



STATEHOUSE REPORT

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OBM releases budget guidance to executive agencies

Last Friday, the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) released the 2026 – 2027 Operating Budget Guidance document to the public and to state agencies. The document serves as a reference to state agencies, the legislature, and the judiciary as budget requests are compiled and submitted to OBM. The document is largely technical in nature, discussing how requests should be filed and formatted. Unlike in the past, there are not specific funding scenarios that agencies must consider when submitting requests.

The guidance asks agencies to complete a "results-focused budgeting reporting package" for any new initiatives, program expansions or increases in service levels. This requires agencies to provide components of a logic model or theory of change for new or expanded programs, including a brief description of the activities of the program, along with short- and long-term goals, output and outcome measures, data for those measures and whether the program is considered evidence-based.

The guidance includes a projected timeline for the budget process. Some of the key dates are listed below.

Estimated Budget Timeline	
Date	Event
September 13, 2024	Licensing boards and commissions submit requests
September 27, 2024	Small to mid-size agencies submit requests
October 21, 2024	Cabinet agencies and all other executive agencies submit requests
November 1, 2024	Legislative, judicial, and statewide elected agencies submit requests
Early February 2025	Governor's Budget ("Blue Book") published
Mid-February 2025	Budget Bills introduced
Late March 2025	Transportation Budget enacted
July 1, 2025	Operating Budget enacted

As new information regarding budget guidance becomes known, CCAO will share it with membership.

Governor DeWine signs bills into law

This week, Governor Mike DeWine signed several bills into law. A brief overview of bills with county-related provisions can be found below.

[House Bill 47](#) (Representatives Richard Brown and Adam Bird)

Effective on October 22, 2024

- Requires sports and recreation locations (defined as indoor recreation centers and facilities, gymnasium, swimming pools, and playing fields) that are designated, operated, and maintained by counties (and other local governments) to place an automatic external defibrillator (AED) at each location.
- The Legislative Service Commission estimates that the average cost of an AED is about \$1,500, with an ongoing maintenance cost of a few hundred dollars per year.

[House Bill 56](#) (Representatives Phil Plummer and Andrea White)

Effective on October 22, 2024

- Requires county sheriffs (and other law enforcement entities) to consider pursuit policy standards and train its officers on the policy.
- Restores a provision that was altered due to veto language from House Bill 33 that will have the effect of increasing revenue to the Indigent Defense Support Fund, which is used to provide some county indigent defense reimbursement costs. The exact size of the effect is uncertain.

[House Bill 301](#) (Representative D.J. Swearingen)

Effective on October 22, 2024

- Beginning in 2031, replaces two part-time judges of the Ashtabula County County Court with one full-time judge and, beginning in 2025, makes changes to the jurisdictions of the Ashtabula County County Court and the Conneaut Municipal Court.
 - Originally contained in House Bill 413, for which [Ashtabula County Commissioner Casey Kozlowski](#) and the full [Ashtabula County Board of Commissioners](#) both provided proponent testimony.
- Requires the Criminal Sentencing Commission to re-establish its standing juvenile committee. The bill does not prescribe the members of the standing committee but includes the CCAO representative on the recommended members.
 - The current CCAO representative on the Criminal Sentencing Commission is Jackson County Commissioner Donnie Willis.
- Allows the Board of Trustees of a political subdivision soldiers' memorial to make rules and regulations for entertainment, retail, educational, sporting, social, cultural, or arts opportunities at the memorial, and permits the Board, with approval of the Board of County Commissioners of the applicable county, to enter into contracts with political subdivisions or nonprofit organizations for use of other facilities separate from the memorial itself.
 - The language does not specify which board of county commissioners must sign off if the Board of Trustees is of a cross-county political subdivision.

[Senate Bill 94](#) (Senators Andrew Brenner and Al Landis)

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY (July 24, 2024)

- Removes the requirement that funds for the offices of the clerk of the county court of common pleas must be authorized by the court instead of the clerk (provided the clerk has been elected and not appointed to fill a vacancy); also specifies that in counties where the clerk of courts is an appointed position, use of the funds must be authorized and disbursed by the county executive.
- Requires county recorders to provide an electronic means of recording instruments and accessing said instruments by June 30, 2026, and allows the recorder to charge a surcharge for document preservation.
 - The bill appropriates \$6.0 million to reimburse counties for the implementation of these provisions.
 - The document preservation surcharge may be for an amount up to \$5, the revenue from which is deposited entirely in the county general fund.
- Provides more flexibility to counties (and other subdivisions) that are a party to a community reinvestment area (CRA) to claw back exempted taxes if the property owner does not comply with the provisions of the CRA.

[Senate Bill 98](#) (Senator Michael Rulli)

Effective on October 22, 2024

- Expands two property tax exemptions:
 - Expands the charitable use property tax exemption to properties where the property owner or lessee is a religious institution or if the property is used by the owner or lessee for public worship.
 - Expands an existing property tax exemption tailored to apply to the City of Mason (Warren County) to apply to convention centers or arenas constructed by or acquired by the city.
- Permits temporary tax abatements for certain circumstances where governments did not file required paperwork in a timely manner. These apply to:
 - City of Trotwood (Montgomery County)
 - Highland County
 - Cleveland Metroparks
- Requires county treasurers to submit reimbursement requests for the county portion of acting/assigned county or municipal court judges' per diem within one year of when the per diem was paid. Requires the Ohio Supreme Court to not pay reimbursement requests later than one year.
- Allows a clerk of the court of common pleas to conduct the physical inspection of certain motor vehicles and allows the clerk to charge the same \$5 service fee as the deputy registrar or dealer may.