



OHIO PUBLIC LIBRARY INFORMATION NETWORK

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April 14, 2014

**Ohio Public Library Information Network (OPLIN)
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From: Stephen Hedges, Director

TO: IMLS Director Susan H. Hildreth and The National Museum and Library Services Board (NMLSB)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the IMLS April 17 Public Hearing “Libraries and Broadband,” and to provide this brief statement for the record.

As the hearing today demonstrated, there is no doubt whatsoever that libraries will need larger Internet connections as more and more public access to e-government and job services comes through the public libraries. In Ohio, we see a steady increase of over 30% a year in the bandwidth used by our public libraries.

Upgrading these connections is an expensive proposition. While one-time infrastructure upgrade costs are significant, they are not as big a barrier to adoption as the much higher recurring charges for a large, broadband circuit.

At our most advantageous current pricing, a 100 Mbps Ethernet circuit costs over 40% more each month than a 10 Mbps circuit (still a very common size for Ohio public libraries), while the oft-mentioned Gig per library would cost 340% more. In order to enable libraries to size their connections for the future, the E-Rate program must provide much more support for those vastly higher monthly recurring charges.

I applaud, therefore, the efforts of the FCC to restructure the E-Rate program to free up more funds to support broadband, rather than older telecommunications technologies. A restructuring of the way E-Rate funds are allocated would make it possible for libraries to look to the future, not the past.