.ohio.gov/Marketing/StateEmps/Training>. You can also contact me at ksabol@library.ohio.gov for more information about teaching patrons to use electronic resources.