CCAO
ANNUAL REPORT



2025





Building stronger counties through advocacy, enterprise programs, and partnerships.

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Teamwork, Change, and Challenges: Looking Ahead with CCAO

Executive Director's Overview

As I mark 29 years with the County Commissioners Association of Ohio, I can say this year and the one ahead will be among the most important for Ohio's county commissioners, executives, and councils, along with the staff who support them.

Property Tax Reform

Ohio's $21.4 billion property tax system remains the focus of detailed analysis and spirited debate. CCAO and the County Auditors Association of Ohio have long called attention to its structural weaknesses and championed meaningful reforms.

The Joint House and Senate Study Committee on Property Tax Review issued a comprehensive set of recommendations last year, and the General Assembly and Governor DeWine acted on portions of those ideas. In addition, he appointed a property tax reform workgroup, including Commissioners Denise Driehaus, Gary Scherer and Jeff Chattin, to further develop and highlight reform.

Recent legislation aims to cap growth of unvoted millage and tie it to inflation—steps CCAO strongly supports to prevent the sharp spikes many homeowners have faced. Further tax policy changes are highlighted in the CCAO Policy Update in this Annual Report.

At the same time, proposals continue to surface—including a potential 2026 ballot initiative to eliminate property tax entirely. Such a move would cost counties $3.93 billion annually, jeopardizing funding for veterans, seniors, children, and first responders. CCAO will continue leading on balanced reforms that protect taxpayers and sustain vital county services.

Human Services and Children

Counties serve as vital partners in Ohio's human services system, administering programs that assist vulnerable individuals and families every day.



Cheryl Subler

CCAO Executive Director

Foster-care costs have risen 68 percent in five years. While fewer children enter care, those who remain often have complex needs requiring specialized treatment. With strong collaboration from the DeWine Administration, the latest state budget increased the child-protection allocation and introduced additional improvements.

CCAO also continues work to expand affordable child care and strengthen Ohio's workforce. A new pilot program shares childcare costs among employees, employers, and the state—an important step toward greater economic stability. Our partnerships with the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, Public Children Services Association of Ohio, Groundwork Ohio, and other statewide groups have earned recognition from several organizations dedicated to children and families.

The Association remains committed to partnering with the Ohio Job and Family Services Directors Association and the state to enhance the accuracy and administration of SNAP - the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. This coordinated effort is critical to protecting Ohio from a projected $321 million yearly cost shift in benefits from the federal level.

Technology and the Future of County Government

Cybersecurity and artificial intelligence are reshaping county operations. CCAO, CORSA, and the Service Corporation are helping counties meet new state cybersecurity requirements, expand training, and pilot AI tools that enhance service delivery. In 2026, a new CCAO Technology Committee will guide this work and help ensure counties are prepared for the future.

The Vibrancy of Our Association

Our family of organizations—CCAO, CORSA, CEBCO, the Service Corporation, the Research & Educational Foundation, and OCERP—continues to deliver unmatched value through advocacy, risk management, wellness, professional development, and financial security for county employees.

I extend special thanks to John Leutz, CCAO's Assistant Director, for 25 years of exceptional service as he transitions into retirement, although he will still support counties through a limited contract agreement.

As we approach 2026 and join the America 250-Ohio celebration, I remain deeply grateful for our county leaders, staff, and partners. Through teamwork, adaptability, and resilience, we will continue serving Ohio's 88 counties and building a stronger future for all.



CCAO POLICY UPDATE

As the 136th General Assembly and Governor Mike DeWine's final budget cycle unfolded, the CCAO once again stood at the center of major state policy debates affecting every county in Ohio. After years of federal stimulus support and rapid revenue growth, 2025 marked a return to fiscal normalcy — but not without challenges. The winding down of pandemic-era relief funds, rising service demands, and growing property tax pressures made this year's state budget process one of the most consequential in recent memory.

The state budget process is always a long and winding road. Beginning in January, CCAO members and staff worked to ensure county priorities were front and center with both the DeWine Administration and the General Assembly. Once the Governor introduced his final biennial budget proposal, House Bill 96, in February, the five-month legislative journey began in earnest. Throughout the process, CCAO members demonstrated the power of unified county advocacy— meeting with legislators, testifying in committees, and providing critical input that shaped the final outcome.

Property Tax and Revenue Policy

Few issues drew more attention in 2025 than property taxes. Rising property values across Ohio and property tax bills created mounting concern among homeowners and policymakers alike. Throughout the year, CCAO continued to advocate for meaningful, balanced property tax reform that provides relief to taxpayers while preserving county revenue streams needed to deliver essential local services. CCAO has urged policymakers to focus on reforms such as modernizing the school district 20-mill floor, expanding the homestead exemption, capping inside millage growth, and creating targeted tax relief programs like circuit breakers and tax deferral programs.

House Bill 96 also included several additional provisions related to local property tax administration and transparency:

- Allowing county commissioners to create local homestead or owner-occupancy exemptions, though not reimbursed by the state.
- Requiring county budget commissions to hold at least one annual public meeting explaining inside millage and how it functions.
- Establishing a statewide eligibility screening system for property tax credits.
- Permitting a county commissioner to serve as the prosecutor's alternate on the county budget commission.

With the looming possibility of a constitutional amendment to eliminate the real property tax, the discussion around property taxes will likely continue into 2026.

CCAO also welcomed the state's first step toward examining sales tax exemptions — a long-standing CCAO priority — with the elimination of several exemptions expected to generate an additional $230 million in state revenue over the biennium, an estimated $58 million benefit to counties.

In addition, the Local Government Fund (LGF) share of state General Revenue Fund tax revenue increased for the second consecutive budget, rising from 1.70% to 1.75%. This increase, while modest, signals the continued strength of the state–county partnership and provides a needed boost as counties face rising costs and growing service responsibilities.

Indegent Defense

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.

Child Welfare

Ohio's child protection system remains one of the most pressing responsibilities of county government, and the budget delivered significant new investments. The State Child Protection Allocation (SCPA) increased by $55 million over the biennium, providing critical support to county public children services agencies struggling with rising placement and care costs.

The budget also requires the Department of Children and Youth (DCY) to issue a Request for Proposal to create statewide rate cards for child placement and care, ensuring

consistency and transparency across the state. Foster and kinship caregivers will remain exempt from this process. Additionally, the budget allocates $10 million in each fiscal year to fund the development of regional child wellness campuses to provide short-term crisis stabilization and support services.

Childcare

Recognizing the connection between child care access and Ohio's economic growth, the budget invested in new programs to make child care more accessible and affordable. While initial eligibility for publicly funded child care remains at 145% of the federal poverty level (FPL), the budget created the Child Care Choice Voucher Program, funded at $100 million per fiscal year, serving families up to 200% of FPL.

The budget also introduced a cost-sharing model where child care expenses are split between employers, employees, and the state (40%-40%-20%), and launched new initiatives to expand the number of licensed providers. Together, these efforts will increase capacity, support working families, and strengthen local economies.

Next Generation 9-1-1

Counties achieved a major win in modernizing Ohio's emergency communication systems. The budget increased the monthly Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1) user fee from $0.40 to $0.60, repealing a scheduled reversion to $0.25 in October 2025.

The distribution formula was also updated, with counties now receiving 81.33% of user fee revenue, up from 72%. These changes ensure counties have the resources necessary to upgrade and maintain 9-1-1 systems statewide and meet the 2030 deadline for full NG 9-1-1 implementation.

County Jails

Counties also saw positive developments in jail construction and inmate healthcare. The $75 million previously appropriated for jail construction and renovation will now be distributed through an administrative process at the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, allowing more flexibility in project selection and local matching requirements.

The budget also mandates that the Ohio Department of Medicaid seek a federal 1115 Waiver to expand Medicaid coverage for behavioral health, mental health, and substance use disorder treatment for individuals incarcerated in county jails, and to provide a 30-day supply of medication upon release — a major advancement for inmate health and reentry success.





Economic and Community Development

Economic development and housing remain central to Ohio's long-term competitiveness. The budget continued successful programs such as $100 million per year for brownfield remediation and $21.5 million per year for building demolition and site revitalization.

In addition, two new programs were created to help increase housing availability statewide:

- The Residential Economic Development District Grant Program, which funds infrastructure for local governments adopting pro-housing policies; and
- The Residential Development Revolving Loan Program, which offers loans to support rural residential development projects.

These initiatives strengthen local communities, promote housing growth, and enhance economic opportunity across Ohio.

Local Elected Officials and Compensation

The budget provides for annual 5% pay increases for county elected officials from 2026 through 2029. Due to constitutional restrictions, most increases will take effect at the start of the next term of office. However, judges and county board of elections members, who are not elected officials, will receive increases beginning January 1, 2026.

A Collaborative Effort

CCAO extends sincere appreciation to all who contributed to these legislative successes. County commissioners, executives, and council members across the state dedicated countless hours to phone calls, committee testimony, and meetings that directly shaped policy outcomes.

CCAO thanks Governor Mike DeWine, Senate President Rob McColley, Speaker Matt Huffman, House Finance Chair Brian Stewart, Senate Finance Chair Jerry Cirino, Majority Leader Marilyn John, Senator Brian Chavez, Senator Nathan Manning, Representative Kevin Ritter, and many other legislators who championed CCAO's efforts and demonstrated steadfast support for county government and partnership on key issues.

As 2025 draws to a close, CCAO remains focused on the road ahead: achieving lasting property tax reform, securing sustainable funding for child welfare and indigent defense, and strengthening county infrastructure and services. Together, we continue building stronger counties for a stronger Ohio.



CCAO Research and Educational Foundation Awards $10,000 in Scholarships to Future Public Servants

The County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO) Research and Educational Foundation is proud to announce the 2025 recipients of the Ohio Counties Scholarship Program, which awards a total of $10,000 in scholarships to outstanding high school seniors across the state who are pursuing a career in public service.

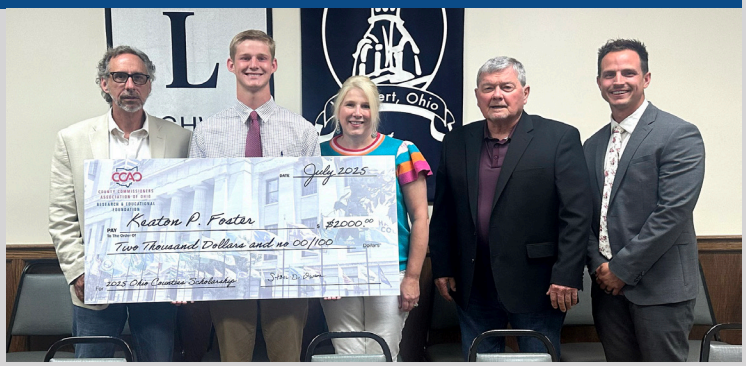
This year's five $2,000 scholarships were awarded to one student in each of CCAO's five districts:

- **Central District: Katelyn Wynkoop, Fairfield County**
- **Northeast District: Angela Freeman, Summit County**
- **Northwest District: Keaton Foster, Van Wert County**
- **Southwest District: Halle Ann Jones, Highland County**
- **Southeast District: Anna Ritter, Washington County**

The Ohio Counties Scholarship Program is sponsored by the County Commissioners Association of Ohio Research and Educational Foundation and reflects the foundation's ongoing commitment to cultivating the next generation of public service leaders.

Funding for these scholarships is made possible through generous contributions and annual fundraising efforts—including the popular County Classic Golf Outing.

Through this program, CCAO continues to invest in Ohio's future by encouraging talented students to pursue careers that strengthen communities and uphold the values of effective and ethical local government.



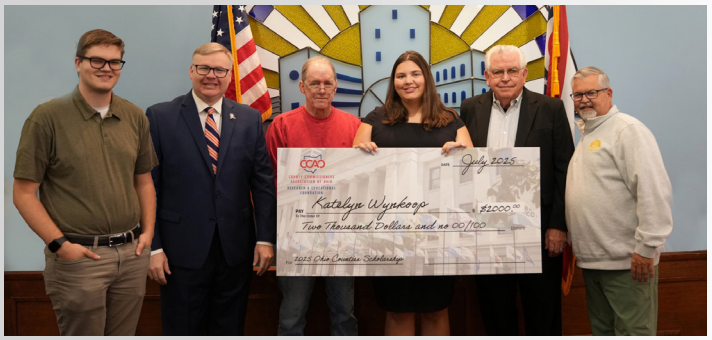
2025 NW District Scholarship Winner Keaton Foster, pictured with his mother along with Van Wert County Commissioners Todd Wolfrum, Stan Owens and CCAO's Tim Hoverman.



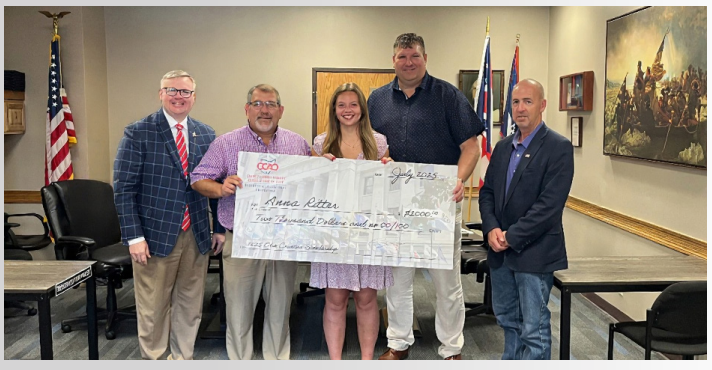
2025 SW District Scholarship Winner Halle Ann Jones pictured with her parents, Highland County Commissioners David Daniels, Brad Roades, Terry Britton along with CCAO's Steve Caraway.



2025 NE District Scholarship Winner Angela Freeman, pictured with her mother along with Summit County Executive Illene Shaprio, County Council President Rita Darrow and CCAO's Steve Caraway.



2025 SE District Scholarship Winner Anna Ritter pictured with Washington County Commissioners Charlie Schilling, Eddie Place, James Booth along with CCAO's Steve Caraway.



2025 Central District Scholarship Winner Katelyn Wynkoop along with Fairfield County Commissioners Steve Davis, Dave Levacy, Jeff Fix and CCAO's Steve Caraway.



LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE & CCAO SUMMER SYMPOSIUM

White House Leadership Conference

In May, more than 60 CCAO members traveled to Washington, D.C., to take part in the White House State Leadership Conference, organized in partnership by CCAO, the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, and NACo. Held in the historic Treaty Room of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, the event marked the first state-focused leadership conference of the second Trump administration. Attendees heard from an impressive slate of federal leaders, including Alex Meyer, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs; Audra Weeks from the USDA; Secretary Chavez-DeRemer from the Department of Labor; Secretary McMahon from the Department of Education; and Secretary Howard Lutnick from the Department of Commerce.

The conference provided county officials the opportunity to hear first hand about federal initiatives affecting Ohio's counties and to share local perspectives on ongoing challenges. Participants extended special thanks to the Deputy Director of the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs for organizing the event. One highlight of the trip was a personal tour of the Vice President's Ceremonial Office, guided by Bryan Gray, a proud Ohioan serving in the administration. The evening prior to the conference, NACo hosted a pre-briefing and dinner where participants discussed key federal policy issues including FEMA reforms, SNAP benefits, Community Development Block Grants, drinking water programs, and broadband access.

Summer Symposium

CCAO Toolbox: Education, Advocacy and Leading Through Change

Following this national engagement, county leaders reconvened in August for the CCAO Summer Symposium, held amid the scenic backdrop of Hocking County. The event provided a deep dive into pressing county issues, beginning with Understanding Property Tax Policy led by Stark County Commissioner Alan Harold and Lawrence County Auditor Chris Kline. The session explored the fundamentals of Ohio's property tax system, current challenges, and the collaborative reform recommendations developed jointly by the County Auditors Association of Ohio and CCAO, with particular attention to House Bill 96.

Building on that session, the Reform in Ohio session featured Representative David Thomas, Hamilton County Commissioner Denise Driehaus, and Greg Lawson of the Buckeye Institute, who examined options for property tax relief, legislative proposals, and the balance between taxpayer needs and county fiscal stability. Broader county management sessions followed, including Beyond Brochures, which highlighted Hocking County's innovative tourism strategies, and From Zoning to Funding, where housing experts shared tools to promote local development and community engagement.

The Symposium also placed strong emphasis on leadership development and fiscal awareness. In Crucial Conversations, attendees learned effective strategies for handling difficult discussions, fostering collaboration, and maintaining professionalism under pressure. The final session, The Big Shift, outlined the fiscal implications of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, focusing on how SNAP and Medicaid cost shifts will impact counties and how CCAO is engaging with state partners to address these issues.

Together, the White House Leadership Conference and the CCAO Summer Symposium reflected CCAO's ongoing mission to strengthen county leadership, build relationships across all levels of government, and provide members with the tools needed to navigate a complex and changing policy environment. From the halls of the White House to the hills of Hocking County, Ohio's county officials demonstrated the power of collaboration, innovation, and leadership in service to their counties.









PHOTO CAPTIONS

Upper left: *Attendees at the 2025 CCAO Summer Symposium in Hocking County.*

Left: *Left to right, Logan County Commissioner Joe Antrum; Miami County Commissioners Ted Mercer and Greg Simmons; Senator Jon Husted; and Miami County Commissioner Wade Westfall.*

Upper right: *In the historic Indian Treaty Room of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building. Commissioners pictured left to right: Charlie Schilling (Washington County); J.P. Dutton (Belmont County); Ty Moore (Noble County); Diane Burkhart and Mitch Schumacher (Monroe County); Heidi Maxwell and Cecil Mayle (Morgan County); and James Booth (Washington County).*

Above: *White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs Deputy Director Jared Borg and Ross County Commissioner David Glass.*





CCAO SERVICE CORPORATION

CCAO Service Corporation Strengthens County Cybersecurity with the Cyber Defense Program

County governments face rising cybersecurity threats. To help protect their systems and data, the CCAO Service Corporation launched the Cyber Defense Program, offering counties affordable, proactive solutions through partnerships with HG Consulting and TTG.

HG Consulting: Building Countywide Cyber Resilience

HG Consulting delivers comprehensive cybersecurity services to strengthen county networks and protect critical systems.

Core services include:

- Endpoint Security: Cloud-managed endpoint detection and response (EDR) and patch management for all county devices.
- Office365 Security: MFA, mail protection, and policy configuration reducing hacking and phishing risks by up to 99%.
- Network Security: Firewall and wireless audits to secure county infrastructure.
- Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery: Planning and testing to ensure rapid recovery from cyber incidents.
- Consulting & Licensing: Guidance and cost-saving software renewals tailored to county needs.

TTG: Trusted IT and Managed Services Partner

As a co-managed Managed Service Provider (MSP), TTG supports counties with reliable IT operations, cybersecurity, and modernization initiatives.

Highlights include:

- On-site and remote support
- Network troubleshooting and connectivity services
- Cloud migration and mobile device management
- Microsoft licensing at cost
- Penetration testing and cyber insurance validation

TTG's quarterly performance reports provide transparent metrics and accountability, while their co-managed model enhances local IT capacity and strengthens security.

Electric Program

- 65 members in the Electric Energy Program
- Over 610 million kWh and 4,000+ meters, 4 new counties joined since this time last year
- Estimated Oct. 24 – Sept. '25 savings vs utility PTCs = $10+ million
- $78+ million estimated savings for member counties since program inception

Gas Program

- 64 members in the natural Gas Energy Program
- Approximately 1,130 meters consuming 1.52 BCF/year
- Just under 100 accounts added in 2025
- Estimated program savings April 2024 – March 2025 = $1.3 million
- $22 million estimated savings for member counties since program inception

Aggregation

- 34 county electric aggregation programs (+1 coming online January 2026)
- Over the last year, three new county programs & over 10 communities added to existing programs
- 14 communities on the November ballot for electric aggregation
- Est. Sept. 2024 – Aug. 2025 savings vs utility PTCs = $42+ million
- $243+ million estimated savings since program inception
- 14 County natural gas aggregation programs
- One county on the November ballot for gas aggregation

County FIRM: Supporting Counties Through Every Phase of Facility Planning and Projects

Over the past year, County FIRM (Facility Investment, Retrofit, and Maintenance) has continued its mission of serving as a trusted partner to Ohio Counties in the planning, execution, and oversight of facility projects. Since launching its partnership with CCAO, County FIRM has engaged with roughly 15 of Ohio's 88 counties, assisting their efforts to improve infrastructure and maintain smooth, efficient project delivery. Throughout the year, the County FIRM team (comprised of licensed engineers, facilities experts and former contractors) has helped counties

avoid unnecessary costs by challenging hundreds of thousands of dollars in contractor change orders and project delay claims, more than offsetting the cost of County FIRM's services. Their guidance ensures counties only pay for what's fair and contractually required, protecting taxpayer dollars while maintaining productive relationships with vendors.

One of the most telling signs of County FIRM's success was the ongoing partnerships built: nearly every county they've worked with has come back for assistance on subsequent projects. From major capital upgrades to smaller maintenance initiatives, counties continue to rely on County FIRM's expertise and advocacy to ensure projects stay on track and within budget. Looking ahead, County FIRM is also helping counties navigate the uncertainty of future funding by providing consulting services around long-term facility planning and budgeting. They are working closely with local leaders to develop proactive strategies that keep essential infrastructure improvements on the horizon, even amid unclear fiscal conditions.

County FIRM remains ready and able to assist any county, on any project, challenge, or concern.

Whether it's managing a complex facility upgrade, assessing capital needs, or providing guidance on planning and procurement, County FIRM stands ready to ensure each county's interests come first.

CCAOSC: Delivering Results

- **Workers Comp Group Rating and Retro Plan**
- **CCAO Cyber Defense (Protecting your county IT infrastructure)**
- **County Benefits+ (Supplemental health benefits program)**
- **Roof Connect (Roofing and paving of county facilities)**
- **Maximus (Cost Recovery)**
- **Ohio County Commercial Card Consortium (Making government purchasing easier)**
- **Amazon for Ohio Counties (Complimentary Prime accounts with savings on thousands of items)**

OCERP

OHIO COUNTY EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT PLAN

For the future you imagine

Celebrating 40 Years of Service: OCERP: Created by Counties, for Counties

This year marks a significant milestone for the Ohio County Employee Retirement Plan (OCERP) 40 years of dedicated service to Ohio's counties and the thousands of employees who serve them. Established by counties, for counties, OCERP continues to embody the collaborative spirit and financial stewardship that have defined its success for four decades.

As of this year, OCERP proudly manages just over one billion dollars in assets, maintaining its reputation as a leading retirement plan for Ohio's county employees. This remarkable achievement underscores the strength, trust, and shared commitment of counties across the state.

Welcoming a New Team Member

OCERP was pleased to welcome Lori Baldridge as the new Membership Services Coordinator. Lori brings valuable experience and energy to the role, continuing OCERP's tradition of providing responsive, personalized service to its members and participating counties.



National Leadership and Collaboration

In October, Steve Caraway, Managing Director of Enterprise and Retirement Services, represented OCERP at the National Association of Government Defined Contribution Administrators (NAGDCA) conference in San Diego, California. Caraway joined a distinguished panel featuring

Brenda Sanne (Nebraska), Arlen Zentner (Kansas), and Emily Boesen (Indiana) to discuss effective participant engagement strategies for government retirement plans. Together, they shared insights on connecting with plan participants and building lasting engagement through innovation and collaboration.

A Year of Impactful Outreach

OCERP's Retirement Plan Advisor Teams, located regionally across Ohio, continued to deliver results throughout the year—ensuring county employees receive the guidance and education they need to achieve retirement success.



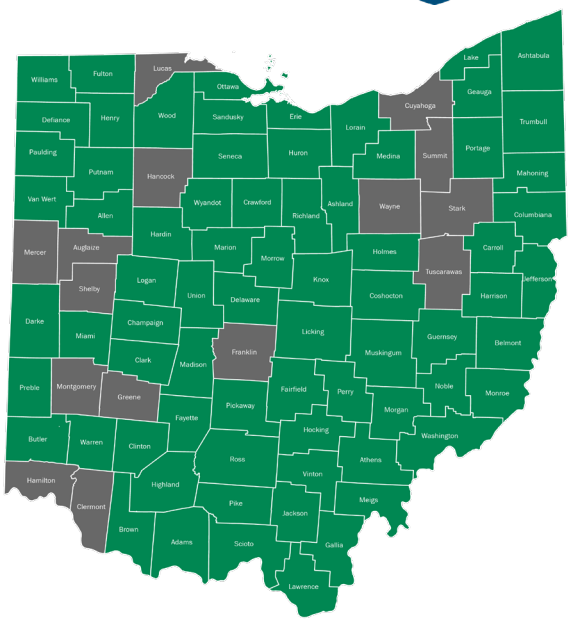
CORSA

Over the past year, CORSA has worked to secure the best coverage options for our members amid a challenging insurance landscape. With counties facing major risks if elimination of property taxes is approved next fall, we are actively exploring tools like the expanded use of AI to keep rates low while maintaining quality service.

A landmark decision occurred this fall when the CORSA board approved the formation of a single-parent captive insurance company, the Ohio Risk and County Alliance (ORCA). ORCA will provide stop-loss coverage to CORSA for large claims, offering us an additional cost control mechanism. More information will be forthcoming as ORCA operations commence in 2026.

I am certain our team's service leads the industry, and we will continue to innovate to serve our members better in the future.

-Craig LaHote, CORSA Board President



73 counties and 51 county affiliates strong.

CORSA is proud to announce the addition of one new county affiliate:

Portage County Land Reutilization

$18.5 billion in covered assets

$4.9 million returned to members in the form of dividends, grants and services

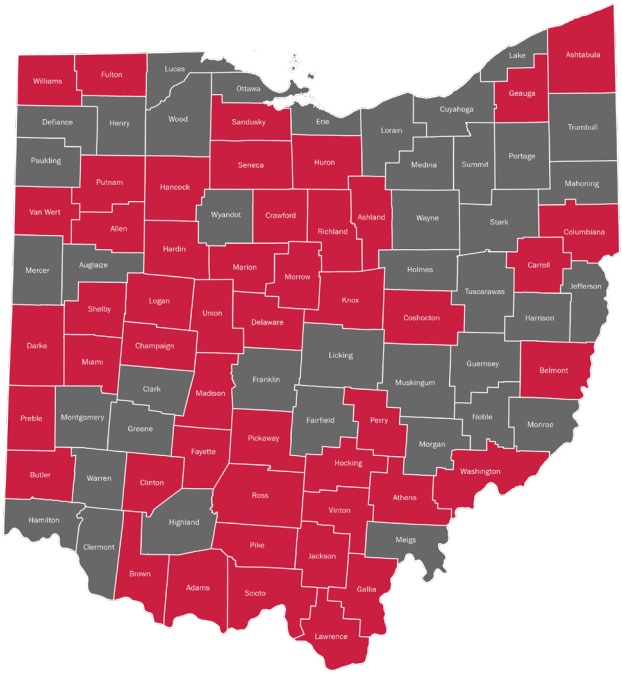
Photo Caption:
CORSA Board of Directors (pictured above, left to right):
Dave Wilson, Member, Guernsey County Commissioner
Jim Justice, Member, Ashland County Commissioner
Mark Stahl, Treasurer, Ottawa County Commissioner
Cory Noonan, Member, Allen County Commissioner
Charlie Schilling, Secretary, Washington County Commissioner
Harry Brady, Member, Huron County Commissioner
Gary Scherer, Member, Pickaway County Commissioner
Gary Merrell, Vice President, Delaware County Commissioner
Craig LaHote, President, Wood County Commissioner



CEBCO

CEBCO continues to demonstrate there is strength in numbers. With Clermont County joining our pool on January 1, 2025, our 49 counties received an average 2025 rate increase which was below market trend. Our mission to provide cost stability, financial strength, and broad coverage, gives member counties a variety of wellness and health management services they could not purchase alone. CEBCO still ranks as Anthem's largest employer group in the state of Ohio, serving 16,600 employees and 37,000+ members throughout the year.

CEBCO provides $700,000 in Wellness Grant funds to member counties to fund annual wellness activities.



We are also excited to continue offering the CEBCO Rewards 200 Program. Now entering its third year since inception, this program provides covered employees and their spouses, with incentives to achieve wellness rewards, for receiving preventative care and testing, and for participating in fun team fitness challenges. In the second year of the program, nearly 21,000 members earned over $2.1 million in gift card rewards. This includes almost 14,000 receiving wellness exams, which is the primary goal of the program.

Photo Caption:
CEBCO Board of Directors (pictured above, left to right):
Steve Robinson, Member, Union County Commissioner
Harry Brady, Vice President, Huron County Commissioner
Steve Hess, Treasurer, Champaign County Commissioner
Cory Noonan, President, Allen County Commissioner
Mike Welch, Member, Ashland County Commissioner
Jeff Benton, Secretary, Delaware County Commissioner
Bart Westfall, Member, Williams County Commissioner
Jon Rupp, Member, Fulton County Commissioner



MEMBER ENGAGEMENT AND TRAINING

CCAO/CEAO District Meetings

CCAO staff joined CCAO and CEAO members at nine district meetings across the state this year. Thank you to our host counties for bringing the membership together, showcasing our counties, and discussing issues that matter to Ohioans.

Strengthening County Leadership and Governance

In February, CCAO held training for newly elected Commissioners and County Council members. The class of new officials was large, with 55 new Commissioners and County Council members.

The training brought together county leaders for learning and collaboration. Former CCAO Executive Director Larry Long opened with an overview of county government functions and the importance of the state-county partnership. Attendees heard from experts on topics such as human resources, budgeting, auditing, purchasing, ethics, and public meetings. Sessions covered practical guidance on managing employees, maintaining fiscal responsibility, promoting transparency, and reducing legal risks. Presenters also discussed strategies for local economic development, delivering essential human services, and ensuring public safety. The training concluded with Clark County Commissioner Melanie Flax Wilt sharing how to set a clear vision, build a strong strategic plan, and tell your county's story.

New members also had the opportunity to meet CCAO, CORSA, and CEBCO staff, tour the building at 209 E. State Street and attend a new member reception with lawmakers and Lt. Governor Jim Tressel in the Atrium of the Ohio Statehouse.

Supporting Issue 2

CCAO played a key role in the passage of Issue 2, the State Capital Improvement Plan, during the May election. Collaborating with stakeholder groups helped educate the public about the importance of this program. Administered by the Ohio Public Works Commission, the plan authorizes the issuance of up to $250 million annually in general obligation bonds over the next 10 years to fund critical local infrastructure improvements.

Since Ohio voters first approved the program in 1987, it has supported more than 19,000 infrastructure projects — improving local roads and bridges, wastewater and water supply systems, and solid waste and stormwater facilities in all 88 counties. In the current 10-year cycle alone, $2.3 billion has been awarded to 1,084 local governments for 4,490 projects benefiting cities, counties, townships, and other local entities across the state.

Issue 2 passed with strong statewide support, earning 67.81% of the vote. CCAO Executive Director Cheryl Subler continues to serve on the Ohio Public Works Commission, ensuring that county interests remain well represented in the administration of this vital program.

National County Government Month

For NCGM this year, CCAO wrote, produced and distributed two educational videos for members to use in their counties. The first video highlighted the role of Ohio's County Commissioners, Executives, and Council Members. The second video demonstrates how county government services touch residents' lives each and every day.

NACo Legislative and Annual Conference

This year, CCAO actively supported and engaged with county officials during the National Association of Counties' (NACo) 2025 Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., and the Annual Conference & Exposition in Philadelphia. The Legislative Conference brought together nearly 2,000 county leaders from across the nation to discuss key federal issues affecting local governments, including infrastructure, workforce development, cybersecurity, and intergovernmental partnerships. CCAO helped facilitate member participation by coordinating with Ohio delegates, sharing briefing materials, and ensuring Ohio's county priorities were well represented during Capitol Hill advocacy efforts. Later in the year, CCAO members joined peers from across the country at NACo's Annual Conference, where discussions centered on innovation in county operations, modernization through technology, and strengthening local leadership. The event highlighted success stories from counties nationwide and provided valuable opportunities for learning and collaboration. CCAO worked closely with NACo to support Ohio's county officials throughout both events—promoting active participation, connecting members with national experts, and ensuring that Ohio's voice

remained strong in shaping national county policy and best practices.

Additional Support

Throughout the year, CCAO hosted a series of informative webinars designed to help counties navigate key policy changes, funding opportunities, and operational best practices. The year began with the DRC Jail Funding Q&A Webinar, which provided county leaders with guidance on state funding programs and jail construction requirements. Members also participated in the County Capital Planning Webinar, presented by County FIRM, which explored strategies for long-term infrastructure investment, and the County Benefits+ Webinar, highlighting enhancements and updates to county employee benefit programs.

Another session, The Big Shift: One Big Beautiful Bill Act's Impact on Ohio Counties, offered an in-depth look at recent legislative changes affecting local governments. The webinar series concluded with CyberOhio & CCAO: Understanding Ohio's New Cyber Law where experts discussed the implications of the state's new cybersecurity requirements and how counties can strengthen their digital defenses.

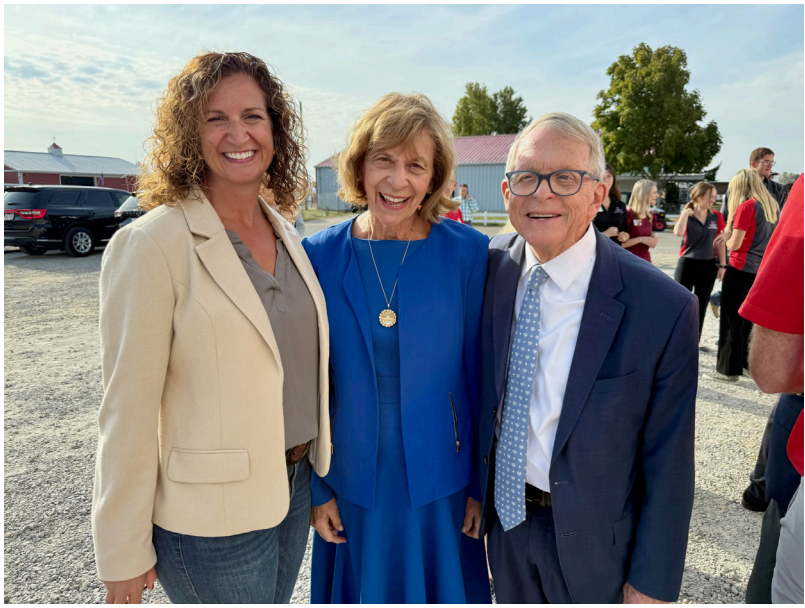
The CCAO Policy Team also published County Advisory Bulletins and CCAO Handbook Chapters, responded to many phone calls and email inquiries about best practices and more to help county commissioners, executives and council members build stronger counties for a stronger Ohio.

Each summer, the John Glenn College of Public Affairs hosts a bipartisan leadership academy that brings together public officials nominated by leaders from across Ohio — including county commissioners, township trustees, school board members, city council members, mayors, and members of the General Assembly.

The Academy's goal is to foster trust, strengthen collaboration, and help participants return to public service with a deeper understanding of their colleagues and a renewed commitment to effective leadership. The county commissioners selected to attend the 2025 Academy were Gallia County Commissioner Leslie Henry, Summit County Council Member Christine Higham, Ross County Commissioner David Glass, Wayne County Commissioner Jonathan Hofstetter, Champaign County Commissioner Tim Cassady, and Cuyahoga County Council Member Michael Houser. These members were sponsored by the CCAO Research and Educational Foundation.

In addition, CCAO-sponsored Wood County Commissioner and CORSA President Craig LaHote, participated in the NACo County Leadership Institute, a rigorous three day in-person program in Washington D.C.







PHOTOS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR







PHOTO CAPTIONS

Top left: *The Ohio Commission on the U.S. Semiquincentennial continued its planning efforts for celebrating 250 years of American Independence. Commission Members David Painter (CCAO President & Clermont County Commissioner) and Steve Hambley (CCAO Board of Directors & Medina County Commissioner) caught up with Ilene Shapiro (Summit County Executive & CCAO Treasurer) following the meeting at the Akron Civic Theatre.*

Top right: *On May 2, 2025, Rep. Ty Mathews presented an official resolution to Hancock County officials during the dedication of the new Allan H. Davis Judicial Center.*

Pictured (L to R): *Rep. Ty Mathews, Commissioners Timothy K. Bechtol, Jeffrey L. Hunker, and William L. Bateson.*

Above: *Cory Noonan (Allen County Commissioner & CORSA Board Member); Cheryl Subler (CCAO Executive Director); Dave Wilson (Guernsey County Commissioner & CORSA Board Member); Alison Redmond (CORSA Membership Services Manager); John Brownlee (Managing Director, Property and Casualty); Sherry Barbosky (CORSA Underwriting Manager); and Brandy Allen (CORSA Underwriter).*



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

- Sabrina Christian-Bennett, Portage County Commissioner
- Charles Schwochow, Sandusky County Commissioner
- Elizabeth Walters, Summit County Council Member
- Jeff Wilhite, Summit County Council Member

20 Years

- Mike Halleck, Columbiana County Commissioner



PARTNERSHIPS

Buckeye Boys State and Buckeye Girls State

CCAO continued to partner with the Buckeye Boys State and Buckeye Girls State programs. These immersive weeklong 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.

Public Children Services Association of Ohio

CCAO was proud to be recognized by the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) for our ongoing collaboration to strengthen support for Ohio’s children and families.



Through a strong partnership during the state operating budget process, CCAO and PCSAO worked together to ensure that children services across Ohio received the attention and prioritization they deserve.

We are grateful for the opportunity to stand alongside PCSAO and local county leaders who are committed to building a stronger, more supportive future for children and families in every Ohio community. Pictured accepting the award above is PCSAO Executive Director Angela Sausser, Ross County Commissioner Jack Everson, along with CCAO’s Rachel Reedy and Cheryl Subler.

Groundwork Ohio

CCAO is honored to be recognized by Groundwork Ohio with the 2025 Groundwork Champion Award. This recognition reflects the strong partnership between our organizations and our shared commitment to advancing policies that expand access to affordable, high-quality child care across Ohio.



Working alongside Groundwork Ohio, CCAO has helped inform state leaders and local communities about the vital connection between child care, working families, and a thriving economy. Together, we continue to advocate for investments that strengthen early childhood opportunities and support the next generation of Ohioans.

Pictured are Lynanne Gutierrez, President and CEO of Groundwork Ohio, and CCAO President David Painter.

Ohio Child Support Professionals Association

CCAO was honored to receive recognition from the Ohio Child Support Professionals Association for our shared commitment to strengthening Ohio’s child support program. This acknowledgment highlights the strong collaboration between CCAO and partners across the state who work tirelessly to ensure that children and families receive the support and stability they deserve. Together, we continue to advocate for effective, locally driven solutions that help Ohio’s families and communities thrive. Pictured on the page banner are the CCAO Executive Committee along with Ryann Levering-White and Amy Roehrenbeck from OCSPA at the recognition.

★ ★ PINNACLE ★ ★

RUMPKE

Anthem

JobsOhio
Ohio’s Economic Development Corporation

PALMER ENERGY COMPANY

sedgwick

★ PREMIER ★

ENCINO Energy

EMPOWER

CPV Retail

PARTICIPATING

CLEMANS-NELSON & ASSOCIATES, INC.

Columbia Gas of Ohio

Gardiner.

GRANGER



CCAO NUMBERS AT A GLANCE








STAFF SERVICE MILESTONES AND UPDATES

25 YEARS



John Leutz, CCAO
Assistant Director, Retiring

20 YEARS



Melissa Bodey, CEBCO
Senior Benefits Specialist

15 YEARS



Sherry Brabosky, CORSA
Underwriting Manager

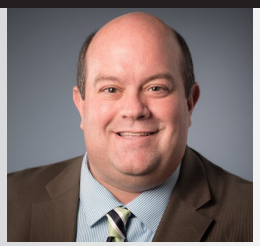


Ken Hilty, CORSA
Risk Control Consultant,
Retired

10 YEARS



Tim Hoverman, Managing
Director, IT/Operations



Curt Pratt, CORSA
Claims Representative

5 YEARS



Justin Grant, CEBCO Lead
Senior Benefits Specialist

Farewells

This year, CCAO and its affiliate programs saw several valued team members move on to new opportunities or conclude long chapters of service. **John Leutz**, CCAO Assistant Director, will retire at year's end after 25 years of dedicated service, continuing in a limited contract role in 2026. **Jim Hale**, CORSA Risk Control Consultant since 2006, will also retire at the end of the year. **Jon Honeck**, Senior Policy Analyst, joined the Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association as Executive Director, and staff member **Jessica Newbacher**, Communications Coordinator since 2022, returned to Cleveland to pursue new career opportunities. Earlier in the year, **Mike Kindell**, CEBCO's Managing Director of Health and Wellness, retired after more than a decade of impactful service. **James Kennedy**, Policy Analyst, relocated to North Carolina to pursue private-sector work, and **Kyle Petty,** Managing Director of Policy, departed to launch his own consulting firm—continuing to collaborate with CCAO through a contract relationship. **Hannah McKee**, CEBCO Wellness Coordinator, also completed her service after six years supporting county wellness efforts. **Ken Hilty**, Risk Control Consultant at CORSA, departed as well. Ken had served Ohio's counties since 2010 and had 29 years of experience in law enforcement before joining CORSA.

We thank each of them for their contributions and wish them success in their next chapters.

Welcomes

CCAO, CORSA, and CEBCO welcomed new team members. **Karla Dunbar** joined as Administrative Professional, bringing extensive association experience. **Aaron Shirley** became a CORSA Claims Representative, contributing strong customer services expertise. **Lori Baldridge** joined as Membership Services Coordinator for the Ohio County Employee Retirement Plan, bringing a deep background in state and local public service. Earlier this fall, employee **Adam Schwiebert** returned as Managing Director of Policy, strengthening CCAO's advocacy and policy capacity. Most recently, **Ryan Horns** joined as Communications Coordinator, bringing comprehensive experience in journalism and university communications.

We are pleased to welcome these talented professionals to our team.






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CCAO COMMITTEES

Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee
Chair: Jonathan Hofstetter, Commissioner, Wayne County
Vice Chair: Tony Anderson, Commissioner, Fayette County

General Government and Operations Committee
Chair: John O'Grady, Commissioner, Franklin County
Vice Chair: Bill Pursel, Commissioner, Knox County

Health and Human Services Committee
Chair: Kathryn Whittington, Commissioner, Ashtabula County
Vice Chair: Carolyn Rice, Commissioner, Montgomery County

Jobs, Economic Development and Infrastructure (JEDI) Committee
Chair: Cory Noonan, Commissioner, Allen County
Vice Chair: Judy Dodge, Commissioner, Montgomery County

Joint Committee on Administration of Elections
Co-Chair: Matt Old, Commissioner, Erie County

Justice and Public Safety Committee
Chair: Barb Lewis, Commissioner, Delaware County
Vice Chair: Terry Britton, Commissioner, Highland County

Metropolitan and Regional Affairs Committee
Chair: Lisa Sobecki, Commissioner, Lucas County
Vice Chair: Kevin Boyce, Commissioner, Franklin County

Small County Affairs Committee
Chair: Donnie Willis, Commissioner, Jackson County
Vice Chair: Tony Montgomery, Commissioner, Pike County

Taxation and Finance Committee
Chair: Gary Scherer, Commissioner, Pickaway County
Vice Chair: Steven Davis, Commissioner, Fairfield County

Water Quality Task Force
Co-Chair: Pete Gerken, Commissioner, Lucas County
Co-Chair: Beth Seibert, Commissioner, Allen County

Ohio County Employee Retirement Plan Committee (OCERP)
Chair: Timothy Bechtol, Commissioner, Hancock County

County Commissioners Association of Ohio

County Employee Benefit Consortium of Ohio
CEBCO Health & Wellness

CORSA Property & Casualty

County Commissioners Association of Ohio Service Corporation

County Commissioners Association of Ohio Research & Educational Foundation