May 15, 2023

The CCAO-CEAO Central District held its meeting in Logan County last Wednesday. Part of the meeting found commissioners, engineers, and county and CCAO staff in Huntsville to learn about how Logan County and its constituent communities have worked on improving water quality in Indian Lake.

If you are having issues viewing Counties Current in your email, click [View this email in your browser] at the top of the email.

Association and Member News | State and Federal News | Education and Grants | ARPA and BIF Resources | County News | Did You Know? | Job Postings

Statehouse Report and Counties Current Archive | Print Version | Dates to Remember

---

ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

Back to Top

Secretary of State issues directive for August election; funding promised by legislative leaders

Last Wednesday, following action by the House of Representatives and the Senate, Secretary of State Frank LaRose issued Directive 2023-07 to county boards of elections. The directive instructs county boards to begin preparations for an August 8 statewide special election. The preparations include recruiting poll workers and securing polling locations.

As noted in the directive, ORC 3501.17(F) requires that if a voting precinct is open during a special election solely for the purpose of a statewide ballot issue, the state bears the entire cost for the election. That is the case for the upcoming August 8 election.

Secretary LaRose has received assurances by legislative leaders that funding for the election will be provided, most likely in the ongoing state budget process (which must be completed by July 1). This echos comments that were made during floor debate in both chambers on Wednesday.

As a note, a lawsuit was filed at the Ohio Supreme Court on Friday challenging the legality of the election. This is based on the argument that August special elections are currently only authorized for local governments in fiscal emergency. CCAO does not have a position on the legal challenge, but we will keep our membership informed of any developments that may arise out of the lawsuit as it pertains to conducting a special election this August 8.

If you have questions concerning the Secretary of State's directive, please contact the office's elections counsel at 614-728-8789.

Save the date for CCAO's 2023 Summer Symposium!

From August 16 to 18, CCAO will host Economic Development Strategies: Ohio Counties Reaching Forward, the 2023 Summer Symposium. It is open to county commissioners, county executives, and county council members, as well as their key staff.

Among the areas of interest that the symposium will focus on are successful landbank practices, economic development practices, workforce development case studies, and expanding broadband services.

Early bird registration will open in early June.

SAVE THE DATE!
CCAO
Summer Symposium
Economic Development Strategies: Ohio Counties Reaching Forward
For County Commissioners, County Executives and County Council Members and Their Key Staff
August 16–18, 2023
CHERRY VALLEY HOTEL
2299 Cherry Valley Rd SE
Newark, OH 43055
Reservations $99 plus tax
Early Bird Registration Opens Early June
AREAS OF INTEREST
Economic Development Practices
Workforce Development Case Studies
Successful Landbank Practices
Expanding Broadband Services
PLUS:
CCAO Golf Outing to benefit the Research & Educational Foundation!
Continuing Conversations with Lawmakers, and more.

Open Enrollment - Managed Care for workers' compensation

CCAO members participating in our workers' compensation programs benefit from significant premium savings every year. **Sedgwick Managed Care Ohio** has been a key partner with our programs since 1997, and Open Enrollment for managed care organization (MCO) selection is May 1-26, 2023.

CCAO continues to endorse Sedgwick MCO as the clear MCO of choice for our members, and here are the two most important reasons why we encourage our members to select Sedgwick MCO:

Results – the data is clear

- Claims managed by Sedgwick MCO incur ***10.9% fewer lost days*** per claim than claims managed by other MCOs *(BWC Public Data 22-05025, 2021-2022 claims as of 12/13/2022)*. Fewer lost workdays translates to less costly claims and fewer staffing problems to solve.
- Sedgwick MCO reduced medical costs for their clients by an ***additional 17.2%*** below BWC fee schedule in 2022 *(Sedgwick MCO Billing Data, Bills processed in 2022)*. All MCOs reduce medical bills to the BWC standard fee schedule, but this additional Sedgwick reduction enhances premium savings and discount options.

Service – making things simple

- Workers' compensation claims can become complex. Sedgwick MCO works closely with their client employers and with the injured employee to navigate the BWC system and the medical treatment process until the claim is resolved.

Your MCO plays a vital role in your ability to control claim costs, care for injured employees, and preserve options for premium savings. If you are one of the 68 Counties that are already active with Sedgwick MCO, no action is required. If you are not, please **click here** to learn more about Sedgwick and enroll. For more information, call Lance Watkins at Sedgwick MCO at 614-376-5524, or email at Lance.Watkins@SedgwickMCO.com.

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

Back to Top

Less than two months remain to utilize the children services workforce recruitment and retention grant

The window for spending a one-time $15 million grant awarded by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to county public children services agencies (PCSAs) last year will **close June 30**.

The workforce recruitment and retention grant, which is managed by the Public Children Services Association of Ohio, was allocated to counties by formula in June 2022 to improve recruitment and retention of frontline workers. ODJFS offered counties a number of options for spending the grant, including various types of incentives and bonuses, tuition payment and loan reimbursement, culture and climate initiatives, flexible/hybrid work options, and more. Many of these options were identified in an OSU report on the children services workforce released by PCSAO in February 2022. The grant provided a rare opportunity to offer bonuses and make purchases outside the normal course of business.

Some county agencies have spent their entire allotment, while others have scheduled retention bonuses to be paid by the end of June. According to PCSAO, grant funds **must be entirely expended by June 30**, with final reports and grant closeout due September 10.

PCSAO added that one-time funding presents unique challenges, particularly when in the form of a grant. JFS and Children Services Board directors worked closely with commissioners last year to identify the most feasible, flexible and sometimes creative spending options for the county, but given the ongoing workforce crisis, plans evolved.

With a hard deadline of June 30, commissioners can help ensure that the entire local allocation is expended by working with PCSA directors to shift unspent funds to other allowable grant expenses or to relinquish unspent funds to other counties that can use them.

Resource created for Ohio students to learn pathways to jobs, faster

On May 1, Ohio Lt. Governor Jon Husted launched a new resource that provides information to students, parents, and teachers about the different career pathways available to high schoolers. The "Find Your Career Pathway" video and toolkit aim to guide students in their educational journey to land a successful career right here in Ohio.
The resource helps encourage Ohio students, parents, and schools to start conversations earlier about the best pathway to a successful career in Ohio.

The video features five students from around the state sharing their experiences in each pathway. The highlighted pathways include:

- **Career Technical Education** – provides students of all ages with the academic and technical skills, knowledge, and training necessary to succeed in future careers and to become lifelong learners.
- **Pre-Apprenticeships** – teaches entry-level technical and job-readiness skills for an apprentice occupation to prepare students for a formal Registered Apprenticeship training program upon graduation.
- **College Credit Plus** – helps students earn college and high school credits simultaneously by taking college courses from local colleges or universities while in high school.
- **Industry-Recognized Credentials** – demonstrates the knowledge and skills students gain through hands-on learning in a specific job or industry.

In addition to the video, an accompanying toolkit was developed to share additional information on the various pathways and other resources that can help students and families learn more about each.

For more information about the "Find Your Career Pathway" video and toolkit, visit Workforce.Ohio.gov/CareerPathways.

EDUCATION AND GRANTS

Back to Top

Visit the Grants and Funding Opportunities page on the CCAO website for a detailed listing of open grant programs.

CCAO hosting performance audit webinar next month

On June 9, CCAO will host a webinar with the Auditor of State regarding the Auditor's performance audit program.

Performance audits examine the efficiency and effectiveness of government programs and functions with the goal of making them better. While financial audits determine whether public funds are spent legally and managed in accordance with accounting principles, performance audits examine whether funds are spent wisely and if programs achieve their intended purpose. The webinar will help county officials learn more about how a performance audit can help your entity.

Registration is free and can be completed here.

SPBR to host virtual seminar on civil service

On Thursday, June 1, the Ohio State Personnel Board of Review (SPBR) will hold a Virtual Civil Service Commission Seminar, primarily for municipal civil service commission board members and supporting staff.

The Seminar is a prime opportunity to enhance one's knowledge and skills as they pertain to civil service.

Registration is free and can be completed here.

May application window for TechCred is open

The current application period for businesses for TechCred opened May 1, 2023, and will close May 31, 2023, at 3:00 PM. Apply now at TechCred | Ohio.gov.

The program helps businesses address their workforce needs by upskilling current and prospective employees. Businesses of all sizes, from any industry, are eligible for up to $30,000 per round and up to $180,000 per year. Top industries from this round include Manufacturing and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services.

"New technologies can help businesses boost their productivity, but workers need to acquire new skills to make the most of the technology," said Lydia Mihalik, director of the Ohio Department of Development. "TechCred can help businesses meet that goal and give workers the skills they need to be successful today and in the future."

"Governor DeWine has said 'It's Ohio's time,' and the success of the TechCred program is a vital part of companies choosing to build and expand here," said Ohio Department of Higher Education Chancellor Randy Gardner.

Individuals and training providers interested in learning more about the program can visit TechCred.Ohio.Gov.

SAM.gov, federal grant portal, walkthrough available; grant writing resources available

Last month, the US General Services Administration hosted an online forum to help walk state and local officials through how to use SAM.gov. The website is the primary portal for intergovernmental assistance from the federal government to state and local governments.

The Administration has made the presentation slide deck and the recording of the session available for download, as well as a one-page guide.

Grants are a valuable resource for counties to utilize, but knowing how best to develop competitive applications can be difficult and the learning curve cause counties to lose out on grants. Luckly, federal agencies and nonprofits offer resources to assist in developing competitive applications. Federal agency websites point to internal and external sources and many conduct free training and targeted one on one or small group technical assistance. Here are some current resources to explore:

- Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse
- Great Lakes Community Action Partnership
- Local Infrastructure Hub
- National Wildlife Federation
- Rural Community Assistance Partnership
- State and Community Energy Programs-Tools and Resources
- US Department of Transportation
- USDA Rural Development
- 10,000 Communities Initiative

ARPA and BIL RESOURCES

Back to Top

This section of *Counties Current* will be a permanent fixture for the foreseeable future to help counties with the ins and outs of the American Rescue Plan Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. These two laws provide a once-in-a-generation investment.

Updated comparison of state and federal procurement law available

Bricker Graydon has shared a revised comparison of Ohio procurement law and federal uniform guidance. The document is intended to provide a comparison of the procurement rules and regulations prescribed by both federal law and state law, as they relate to Ohio counties using ARPA funds. Counties must comply with both state and federal law, where possible. Where federal requirements are more restrictive than state law, federal law must be followed. Where state law is more restrictive than federal requirements, state law must be followed.

The key revision regards state term contracts (page 8), which counties may participate in but Bricker Graydon suggests exercising caution and reviewing Auditor of State training materials before doing so.

The information presented in the chart was prepared by Bricker Graydon LLP as a service to CCAO. This information is intended solely for informational purposes of CCAO and its members and is not intended to constitute legal advice to, and may not be relied upon by, any party. Readers should engage legal counsel to provide legal advice related to any specific transaction.

Federal legislation increases ARPA flexibility for infrastructure, disaster response, and CDBG projects

The federal Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 was signed into law on December 29, 2022. The legislation contains important updates to how counties and other local governments may use their ARPA funds. First, the Act codifies the standard allowance included in the US Department of the Treasury's Final Rule that permits counties to use up to $10 million for the provision of government services under the "revenue loss" eligibility category without having to demonstrate losses through a complicated formula. This codification means that the Treasury Department cannot alter the standard allowance in any subsequent rulemaking.

The Act also permits counties to use the greater of $10 million or 30 percent of their total ARPA allocation for federal infrastructure projects, responding to natural disasters, or Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) projects. Counties must expend these funds no later than September 30, 2026, rather than the standard date of December 31, 2026. Eligible natural disaster responses include emergency relief and the negative economic impacts of natural disasters, including temporary emergency housing, food assistance, financial assistance for lost wages, or other immediate needs. CDBG projects must meet the requirements of Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.

Some of the federal infrastructure programs eligible for ARPA match include the National Highway Performance Program; Bridge Investment Program; Surface Transportation Block Grant Program; and, the Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program. More information, and a complete list of eligible transportation programs, is available from NACo at this link.

Resources for ARPA Reporting and Compliance

The most recent version of the US Treasury Reporting Guidance was published September 20, 2022. Counties and other local governments with populations greater than 250,000 or ARPA distributions greater than $10 million are required to file Project and Expenditure Reports no later than 30 days after the end of each quarter throughout the grant period. Other recipients will file Project and Expenditure Reports annually by April 30.

Members are urged to consult resources from US Treasury, NACo, and the Ohio Office of Budget and Management for more information about reporting and how to use ARPA funds. CCAO maintains a list of ARPA links and resources, including a comparison of state and federal procurement laws, at the ARPA Resources page.

Ohio Ethics Commission issues statement regarding stimulus funds

Last week the Ohio Ethics Commission released a statement ensuring that public officials are aware that stimulus funds, such as those received under the federal American Rescue Plan Act and the funds that communities will receive under Governor Mike DeWine's Appalachian investment program, are public funds and that conflict of interest laws must be observed.

To that effect, the Commission also recirculated its Advisory Opinion No. 2009-006, issued in 2009 regarding stimulus funds made available to governments under the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. It provides a more in-depth examination of potential conflicts of interest with stimulus funds, including a discussing regarding vendors.

CCAO encourages members refamiliarize themselves with this Advisory Opinion and conflict of interest laws to ensure good stewardship of ARPA and Appalachia funds.

Guidance and overview of available BIL funding available from NACo and the Ohio Department of Transportation

NACo and ODOT each host a resource page providing information to counties about the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The pages are rich with information including multiple tables providing overviews and links to funding opportunities, a timeline of upcoming grant programs, and much more.

The NACo website can be found here and the ODOT website can be found here.

CCAO strongly encourages counties to frequently visit the sites and apply for funding through the myriad of programs to bring valuable federal funds to Ohio communities.

COUNTY NEWS

Back to Top

Each week Counties Current highlights the happenings in our counties in the words of their local media. One county from each of the CCAO's five districts is highlighted.

Northwest District

Where is the new Lucas County jail going to be built?

WTOL.com, May 10, 2023

The Lucas County Commissioners announced Tuesday that they plan to build a new county jail on several parcels of land downtown just a few blocks west of the current jail building.

The county is buying 12 parcels of land for the project from the law firm Shumaker, Loop and Kendrick, commissioners announced. The properties are bounded by 12th Street, Southard Street, Canton Street and the alley just north of the law firm's building on Jackson Street.

The new $187 million jail will have 430 beds, plus 24 medical beds and a mental- health wing.

"We still want to manage up to about 370 persons at any one time," Commissioner Tina Skeldon Wozniak said. "That's about the average number of people that we have in the jail at this point."

Lucas County officials have worked for years to come up with a plan to replace the county's Spielbusch Avenue jail, which opened in 1977.

Northeast District

County allocates $400K as incentive

The Vindicator, May 13, 2023

The Mahoning County commissioners this week resumed allocations from the $42 million in funding through the American Rescue Plan Act, giving $400,000 to the Mahoning County Fire Chiefs Association.

That money will be used for scholarships to encourage more people to enter the emergency medical services and firefighting field.

Andrew Frost III, Austintown fire chief and Mahoning County Emergency Management Agency director, said fire departments and private ambulance services have had problems since COVID-19 began in getting enough candidates for jobs.

"Nobody wanted to enter the field," he said. "The pay wasn't enough, and the job — being in the homes of COVID-19-positive patients — caused a big shortage in firefighting and the (ambulance) side of things," he said.

He said the funding will be used this year and next year to provide scholarships "for folks who want to get back into the business, and trying to recruit young people to get back in. We're all in dire straits, where it is private or public sector, so we feel this will get people back into the field."

Central District

Commissioners OK tornado siren repair contract, hold CDBG hearing

Mansfield News Journal, May 10, 2023

Richland County is hoping to move direct control of its tornado warning sirens to the state's Multi Agency Radio Communications System (MARCS) by the end of summer. County commissioners took the first step Tuesday by approving a $40,880 contract with Vasu Communications to repair 29 of the 47 sirens around the county that are maintained by the county Emergency Management Agency.

EMA Director Rebecca Owens told the board that the work will involve replacing batteries and mountings and other recommendations that have been made over the last few years but have not happened.

"There are wires, ground connections and such that we want to make sure are safe and are not going to cause any problems down the road," she said. "We want everything to be 100% before we start the conversion to MARCS."

Southwest District

Design plans for new Butler County morgue, 911 call center sought

Journal News, May 10, 2023

Butler County is taking two steps forward on the long-awaited space reutilization project by asking for requests for qualifications for a new morgue and expanded 911 dispatch center at the Princeton Road campus.

The commissioners hired CBRE, Inc. for $145,000 last summer to do a space reutilization study, as they endeavor to right-size county government and enhance customer service for the taxpayers they serve. They have earmarked a $15 million capital reserve fund to address this study.

On Monday, Butler County commissioners approved going out for requests for qualifications to find architectural firms to design the first two projects, consolidating Coroner Dr. Lisa Mannix's operations — she has offices in the GSC and leases space for the morgue — and expanding the sheriff's 911 dispatch center.

Southeast District

Locals in need of mental health services should see more options soon

WTOV9.com, May 8, 2023

May marks Mental Health Month across the country and crisis officials across the Ohio Valley are trying to better the resources available to residents.

"We used to have five contracts with providers around our three-county area and this year we are close to 15, so we have really been trying to expand services and access to care," Mental Health and Recovery Board Executive Director Lisa Ward said.

The Mental Health Recovery Board serves Belmont, Harrison and Monroe counties. Ward said access is a huge issue in rural appalachian areas. That's why their focus is to expand.

"They can do in-person and they still offer some telehealth," Ward said. "They do basic mental health, interventions, as well as drug and alcohol addiction prevention."

Also providing a significant amount of prevention services with their partners in schools to target young ages, Ward said they are in the works of a new facility that is much needed.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Please view the CCAO Calendar for a comprehensive list of events to note.

Back to Top

MAY 19
Southeast District Meeting

MAY 29
Memorial Day

JUNE 9
CORSA Board of Directors Meeting

JUNE 15
General Government Committee Meeting
CCAO Executive Committee Meeting

JUNE 16
CCAO Board of Directors Meeting

DID YOU KNOW?

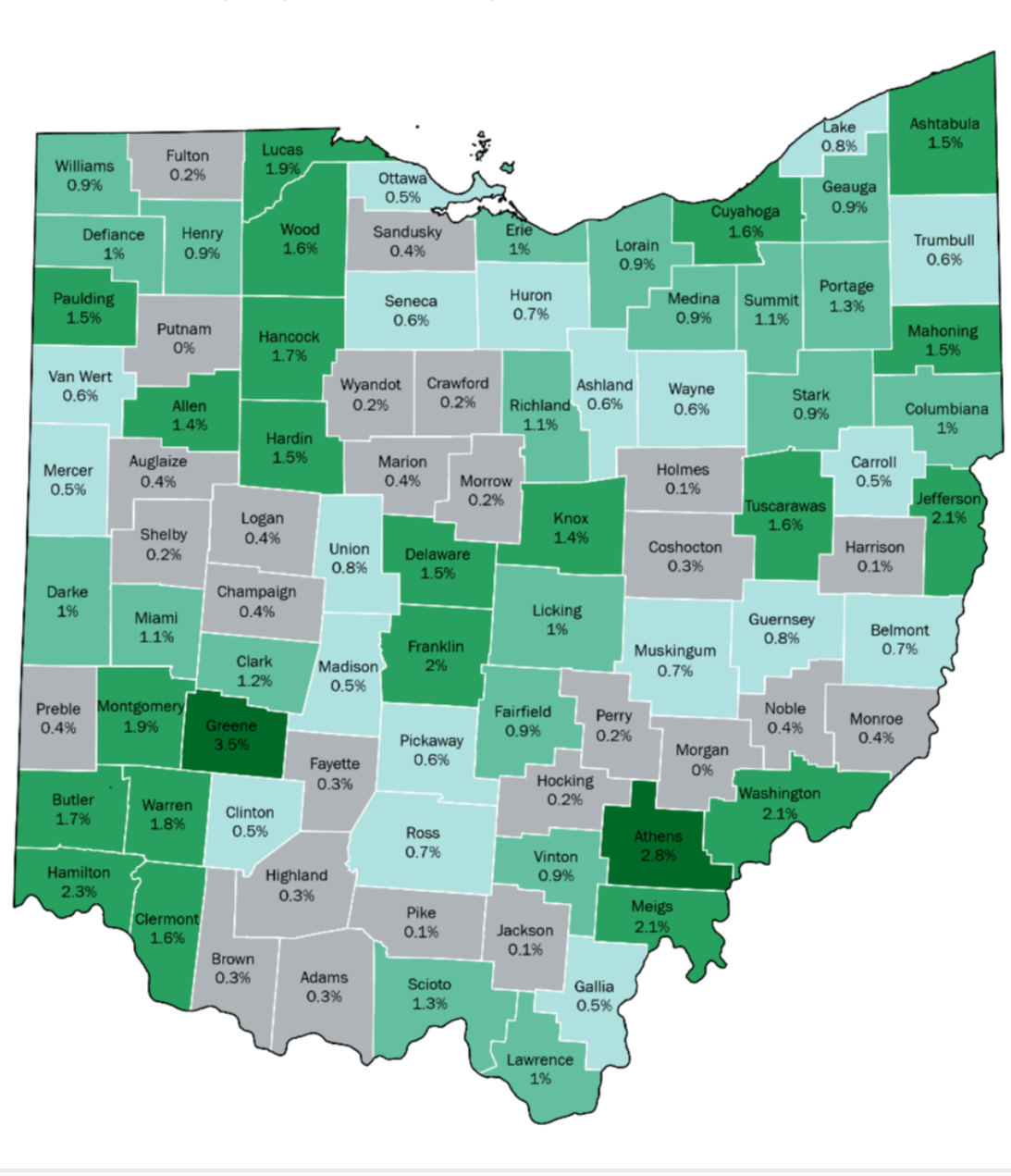
Back to Top

Greene County

The map below shows the estimated share of each county's population who migrated to the county from a different state, according to the 2021 5-Year American Community Survey data compiled by the US Census Bureau. The lower bound of the US Census Bureau estimates are used.

Greene County has by far the greatest share of out-of-state migrants at 3.5% of its population moving into the county from out of state, 25% greater than the next closest county (Athens County).

Why Greene County? The answer is most likely Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, which is located in both Greene County and its neighbor Montgomery County. Wright-Patterson is one of the US Air Force's largest bases and is home to more than 30,000 employees (including military and civilian). Soldiers who are assigned to the base typical either live on-base or in the surrounding communities, meaning many call Greene County home.



Copyright © 2023 CCAO, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.