



2024 CCAO ANNUAL REPORT



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A MESSAGE FROM CHERYL SUBLER

CCAO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director's Overview

As we reflect on the past year, CCAO President Chris Abbuhl's vision—"Teamwork for a Better Tomorrow"—has proven to be more than a guiding principle; it has been a rallying call that shaped every goal, initiative, and achievement within our organization. This vision inspired a renewed commitment to collaboration, empowering Ohio's counties to work together with purpose and unity, building stronger, more innovative, and more resilient communities.

Advocacy and Policy Support

Advocacy remains at the heart of our mission—strengthening the state-county partnership and equipping county officials with the tools and flexibility they need to serve their communities effectively. This year, our Policy Team spearheaded critical updates through an omnibus bill addressing essential administrative elements and mandates that directly impact counties.

In addition, the team played a vital role in developing the 2025-2026 CCAO Policy Platform. This comprehensive document sets the Association's advocacy priorities, outlining more than 100 positions on key policies and programs to guide our efforts. On a day-to-day basis, the Policy Team continued to support our members by providing timely responses to inquiries, issuing county advisory bulletins with guidance on new laws and updates, and hosting informative webinars.

Enhancing Member Value

Delivering value to our members remains a cornerstone of CCAO's mission. This year, we celebrated significant milestones across our programs:

CORSA membership expanded to 73 counties, reinforcing its reputation as a trusted partner in risk-sharing.



Cheryl Subler

CCAO Executive Director

CEBCO reached 49 counties, providing critical health insurance solutions tailored to member needs.

The Service Corporation introduced valuable new offerings, including FREE Amazon Business Prime memberships, enhanced energy purchasing options, and innovative benefits programs such as County Benefits Plus and County Firm.

We also made strides in enhancing the CCAO deferred compensation program—Ohio County Employees Retirement Program (OCERP)—ensuring it continues to deliver meaningful retirement solutions for county employees.

Education and Communication Growth

The CCAO Research & Educational Foundation achieved remarkable progress, doubling its fundraising revenue through a successful golf outing. This growth strengthens our ability to support educational initiatives that empower our members.

Additionally, we expanded our communications efforts with spotlight features and engaging videos that highlight innovative county programs and initiatives. Looking ahead, we are actively exploring new training opportunities to ensure our members have access to the resources and education they need to succeed.

Looking Forward

The accomplishments of this year would not have been possible without the steadfast leadership of President Abbuhl, the CCAO Board of Directors, and our dedicated county officials. Your unwavering commitment to collaboration and innovation exemplifies the spirit of "Teamwork for a Better Tomorrow." Together, we are building a stronger foundation for Ohio's counties and the communities we serve.



CCAO POLICY UPDATE

As we see this General Assembly come to a close, it feels as though the COVID-19 era is also closed in many respects. The stimulus money through the CARES Act and ARPA has been either allocated or spent at both the state and county level. The years of soaring sales tax revenue have given way to a plateau of revenue, with inflation outpacing revenue growth. The challenges brought on by COVID-19 have been replaced by property tax challenges and a shortage of housing in all areas for counties.

Speaking of challenges, the 135th General Assembly proved to be one of the most challenging General Assemblies in recent memory. Although most of the legislative activity occurred during the main operating budget, we were still able to advance some key policies in 2024 with the General Assembly and the executive branch. It took an all-hands-on deck approach to navigate and the policy team would not have been able to do so without the support of our membership.

Our members rose above the fray and were able to advance legislation and implement key agency programs that would strengthen county government in Ohio. As we close out 2024, it is important to look back on all that we have achieved, recognize the challenges that lie ahead, and prepare to hit the ground running in 2025!

Updating and Streamlining County Government: The County Omnibus Bill

CCAO formers Representative Brian Stewart and Representative Roy Klopfenstein introduced a county omnibus bill, House Bill 497. This bill was a culmination of several years of feedback from our members and their staff on areas of the Revised Code that need updated. The bill language was also reviewed and, in some instances, improved by our various county elected partners. Most of the changes contained in the bill merely updated the Code to reflect the current practice of counties, such as where certain records should be stored. The bill also increased the contracting threshold required for county prosecutors to review county contracts and the threshold for county courthouse and jail repair projects that the commissioners can unilaterally approve. Many of these changes are needed to modify monetary thresholds in the Code following the high levels of construction material inflation experienced by counties.

HB 497 was introduced in late April. In May, CCAO President and Tuscarawas County Commissioner Chris Abbuhl testified in support before the House State and Local Government Committee, chaired by Representative

Scott Wiggam, a former Wayne County Commissioner. The Ohio House of Representatives unanimously passed HB 497 in late June. It is rare to see a bill move that quickly through one legislative chamber and it is a testament to the advocacy efforts of our members, the bill sponsors, and the CCAO policy team. The bill is currently pending in the Senate and its passage into law will be a top priority for CCAO during the lame duck session.

Capital Budget

The General Assembly passed a \$4.3 billion capital budget bill, which provided support to counties in a variety of areas. We were pleased to see the continuation of the state-county partnership in the area of jail funding, investing \$50 million in county jail construction and renovation. Earlier in the year, CCAO and BSSA updated our jail project survey from 2019 and found that there is \$2.2 billion needed for projects. The survey also showed that the price for the project increased by 41.5% on average between the initial bid for the project and the most recent bid, which further illustrates the importance of state assistance.

The bill also allocated \$718.8 million from the operating budget in the One Time Strategic Community Investment Fund (OTSCIF). Of that allocation, 75 county projects were funded totaling \$117 million.

Property Valuations and Taxation

Sale prices of residential homes continued to rise throughout Ohio and the nation in 2024, continuing a long-term trend that has resulted in higher property tax valuations across the state. Forty-one counties experienced an update or reappraisal in 2023, which impacted property taxes paid in 2024. Another 24 counties were undergoing updates or reappraisals in 2024.

In response to homeowners' concerns about rising property tax valuations, the General Assembly established a Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform comprised of five members from each chamber. Committee Co-Chairs were Senator Bill Blessing and Representative Bill Roemer, who were the chairs of their respective Ways and Means Committees. The committee held hearings throughout the spring and early summer.

CCAO members Tony Bornhorst (Shelby County), Don Dixon (Butler County), Dave Burke (Union County), and Mike Yoder (Logan County) provided testimony with their suggestions for reform, and CCAO staff provided additional data and issues for the committee's consideration. CCAO

will continue to advocate for a number of reforms to the valuation system, including improvements to the homestead credit and limits to property tax exemptions, in the 136th General Assembly.

Housing

The shortage of housing options for Ohioans of all ages became a major focus of public policy discussion during 2024. CCAO members were actively involved in developing solutions and shaping the response of other levels of government. Members provided testimony to the Ohio Senate Select Committee on Housing, chaired by Senator Michele Reynolds, as it held hearings around the state.

At the national level, Franklin County Commissioner Kevin Boyce co-chaired a NACo Housing Task Force which produced a report, *Advancing Local Housing Affordability*, that was released in 2023 and led to his testimony in January 2024 in a hearing before the U.S. Senate Committee on the Budget. Commissioner Boyce discussed the rising cost burden of housing on Franklin County families, and called for the federal government to take the following actions:

- Invest additional federal resources to adequately support housing needs
- Modernize and strengthen current federal programs
- Provide more direct-to-local government funding opportunities
- Simplify programs and reduce burdensome compliance requirements on local governments

In the second half of 2024, CCAO partnered with OhioRealtors and the Bricker Graydon law firm to foster regional dialogue about housing issues around the state. Meetings in Allen County, Fairfield County, Portage County, and Ross County featured local real estate and economic development experts and local public officials discussing conditions in regional housing markets and possible approaches for improving housing supply. CCAO will continue to focus on this issue in the state budget process in 2025.

Grants Galore

CCAO was actively engaged with both the General Assembly and the DeWine-Husted Administration as the state contemplated how it would allocate and ultimately distribute its ARPA dollars. Many of the allocation conversations occurred in 2023, but this year CCAO spent a significant amount of time working with state agencies to ensure that grant dollars were distributed in an effective and efficient manner to county partners.

We worked with the Department of Development to modify the application and criteria for grants that support “Mega Site” development, as well as grants for broadband, water and sewer, demolition, and brownfield projects. CCAO staff also worked with the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction to help develop their grant application and

distribute funding to counties. Furthermore, we worked with the Department of Aging on the allowable uses and reporting requirements to maximize the value of the Healthy Aging Grants program.

With support from the General Assembly, various executive agencies, and CCAO staff, counties and their partners in local government received the following in 2024:

- \$64.1 million for the Appalachian Children’s Health Initiative (28 projects in 20 counties)
- \$154.4 million for the Appalachian Downtowns and Destinations Initiative (30 projects in 12 counties)
- \$179.3 million for the Brownfield Remediation Program (176 projects in 61 counties)
- \$156 million for the Building Demolition and Site Remediation Program (3,001 projects in 88 counties)
- \$270 million for H2Ohio Funding
 - \$121.3 million to the Ohio Department of Agriculture (1.8 million acres enrolled across 24 counties)
 - \$93.2 million to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (183 wetland projects)
 - \$55 million to the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
 - \$264,000 to the Ohio Lake Erie Commission
- \$39 million for Healthy Aging Grants (85 counties)
- \$51.8 million for Ohio’s Wonderful Waterfronts Initiative (18 projects in 10 counties)
- \$94.5 million for the Residential Broadband Expansion Program (Six projects in 23 counties)
- \$29.5 million for the Welcome Home Ohio Program (263 projects in 17 counties)

Looking Forward: The 136th General Assembly

Despite the challenges in the 135th General Assembly, we were able to advance several of our policy priorities. However, we recognize that there is still work to be done. We are optimistic that the 136th General Assembly will continue to support county government in a variety of key areas. In the upcoming biennium budget, the CCAO Board has decided to focus on targeted funding for child welfare, child care, indigent defense, jail construction, and 9-1-1 funding. These areas continue to be in desperate need of funding, despite previous funding increases.

With a strong partner in the DeWine-Husted Administration and many champions in the legislature, we are strongly positioned to advance our policy priorities. The policy team would like to thank our members for their strong support in 2024 and we are excited to continue this work in 2025!



CCAO STRATEGIC PLAN AND SUMMER SYMPOSIUM

CCAO Strategic Plan

The CCAO Strategic Plan continues to be our road map for operations. Our 2024 goals focused on supporting Association members through outreach, education opportunities, and relationship building.

In the spring, CCAO launched the “County Spotlight” program, designed to amplify county innovation and collaboration. As members share information about new initiatives or program successes, CCAO staff highlight the examples through CCAO social media channels, publications, and website.

With many outgoing CCAO members at the end of 2024, the Association worked to capture their insight and valuable lessons through video interviews. Former CCAO President and Licking County Commissioner Tim Bubb and CCAO Communications Coordinator Jessica Newbacher produced a video series to showcase the diverse backgrounds of our members and how they applied their past experiences to serving county government. The series spotlights seasoned leaders who have been in office two, three, and even 11 terms.

This Annual Report highlights our Summer Symposium event, as well as the many regional events that connected CCAO members throughout the year. CCAO is proud of the many partnerships (page 16) and additional service options provided to our members from the Service Corporation (pages 7-8).

CCAO Summer Symposium



CCAO members gather on the top level of the Hocking Hills Lodge & Conference Center during the 2024 CCAO Summer Symposium for a photo (see the bottom half of this photo at the top of this page).



Ohio EPA Director Anne Vogel and Columbiana County Commissioner Mike Halleck pose for a photo after Director Vogel’s session on emergency management.

In August, CCAO hosted its 2024 Summer Symposium at the Hocking Hills Lodge and Conference Center in Hocking County. The theme of the symposium was “Teamwork for a Better Tomorrow.” Many CCAO members and county staff were in attendance for sessions covering a wide range of topics. Sessions included leadership strategy with Ashtabula County Commissioner Kathryn Whittington, strategic planning process lessons with Lorain County, public safety infrastructure, artificial intelligence use in county administration and more.

During the symposium, attendees heard from Ohio EPA Director Anne Vogel on emergency management and lessons learned from the East Palestine train derailment crisis and other previous environmental crises. Several counties experienced emergency management situations in 2024, including devastating tornadoes and floods. CCAO members partnered with the state and local emergency management agencies to coordinate an effective response and ensure help and resources were deployed to Ohioans affected.

Thank you to the Planning Committee: Casey Kozlowski, Ashtabula County Commissioner, Chair; Joe Antram, Logan County Commissioner; Tim Bubb, Licking County Commissioner; Sabrina Christian-Bennett, Portage County Commissioner; Denise Driehaus, Hamilton County Commissioner; Lenny Eliason, Athens County Commissioner; Matt Old, Erie County Commissioner; Donnie Willis, Jackson County Commissioner; and Melanie Wilt, Clark County Commissioner.



CCAO RESEARCH & EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

Foundation Continues to Invest in Ohio's Future Leaders

The CCAO Research and Educational Foundation awarded the 2024 Ohio Counties Scholarships in July. Established in 1991, the foundation operates as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to providing our members and the people of Ohio with the high-quality information, tools, and education. The scholarships, funded through private donations and events like the County Classic, support outstanding students pursuing higher education.

Congratulations to the following recipients:

- Central: Alexis Cupp, Pickaway County
- Northeast: Nicholas McClure, Ashtabula County
- Northwest: Riley Barhorst, Shelby County
- Southwest: Sophia Shenk, Montgomery County
- Southeast: Ava Fierbaugh, Harrison County

These scholarships reflect the foundation's commitment to investing in future leaders who will contribute to the continued growth and development of Ohio's counties.

A Swing for Scholarships: 2nd Annual County Classic Golf Outing

On July 19th, under the warm midsummer sun, the 2nd Annual County Classic Golf Outing brought together golf enthusiasts, commissioners and other leaders for a day that perfectly blended sport and purpose. The event, with its picturesque fairways and the enticing aroma of a delicious lunch spread, was a resounding success. Participants were not just swinging their clubs; they were swinging for scholarships, with proceeds benefiting the Scholarship Fund for the CCAO Research and Educational Foundation.

A Swing for a Cause

The essence of the County Classic Golf Outing lies in its dedication to the CCAO Research and Educational Foundation Scholarship Fund. With each stroke of the club, participants directly contributed to the future of promising students throughout Ohio. This year, the Foundation proudly awarded five deserving students with \$2,000 scholarships, empowering them to pursue their academic endeavors and shape the leaders of tomorrow.

The 2024 County Classic Champions were Sean Dunn,



Top left: Ashtabula County Commissioners JP Ducro, Kathryn Whittington and Casey Kozlowski, NE District winner Nicholas McClure and his parents and CCAO's Steve Caraway

Bottom left: Shelby County Commissioners Bob Guillozet, Julie Ehemann and Mack Knupp, NW District winner Riley Barhorst and CCAO's Tim Hoverman

Top right: Harrison County Commissioners Paul Coffland and Dustin Corder, SE District winner Ava Fierbaugh with her parents and CCAO's Steve Caraway

Middle right: Pickaway County Commissioners Gary Scherer and Jay Wippel Harold Henson, Central District winner Alexis Cupp and CCAO's Steve Caraway

Bottom right: Montgomery County Assistant Prosecutor Ward Barrentine, Montgomery County Commissioners Judy Dodge, Debbie Lieberman and Carolyn Rice, SW District winner Sophia Shenk, and CCAO's Steve Caraway

David Salisbury, Jimmy Wolf and Andrew Huffman from Sean P. Dunn and Associates (David Salisbury and Jimmy Wolf pictured top middle of this page). Over the past two years, the CCAO Research and Educational Foundation has awarded \$20,000 in scholarships to high school students across Ohio who seek a career in public service.

If you would like to support the foundation, you can donate online at the Research and Educational Foundation page at ccao.org or you can send a personal or campaign account check made payable to:

CCAO Research and Educational Foundation
209 E. State Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215



CCAO SERVICE CORPORATION

CCAO Partners with Amazon Business



Program is First of its Kind with Counties

This fall, CCAO announced a new partnership with Amazon Business, bringing a host of exclusive benefits to all county offices and departments in Ohio. This collaboration, the first of its kind with county governments nationally will streamline the procurement process, enhance cost savings and provide unparalleled convenience for county operations.

In just a few short weeks, CCAO was able to register nearly 400 accounts to the program. The team will continue to present the program to all county departments early in 2025 with the goal of increasing program participation.

The key benefits of the program are:

- Free Business Prime Membership, courtesy of CCAO, pre-approved lines of credit and significant discounts on essential products.
- With the addition of this service, the CCAO Service Corporation continues to have a laser focus on providing resources and cost saving measures to counties.

CCAO Launches Strategic Partnership with County FIRM

At CCAO, we're not just listening – we're taking action to help shape the future of county operations!



COUNTY FIRM
FACILITY INVESTMENT RETROFIT MAINTENANCE

Inspired by the feedback from our member counties, this year we announced County FIRM (Facility Investment, Retrofit, and Maintenance) – a proven team of former contractors, licensed professional engineers, and other facilities industry experts that are using their expertise to support our counties in their endeavors around facility maintenance and facility capital projects (including jails).

"Our mission is to bring this expertise to the table solely for the benefit of counties, providing skilled advocacy

and oversight during facility construction and upgrade projects," said Joe Sokel, Regional Manager at County FIRM.

A recent example illustrates the impact County FIRM can have: Marion County was considering a \$1,000,000 proposal for HVAC upgrades at their administrative building. They engaged Palmer Conservation Consulting (program manager of County FIRM) to review the contractor's proposal and assess the scope and pricing, initially set up through a cooperative purchasing program.

Following our complimentary review, they determined a competitive price would fall closer to \$750,000. County FIRM then provided the county with a full-service bid package and managed the process to select and oversee a contractor for the HVAC upgrades. The project was completed on time, within budget, and with zero change orders.

"At County FIRM, we're passionate about using our expertise to advance the best interests of CCAO member counties," said Sokel. "We find real enjoyment in delivering value and making a difference in each county we serve. Whether you have upcoming facility projects, jail upgrades/new builds, or capital planning needs for the year ahead, we're here to provide support that makes your job easier and protects your county's interests."

CCAO Service Corporation Services: Meeting the Needs of Ohio Counties!

By the Numbers: Energy Programs

Electric Program:

- 62 members in the Electric Energy Program.
- Estimated Electric Energy Program Savings:
 - \$21+ million (38% increase from 2023)
 - \$68+ million estimated savings for member counties since program inception

Natural Gas Program:

- 64 members in the Natural Gas Energy Program
- Estimated Natural Gas Energy Program Savings:
 - \$4.3 million
 - \$20+ million estimated natural gas program savings for member counties since program inception

Aggregation:

- 171,000 meters in the electric agg program.
- The September 2023 through August 2024 usage is 1.8TWh or 1.8 billion kWh. That's enough electricity to power the Empire State Building for over 20 years!
- \$76 million estimated electric aggregation savings.
- 49,000 natural gas accounts, +38% year over year.

CCAOSC: Delivering Results!

The CCAO Service Corporation continues to maintain and strengthen multiple enterprise programs all designed to save counties money.

- Workers Comp Group Rating and Retro Plan
- CCAO Cyber Defense (Protecting your county IT infrastructure)
- County Benefits+ (Supplemental health benefits program)
- Comm-Core (VoIP and Security Infrastructure Services)
- Roof Connect (Roofing and paving of county facilities)
- Maximus (Cost Recovery)
- Ohio County Commercial Card Consortium (Making government purchasing easier)

OCERP

The Ohio County Employee Retirement Plan (OCERP) is the only deferred compensation plan designed specifically for Ohio's county employees. With nearly \$1 billion in assets under management and over 22,000 participants, OCERP continues to serve as a secure and trusted partner in helping county employees build the future they imagine.

2024 has been a milestone year for OCERP. CCAO leadership is finalizing a new contract that will significantly reduce participant fees, a move expected to benefit all participants and strengthen the plan's long-term value. The Retirement Plan Advisors with OCERP have been remarkably active, reaching participants across the state. Key achievements this year include:

- 58 group meetings conducted.
- 1,930 meetings with participants.
- 1,097 individual consultations.
- 833 Retirement Readiness Reviews completed.
- 432 new participants joined the OCERP family.
- 470 employees chose to increase the amount they are investing for the future they imagine.
- 92 roll-ins, bringing \$3,434,641 into the plan. Employees may consolidate outside accounts into OCERP, as long as they are qualified.



OCERP's Retirement Plan Advisors are highly rated by participants, who appreciate their dedication and expertise. Eugene, a county employee, praised Northern Ohio RPA Rick Dyson, saying, "Rick was extremely knowledgeable and helpful. I've already reached out to several coworkers as a result of our meeting, to have them give Rick a call."

Looking ahead to 2025, OCERP will mark its 40th anniversary, a testament to its enduring commitment to Ohio's county workforce. Celebrations will honor this remarkable journey, and OCERP eagerly anticipates helping thousands more employees achieve their retirement dreams.

Join the Ohio County Employees Retirement Plan by visiting OCERP457.com.



CORSA

Looking back over the last year, CORSA has achieved significant milestones, not the least of which has been continuing to provide all lines of coverage with the same limits. That alone was a challenge, especially with social inflation limiting the amount of excess coverage available.

Looking to the future, we face new opportunities and challenges. Our next focus will be on enhancing our educational efforts and looking at options to control some of the reinsurance rates we have been experiencing. I'm confident that, with our collective effort and unwavering dedication, we will continue to build on our successes and drive positive change.

-Dave Wilson, CORSA Board President

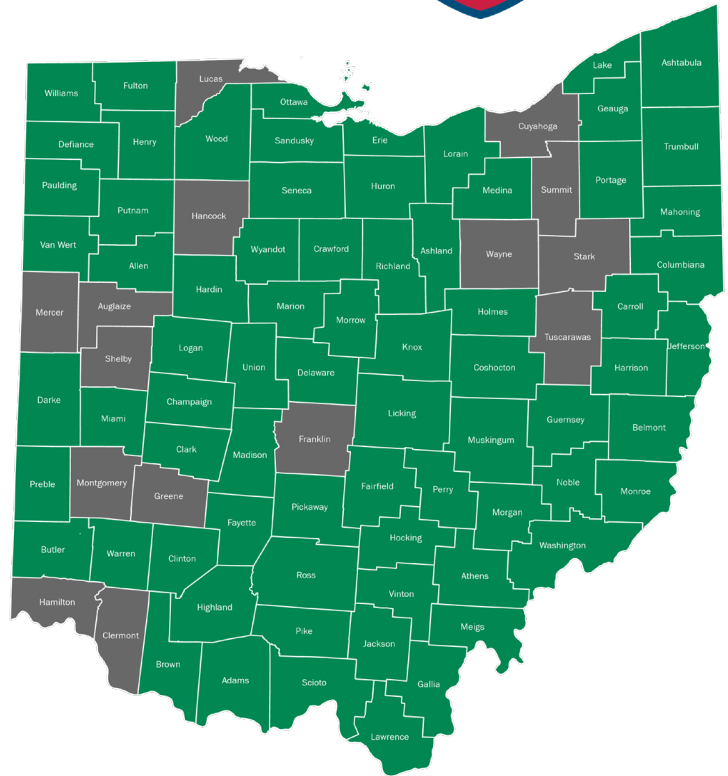
73 counties and 50 county affiliates strong!

CORSA is proud to announce the addition of **Van Wert County** to the pool along with 3 new county affiliates:

- Star Community Justice Center
- Wood County ADAMHS
- Northwest Community Corrections Center

\$17 billion in covered assets

\$5.3 million returned to members in the form of dividends, grants and services



CORSA Board of Directors (pictured above, left to right): Dave Wilson, President, Guernsey County Commissioner Charlie Schilling, Member, Washington County Commissioner Mark Stahl, Secretary, Ottawa County Commissioner Dan Dean, Member, Fayette County Commissioner Diane Ward, Member, Adams County Commissioner Gary Merrell, Treasurer, Delaware County Commissioner Teresa Bemiller, Member, Knox County Commissioner Cory Noonan, Member, Allen County Commissioner Craig LaHote, Vice President, Wood County Commissioner



County Employee Benefit Consortium of Ohio

CEBCO

Health & Wellness

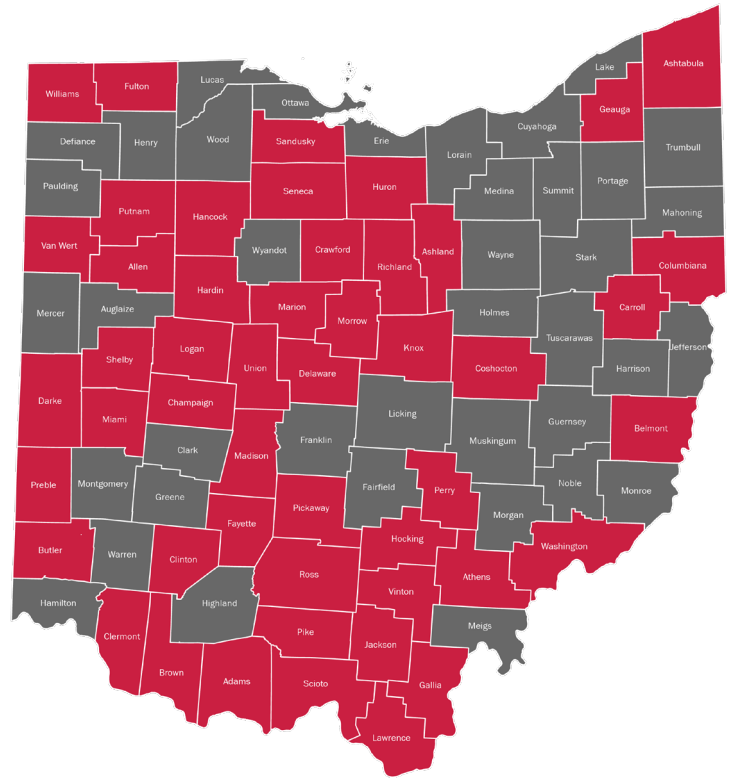
CEBCO

CEBCO continues its mission to provide cost stability, financial strength, and broad coverage with an array of wellness and health management services that our member counties could not purchase, alone.

CEBCO is pleased to announce that Clermont County will join our pool on January 1, 2025. With this addition, CEBCO's Medical/Rx program will consist of **49 counties**, serving over **16,600 employees** and **37,000 members**.

Also, Butler County is adding Dental coverage and Darke County is adding Vision coverage.

CEBCO will return over \$4 million back to our members, which includes \$660,000 through Wellness Grants and Wellness Program reimbursements.




CEBCO Rewards 200

The first year of our new CEBCO Wellness Rewards 200, saw members earn in excess of \$1.6 million in gift card rewards. The most important part of the program is to reward members for visiting their Primary Care Physician (PCP). Data has shown that members with a PCP have a much lower claims spend than members without a PCP.

CEBCO Board of Directors (pictured above, left to right): Tony Bornhorst, Member, Shelby County Commissioner Kevin Ritter, Member, Washington County Commissioner Jeff Benton, Member, Delaware County Commissioner Lenny Eliason, Member, Athens County Commissioner Lew Hilkert, Member, Williams County Commissioner Cory Noonan, President, Allen County Commissioner Mike Welch, Member, Ashland County Commissioner Jon Rupp, Member, Fulton County Commissioner Steve Hess, Member, Champaign County Commissioner Harry Brady, Vice President, Huron County Commissioner J.P. Ducro, Secretary, Ashtabula County Commissioner Bryan Davis, Treasurer, Scioto County Commissioner
Not pictured: Steve Robinson, Member, Union County Commissioner



MEMBER ENGAGEMENT AND TRAINING

CCAO/CEO District Meetings

CCAO staff joined CCAO and CEO members at six district meetings across the state this year. Fulton County hosted the Northwest District in March where members toured their recently renovated courthouse. The district's second meeting, hosted by Hancock County, included tours of the Marathon Pipeline Control Center and the county juvenile/probate courthouse renovations. Henry County hosted the district's final 2024 meeting where members heard from two local agribusiness operations.

Harrison County hosted the Southeast District in May where members heard presentations regarding solar power activity in the region.

In May, Fairfield County hosted the Central District at their Workforce Center for discussions on land use planning, workforce development, and transit. Central District members also gathered in Champaign County in October and toured the Sutphen Corporation (pictured above) and Champaign Aviation Museum.

Thank you to our host counties for bringing the membership together this year!

America 250



CCAO Events Manager and Boards' Liaison Robin Garrett, CCAO Policy Analyst James Kennedy and CCAO Managing Director of Policy Kyle Petty pose with Rear Admiral Dr. Peter Cressy, who presented at Tuscarawas County's America 250-Ohio Event, along with CCAO President and Tuscarawas County Commissioner Chris Abbuhl.

CCAO is partnering with the America 250 Commission to encourage counties to become America 250 counties

and prepare for this exciting celebration in 2026. CCAO President and Tuscarawas County Commissioner Chris Abbuhl spearheaded a celebratory event in his county in October. The event featured Retired U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Dr. Peter Cressy to inspire community leaders through his "Strategic Approach to Leading Through Times of Crisis and Change: Washington, Lincoln, Roosevelt, Churchill." We look forward to more celebrations to come!

County Celebrations

This year, four counties celebrated their bicentennial birthdays. Congratulations to Holmes County, Lorain County, Seneca County, and Williams County! CCAO members and staff along with legislators and other officials gathered to honor the history and achievements of each of these counties over the past 200 years.



Lorain County Commissioners David Moore, Michelle Hung, and Jeff Riddell during the county's bicentennial celebration.

Membership Events

In August, the association hosted its annual Summer Symposium at the Hocking Hills Lodge and Conference Center (read more on page 5). December brought the annual CCAO/CEO Winter Conference which centered on "Teamwork for a Better Tomorrow." CCAO members gathered for deep dives into key county policy areas and share updates on their own innovative solutions.

National County Government Month

Counties across the state celebrated National County Government Month in April. During this month,



Licking County Commissioners Duane Flowers, Rick Black and Tim Bubb pose with National County Government Month signs in front of their courthouse.

commissioners, executives, and council members take the opportunity to educate the public on county government functions and engage with the state on fostering a continued state-county partnership. This year, CCAO created a toolkit to help with educational efforts, including window slicks and informational posters, yard signs, a sample resolution, social media posts, Why Counties Matter brochure, and the option to customize Ohio Counties Matter booklets.

Additional Support

The CCAO Policy Team hosted webinars, published County Advisory Bulletins and CCAO Handbook Chapters, responded to many phone calls and email inquiries about best practices, and more to help county commissioners, executives and council members build stronger counties



Whittington (middle front) gathered with other county elected officials at the 2024 NACo County Leadership Institute.

for a stronger Ohio. Ashtabula County Commissioner and CCAO Human Services Committee Chair Kathryn Whittington participated in the 2024 NACo County Leadership Institute. The Institute brings together county elected officials to learn strategies for innovation and creative responses to the complex issues they face in county government.

Every summer, the John Glenn College of Public Affairs hosts a bipartisan class who are nominated by leaders from their jurisdiction, including county commissioners, township trustees, school board members, city council, mayors, and state representatives. The goal of the Academy is to build trust among participants so they can return to political life with a better understanding of their colleagues and a renewed commitment to public service. The commissioners selected to attend the academy in 2024 were: Ashtabula County Commissioner and CCAO Treasurer Casey Kozlowski, Harrison County Commissioner and CCAO Board Member Amy Norris, Cuyahoga County Councilmember Meredith Turner, Defiance County Commissioner and CCAO Board Member David Kern and Tuscarawas County Commissioner Kristin Zemis.



John Glenn College of Public Affairs Leadership Academy participants from left to right: Turner, Norris, Zemis, Kozlowski and Kern.



The CCAO Small County Affairs Committee was hosted by Jackson county, Chairman Donnie Willis' home county. The committee welcomed Ohio Office of Budget & Management Assistant Director Christina Frass, Manager of Government Affairs for JobsOhio RJ Mancini, and Vice President of Ohio SE Economic Development Katy Farber to give presentations regarding economic development to the committee. The committee was also greeted by Senator Shane Wilkin, who represents Ohio's 17th Senate District.

DECADES OF DEDICATION AWARDS

CCAO members who hit service milestones this year receive a Decades of Dedication Award. Congratulations and thank you for your years of dedicated service to our counties!

10 Years

- Jeff Benton, Delaware County Commissioner
- Denny Bittle, Ashland County Commissioner
- Rick Black, Licking County Commissioner
- Cindy Cameron, Muskingum County Commissioner
- David Daniels, Highland County Commissioner
- Bryan Davis, Scioto County Commissioner
- Tom Grossman, Warren County Commissioner
- Mark Holtsberry, Paulding County Commissioner
- Craig LaHote, Wood County Commissioner
- Barb Lewis, Delaware County Commissioner
- Jeff Rupp, Fulton County Commissioner
- Dave Wilson, Guernsey County Commissioner

20 Years

- Chris Abbuhl, Tuscarawas County Commissioner
- Tim Bubb, Licking County Commissioner
- Pete Gerken, Lucas County Commissioner
- Debbie Lieberman, Montgomery County Commissioner
- David Maple, Jr., Jefferson County Commissioner
- Vincent Schroeder, Putnam County Commissioner
- Dane Shryock, Coshocton County Commissioner
- Anthony Traficanti, Mahoning County Commissioner
- David Young, Warren County Commissioner

PHOTOS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR



The Henry County Commissioners and Engineer hosted the fall CCAO/CEAO Northwest Region in October.



CORSA President Dave Wilson & CCAO President Chris Abbuhl along with staffers John Brownlee & Cheryl Subler following CORSA's March Board meeting.



CCAO Staffers and Members attended the 2024 Ohio State College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences Farm Science Review.



CCAO Board Member and Fayette County Commissioner Tony Anderson, CCAO Assistant Director John Leutz, CCAO Secretary and Ashtabula County Commissioner Casey Kozlowski and Tuscarawas County Commissioner and CCAO President Chris Abbuhl.

CCAO NUMBERS AT A GLANCE





STAFF SERVICE MILESTONES AND NEW STAFF

Congratulations to our staff who hit service milestones this year!



20 YEARS
John Brownlee, Managing Director, Property and Casualty



10 YEARS
Mike Kindell, Managing Director, Health and Wellness



5 YEARS
Robin Garrett, Boards' Liaison and Events Manager

Staff Updates

Allen joins CORSA



In January, Brandy Allen joined the CORSA team as a Claims Representative. Brandy previously served as the CCAO Senior Accountant for 8 years. In October, Brandy was promoted to CORSA Underwriter. Her attention to detail along with her strong analytical skills make her a perfect fit to enhance CORSA's already exemplary team.

Stretch joins CCAO



Isaac Stretch joined CCAO as a Senior Accountant in March. Prior to joining CCAO, Stretch worked as the Office Manager/Accountant for Darling Ingredients in Morrow County. He received a B.A. in Finance and Business Management from the University of Findlay.

Herring joins CEBCO



This past October, CEBCO welcomed Cindi Herring as their new Benefit Specialist. A native of Delaware County, Cindi earned her B.S. in Business Management from Mt. Vernon Nazarene College. Cindi brings over 25 years of experience in employee benefits and property and liability insurance and previously worked for Delaware County.

Miller retires



March 15, 2024 marked the retirement of CORSA Claim and Litigation Manager Beth Miller after 25 years of dedication and service to Ohio counties. She was instrumental in the growth of CORSA's loss control program and claim litigation services. Beth's experience and commitment to the CORSA membership has proven to be invaluable.

Dillingham retires



After 18 years of service to CEBCO and CCAO, Senior Benefits Specialist Wendy Dillingham will retire at the end of 2024. Wendy has been instrumental in the CEBCO program and will be missed by the entire organization and the counties she has served. We wish her health and happiness in her retirement.

Farewells



CORSA Program Assistant Tricia Callihan departed this fall following over 20 years of service. CCAO

Administrative Professional Nedra Benson left this fall after 5 years with the organization. We wish Tricia and Nedra the best in their future endeavors.



PARTNERSHIPS

Buckeye Boys State and Buckeye Girls State

CCAO continued to partner with the Buckeye Boys State and Buckeye Girls State programs. These immersive week-long experiences bring together high school students to learn about city, state and county government. Current county commissioners attend to provide advice to the student “elected” county commissioners. Pictured at the top of this page are the 2024 Buckeye Girls State participants with Wood County Commissioner Doris Herringshaw.

OSU Extension

CCAO partnered with OSU Extension to create a county land use and zoning survey, in which 77 counties participated. The survey data will allow CCAO and others to better understand how counties handle zoning, comprehensive plans, the handling of solar farms, subdivision regulations, land use planning, and many other related topics.

BroadbandOHIO

The CCAO Broadband Task Force has met with BroadbandOhio numerous times throughout the year to discuss the Ohio BEAD Challenge Process. The state’s BEAD Program proposal is awaiting approval from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). This program allowed counties and ISPs to submit challenges to the NTIA maps for the purpose of creating the most accurate map, which will be beneficial in determining which broadband projects receive funding. Within this process, a project will receive 13 points if the board of county commissioners adopts a resolution in supporting a specific project, which carries roughly a 2.5% scoring weight within the grading process.

Ohio Chamber of Commerce

CCAO collaborated with the Ohio Chamber of Commerce to continue preparations for economic development across our counties. Ohio Chamber Senior Vice President of Government Affairs Rick Carfagna attended CCAO’s Board of Directors’ Retreat in the spring to share highlights of The Blueprint for Ohio’s Economic Future. The organizations will continue to partner on removing barriers to work, such as child care challenges, and preparing our workforce and infrastructure for further development opportunities. Additionally, CCAO is partnering with the Ohio Chamber and the Department of Development to create a Mega Development Caucus as a space for CCAO members planning for large projects to share ideas.

Thank you to our 2024 Corporate Partners for your support of our work.

★ ★ PINNACLE ★ ★

Anthem

JobsOhio
Ohio's Economic Development Corporation

PALMER ENERGY COMPANY

RUMPKE

sedgwick

★ PREMIER ★

COMM-CORE

EMPOWER

ENCINO Energy

PARTICIPATING

CLEMANNS-NELSON & ASSOCIATES, INC.

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Dinsmore

Lit Fiber

VIEAbility
Office Supplies with Social Impact

A division of CA BVI

CCAO COMMITTEES

Agriculture and Rural Affairs

Chair: Bill Clinger, Wyandot County Commissioner

Vice Chair: Tony Anderson, Fayette County Commissioner

General Government and Operations

Chair: John O'Grady, Franklin County Commissioner

Vice Chair: Bill Pursel, Knox County Commissioner

Human Services

Chair: Kathryn Whittington, Ashtabula County Commissioner

Vice Chair: Carolyn Rice, Montgomery County Commissioner

Jobs, Economic Development and Infrastructure

Chair: Cory Noonan, Allen County Commissioner

Vice Chair: Judy Dodge, Montgomery County Commissioner

Joint Committee on Administration of Elections

Co-Chair: Matt Old, Erie County Commissioner

Justice and Public Safety

Chair: Barb Lewis, Delaware County Commissioner

Vice Chair: Terry Britton, Highland County Commissioner

Metropolitan and Regional Affairs

Chair: Gloria Rodgers, Summit County Council Member

Vice Chair: Kevin Boyce, Franklin County Commissioner

Small County Affairs

Chair: Donnie Willis, Jackson County Commissioner

Vice Chair: Tony Montgomery, Pike County Commissioner

Taxation and Finance

Chair: Daniel Dean, Fayette County Commissioner

Vice Chair: Steve Davis, Fairfield County Commissioner

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