

THE STATEHOUSE REPORT

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Governor DeWine signs legislation including funding for Appalachia and elections administration

Governor DeWine signed [House Bill 377](#), sponsored by Representatives Hall and Swearingen, into law this week. The bill appropriates \$500 million in ARPA funds for the Appalachian Community Grant Program; \$20 million for the Secretary of State to reimburse county boards of elections for the costs of the August 2 primary; and \$422 million in ARPA funding for small municipalities and townships.

Forty-six commissioners, representing a diverse group of communities, attended the signing and discussed with Ohio Department of Development Director Lydia Mihalik the Governor's Office of Appalachia Director John Carey how the money contained in House Bill 377 can be utilized to benefit their area of the state. The program will allocate \$500 million in ARPA funds to projects in the 32-county Appalachian region.

There are two categories of grants available:

1. Appalachian Planning Grants to defray costs associated with research, planning, and writing a formal development proposal for a project or a group of projects, or similar uses approved by the department.
2. Appalachian Development Grants to implement a program to address one of the following program components:
 - An infrastructure component, such as main street or downtown redevelopment, improvements to multi-community connecting trails, significant outdoor community space, links to community arts, history, and culture, or access to telemedicine services.
 - A workforce component, such as public-private partnerships designed to build and coordinate technical, educational, clinical, and workforce infrastructure.
 - A healthcare component, such as investments in school or community-based services to address children's physical and behavioral health needs, or plans to address the ongoing challenges of substance use disorder in the region.

The law directs the department to give priority to projects with the following characteristics:

- Region-wide scale or impact.
- Evidence-based.
- Include a public-private partnership.
- Are economically sustainable.
- Will prove transformative to the region impacted by the project.

CCAO will provide updates to members as program rules, guidelines, and timelines are released.

The law also includes \$20 million for the August primary election. The funds will be used to reimburse counties for expenses. These funds are in addition to the \$9.2 million already appropriated for primary preparation expenses. All funds must be used prior to December 31, 2022.

The bill also clarifies PERS monetary participation thresholds for Board of Elections workers. During a year in which more than one primary election and one general election are held, an election worker who is paid \$600 plus an amount not to exceed \$400 for an additional election is not considered a PERS member. County boards of elections are not required to make contributions for these individuals.



Governor Mike DeWine and First Lady Fran DeWine, along with Ohio Department of Development Director Lydia Mihalik and Director John Carey of the Governor's Office of Appalachia, joined lawmakers, county commissioners, municipal officials and local development district representatives at the Governor's Residence for the signing of House Bill 377, which provides \$500 million for transformational investment to Ohio's 32 Appalachian counties.

[Click image to enlarge](#)

JFS caseworker recruitment and retention grants available

On June 24, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services announced a [\\$15 million grant program](#) to help public children services agencies recruit and retain frontline caseworkers and supervisors.

Some permissible usages of grant awards include expenses related to media campaigns to support or recruit the workforce, student loan and/or tuition payments, retention and sign-on bonus programs, and activities to target agency culture, such as programming to address mental, physical, and emotional health issue, among other possible usages.

ODJFS will be provide county agencies with more details regarding the program and the application process in the coming days. CCAO will continue to provide members with updates in Counties Current as well.

August 2nd primary election updates

Ohio Secretary of State Issues New Elections Security Directive

Earlier this week, Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose issued a new security directive for boards of elections. The [new directive](#) instructs county boards of elections on continuing security steps and outlines additional requirements that each board must take to enhance its overall election security and protect its information technology systems.

The Secretary of State's office will provide up to \$10,000 of Help America Vote Act funds to improve election security and implement the requirements of this directive. All items in this Directive must be completed by **December 30, 2022**, unless otherwise specified. The funds may only be used to implement requirements contained in the directive and can be accessed after completing the following steps:

- Submit a plan identifying how they intend to meet the Directive requirements;
- Provide an estimate of the associated costs to HAVAGrant@OhioSoS.gov; and
- Receive approval of the plan.

The Secretary of State's Office also enrolled each board of elections domain in the Department of Homeland Security Crossfeed service. This service is free to elections officials and it scans web applications and underlying infrastructure for known vulnerabilities and compiles the information into a single dashboard. More information on the service can be found at [Crossfeed | CISA](#). Additionally, elections officials can take advantage of a full menu of free DHS services, however they must continue to request access to these services no later than **July 15, 2022**. Requests for continuation of these services should be emailed to CISAServiceDesk@cisa.dhs.gov, copying HAVAGrant@OhioSoS.gov.

If you have any questions regarding this Directive, please contact the Secretary of State's Elections Counsel at (614) 728-8789 or the cyber liaison assigned to your county.

Usage of \$20 million dollars for the August 2nd Primary Election

In recognition of the unusual nature of the 2022 primary election, the Ohio General Assembly appropriated an additional \$20 million to counties to conduct the August 2nd primary election, signed into law in HB 377 (see prior article). This amount is in addition to the previously allocated \$9 million dollars for the spring primary. A breakdown of your county's allocation can be found [here](#). The appropriation further solidifies the state-county partnership and we are appreciative for the financial assistance during this unprecedented election year.

In addition to the \$20 million that has been newly appropriated, the deadline for which the \$9 million previously appropriated for the spring primary must be expended or encumbered has been pushed back from October 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022. This aligns the deadline with the new \$20 million. Remaining funds that are unexpended or unencumbered after December 31, 2022 will be returned to the state General Fund.

CCAO is currently working with the Ohio Secretary of State's office to determine how counties can access the aforementioned funds as well as what expenses will qualify for the state funding. We believe the mechanics of the funding will operate in a similar manner to the spring primary funding. Once your county board of election signs a grant agreement with the Secretary of State's office, they will be mailed a check for the full amount listed in the linked spreadsheet. We anticipate that the funding can be used for the following expenses relative to the August 2nd primary election:

- **Administrative Costs:** the costs incurred by the Board for staff overtime and the hiring and training of temporary staff for data entry, voting machine programming, reprogramming, testing, and training costs, ensuring accurate voter rolls, poll worker recruitment and training, and review and improvement of processes to promote Board efficiency for the primary election.
- **Vendor Expenses:** the costs incurred by the Board for absentee ballot printing setup, the election management system, voter registration, and GIS and mapping.
- **Ballot Production Increases:** the costs incurred by the board for expediting the printing of ballots, restructuring existing contracts for absentee ballot outsourcing, changes to the number of pages per ballot style, and setup costs for absentee ballot outsourcing.
- **Additional Pre-Approved Purposes:** The Board may also seek permission in writing by submitting requests that clearly identify how the expenditure relates to administering the 2022 primary election.

If you have any questions regarding August 2nd primary elections, please contact Legislative Counsel Kyle Petty at 614-220-7977 or via email at kpetty@ccao.org.

Virtual meeting authority has expired

As of today, public bodies **can no longer** hold meetings virtually. Future meetings must be held in person with officials physically present. This does not apply to entities that have statutory authority to hold meetings virtually, such as multi-county petition ditch meetings.

With the legislature away from Columbus until the fall, CCAO does not anticipate an extension of this authority.

