



STATEHOUSE REPORT

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Effective date for non-appropriation, non-taxation budget provisions set at October 3

According to the Legislative Service Commission, Governor Mike DeWine filed House Bill 33, the state operating budget, with Secretary of State Frank LaRose on July 4. Appropriations and taxation provisions became effective on that date, while other provisions will become effective after the standard 90-day window. In this case, that means that statutory changes not pertaining to taxation will become effective on Tuesday, October 3.

This applies to many county-related provisions, such as the new competitive bidding threshold language, new authority for the use of county credit cards, changes to the appointment processes for county ADAMHS boards, and more.

Office of the Public Defender releases memo on reimbursement, policy changes for new state biennium

Last Friday, the Office of the Ohio Public Defender (OPD) [released a memo](#) to county commissioners, public defenders, appointed counsels, judges, and county auditors regarding the state fiscal year 2024-2025 biennium, as established in House Bill 33, the state's operating budget.

The memo provides OPD's first estimate of the indigent defense reimbursement rate for SFY 2024 (July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024). OPD is setting the initial reimbursement rate at 85%, a decrease from the 90% that the office originally estimated the budget would allow. OPD bases this initial rate on an estimated \$18 million monthly submission figure. SFY 2023 averaged \$15.8 million in monthly submissions.

The memo also discusses the cap on appointed counsel hourly rate reimbursement that was included in the state operating budget. Under this provision, OPD will provide reimbursement for up to \$75 per hour of appointed counsel costs. Counties may still set their hourly pay rates at greater than \$75, but the difference between their rate and \$75 per hour will be the responsibility of the county to pay. For example, if a county sets its rate at \$80 per hour, it will be responsible for paying \$5 per hour of the total cost.

Finally, the memo states that OPD will be amending its Standards and Guidelines to reflect changes made in House Bill 33 and that OPD will host “virtual office hour” sessions for county stakeholders to provide answers to frequently asked questions. CCAO will notify counties of these sessions when we are made aware of them.

If you have questions regarding indigent defense, please contact CCAO Managing Director of Policy Kyle Petty at kpetty@ccao.org or 614.220.7977.

Secretary of State issues update on August election funding, directive for election result canvassing

Last week, Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose and his office sent detailed instructions outlining how the state will cover August special election costs for State Issue 1 to county boards of elections. Below is his message:

As we once again answer the call of duty and prepare for the August 8 special election, I couldn't be more thankful that Ohio has the best election officials in the country working together to make this election a success, not only as Republicans and Democrats but also as public servants.

To support you in this important work, the Ohio General Assembly has met its obligation to provide funding for election administration costs. These funds can be used to pay for expenditures such as overtime and temporary labor, election management, and ballot production and printing.

The legislature authorized \$16 million in up-front funds and an additional \$4 million in reimbursable funds as needed. Most importantly, boards of elections are guaranteed by law to be covered by the state for all permissible costs of administering the August 8 special election, in accordance with R.C. § 3501.17(F).

In consultation with the Ohio Association of Election Officials, the \$16 million appropriation is being quickly distributed to all county boards based on a formula that includes prior comparable election expenditures and current voter registration counts. I've asked my team to expedite the release of these funds and to make these grants as flexible and easy to access as possible. I recognize that this election might require adjustments, as some counties spend more and others less. We're prepared to quickly reappropriate unspent funds and seek legislative approval to secure the additional funding as needed.

To receive your allocated amount, please review and sign the attached grant agreement and return the signed copy to 2023election@OhioSoS.gov. While we are working to get this funding out to boards as quickly as possible, please allow 1-2 weeks for the delivery of the checks. Please use the August Special Election Expense Report to report all expenses by October 13, 2023. Unused funds from all grants associated with the August special election must be returned to SOS by October 27, 2023.

We've faced some unprecedented challenges together these past few years, and, once again, you're being asked to step-up and serve. You continue to show the nation every day why Ohio is the gold standard in elections. Thank you for everything you do for our democracy – and please don't hesitate to reach out to us if you need assistance or have questions.

Yours in service,

Frank LaRose
Ohio Secretary of State

You can view the [grant agreement here](#) and the [August Special Election Expense Report here \(Excel file\)](#).

Additionally, last week, Secretary LaRose issued a [directive to county boards of elections](#) regarding the canvassing process for the August election.

If you have questions about the reimbursement process, please contact either the Secretary of State's [regional liaison for your county](#) or CCAO Policy Director Kyle Petty at kpetty@ccao.org or at 614.220.7977.

OBM releases budget highlight documents

This week, the Office of Budget and Management released budget fact sheets that highlight provisions included in the final version of the state budget in a number of policy areas.

Key points from each include:

[Investing in a Thriving Economy](#)

- \$750 million for the All Ohio Future Fund, to support site infrastructure in all parts of the state;
- An increase in eligibility for publicly funded child care to enable more parents to remain in the workforce without compromising their children's development;
- Funding to bolster the health care workforce.

[Investing in Ohio's Communities](#)

- Funding for the expansion of MARCS, for the rollout and operation of Next Generation 9-1-1, and for the operations of the 9-8-8 Suicide Prevention Lifeline;
- Providing \$75 million for the construction and renovation of county jails;
- Providing hundreds of millions in funding for critical water infrastructure projects, brownfield site remediation, and building demolition and site revitalization projects.

[Investing in Recovery](#)

- Funding to the Ohio Narcotics Intelligence Center to aid local law enforcement in combating drug-related crimes;
- Funding to assist jails provide addiction services and mental health treatment to inmates;
- \$13.9 million in funding to expand early-identification programs to help ensure Ohioans receive treatment early.

[Investing in Bold Beginnings](#)

- Investment of an additional \$60 million to county public children services agencies to transform foster care;
- Funding to improve maternal and early childhood healthcare;
- Funding to ensure housing continuity for pregnant women.

[Investing in People and Workforce](#)

- Providing \$40 million for Healthy Aging grants to help seniors live healthy, independent lifestyles;
- Funding to reduce crisis services infrastructure in communities across the state;
- Funding to support initiatives to keep youth with complex behavioral health needs with their families.

OBM also released a budget highlight document regarding [education](#).

CCAO staff is producing a County Advisory Bulletin on county-related provisions in the budget that will be published later in the summer. If you have a question regarding the budget, please contact a member of the [Policy Team](#).

Legislative Activity

Introduction of Bills

The following bills that may be of interest to counties were introduced this week:

- [House Bill 237](#) (Representative Sarah Fowler Arthur and Representative Bill Dean): To make changes to the laws governing all-purpose vehicles, off-highway motorcycles, snowmobiles, utility vehicles, and mini-trucks.
- [House Bill 239](#) (Representative Sarah Fowler Arthur and Representative Bill Dean): To establish requirements relative to the registration, titling, and use of replica motor vehicles.