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Counties Current
CCAO
County Commissioners Association of Ohio

December 11, 2023

CCAO's in-coming officers were sworn in at last week's Winter Conference by former Tuscarawas County Commissioner and CCAO President Kerry Metzger. The officers for 2024 are President Chris Abbuhl (Tuscarawas County, top photo), 1st Vice President David Painter (Clermont County, bottom right), 2nd Vice President Denise Driehaus (Hamilton County, bottom middle), Treasurer Casey Kozlowski (Ashtabula County, bottom left), and Secretary Illene Shapiro (Summit County, not pictured).

Thank you for attending the 2023 CCAO/CEAO Winter Conference! Please watch your inboxes for an after-event email which will include an event summary, a photo album, and a post-event survey.

Thanks again for making the event a success and we look forward to seeing you all at next year's conference!

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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Winter Conference Recap: Board of Directors and NACo Representatives

The 2023 CCAO / CEAO Winter Conference concluded on Friday, and it was another successful event! The associations welcomed more than 500 visitors from across the state, including commissioners, county council members, county executives, county engineers, staff from across county departments, and vendor partners.

During the CCAO's Annual Business Meeting the CCAO membership voted on officers, board members, and NACo representation. For board officers, the membership unanimously accepted the recommendations of the CCAO Nominating Committee:

- President: Chris Abbuhl of Tuscarawas County
- 1st Vice President: David Painter of Clermont County
- 2nd Vice President: Denise Driehaus of Hamilton County
- Secretary: Illene Shapiro of Summit County
- Treasurer: Casey Kozlowski of Ashtabula County

During the Banquet on Thursday evening, the new officers for CCAO and CEAO were sworn in by former Tuscarawas County Commissioner and 2009 CCAO President Kerry Metzger.

Additionally, the following members were appointed to two-year terms on the board:

- Tony Anderson of Fayette County
- Jeff Fix of Fairfield County
- Stephen Hambley of Medina County
- Shannon Jones of Warren County
- Gary Merrell of Delaware County
- Chris Ronayne of Cuyahoga County
- Gary Scherer of Pickaway County
- Donnie Willis of Jackson County

During the Business Meeting, those counties that are members of NACo also voted for Ohio's two representatives on the NACo Board of Directors. In a three-way race between Debbie Lieberman (Montgomery County), Painter, and Lisa Sobecki (Lucas County), NACo members selected Lieberman and Painter for the NACo Board.

Winter Conference Recap: Panels Galore!

Across the three-day conference, attendees had the opportunity to sit in on a number of panels to learn about issues affecting counties today. Sessions included such topics as:

- Navigating the implementation of legalized adult-use cannabis,
- Understanding community solar,
- The OneOhio Recovery Foundation's plan for 2024 and beyond,
- A cyber security overview from CORSA,
- and more!

Weren't able to attend, or simply missed a session because it conflicted with another you wanted to sit in on? No fear! CCAO will have all materials from the conference, organized by session, hosted on the Winter Conference page of our website within the next week. Keep an eye out!

CCAO publishes the 2023 Annual Report

This week, ahead of the 2023 CCAO / CEAO Winter Conference, CCAO has published our 2023 Annual Report!

The Association had another great year in 2023. CORSA grew by six counties and now serves 72 counties across the state, while CEBCO added Hocking County back to its ranks, with Butler and Pike counties joining in January. This will bring CEBCO up to 48 counties.

The CCAO Service Corporation enjoyed a successful year as well. Its energy programs saved members more than $20 million with even more saving coming from the CCAOSC's energy aggregation programs.

CCAO also launched County Benefits+, a partnership with Aflac, in conjunction with NACo's Public Promise Insurance, to offer supplemental benefits to county employees at no cost to counties.

Read more about the fruitful 2023 in the Annual Report!

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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Mallinckrodt bankruptcy opioid dollars to require reporting

CCAO was recently made aware that counties (and other local governments) will be responsible for reporting how they spend every dollar from the Mallinckrodt bankruptcy. These dollars are sent to counties through the National Opioid Abatement Trust II (NOAT II)). **This is different than the settlements flowing through BrownGreer, the National Settlement Administrator**. The NOAT II website can be found here.

On Wednesday, November 29, your county should have received credentials from NOAT II to log in to the NOAT II Beneficiary Abatement Use Reporting Tool. Once in the Reporting Tool, the county will be prompted to reporting forms. Please direct all reporting related inquiries to reporting@noatii.com.

Ohio counties have received two Mallinckrodt payments to date. Copies of the payment spreadsheets are below.

NOAT II Payment 1 March 2023

NOAT II Payment 2 November 2023

Please contact Rachel Reedy (rreedy@ccao.org) and Kyle Petty (kpetty@ccao.org) with any questions.

Ohio START Program Receives National Certification

Governor DeWine announced last week that Ohio Sobriety Treatment and Reducing Trauma (Ohio START) is the first in the nation to receive national certification from Children and Family Futures (CFF).

Ohio START, administered by the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO), is an evidence-informed children services-led intervention model that helps public children services agencies (PCSAs) bring together caseworkers, behavioral health providers, and family peer mentors into teams dedicated to helping families struggling with co-occurring child maltreatment and substance use disorder.

Since 2017, Ohio START has helped more than 2,300 children. Congratulations to the DeWine Administration and PCSAO on this new certification!

You can read the full press release here.

EDUCATION AND GRANTS

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

Department of Development to host brownfield remediation program webinar ***TODAY***

Earlier this year, the Ohio Department of Development released guidelines for the new round of funding under the Ohio Brownfield Remediation Program. The program includes Ohio's land banks and counties as key leaders in the critical task of cleaning up brownfield sites in Ohio.

The program will award grants for the remediation of brownfield sites throughout Ohio, to assist in the remediation of hazardous substances or petroleum at industrial, commercial, or institutional properties. The legislature allocated $175 million in Fiscal Year 2024 and 2025 for the program.

The Department will host a webinar focusing on the Remediation Program ***TODAY***, December 11, 2023, from 11:00 am to 12:30pm. The free Webinar will afford the opportunity for dialogue about how this important program can be most effectively utilized. Representatives of the Ohio Department of Development will participate, along with the Ohio Economic Development Association, the Ohio Land Bank Association, the County Commissioners of Ohio Association and Greater Ohio Policy Center, who are partnering to sponsor this webinar.

The webinar is free and can be registered for here.

Ohio to issue more than $4 million in grants for adult day centers, capacity building

For older adults that wish to remain at home but need a higher level of supervision or care, adult day centers often bridge the gap that would otherwise result in costly transitions to a facility or institution. Many family caregivers also depend on adult day services to provide the care their loved ones need while working or otherwise engaging with their community. Studies show that older adults who regularly attend an adult day program have a better quality of life and increased positive health outcomes, especially for those with dementia or other cognitive disabilities.

Prior to the pandemic, adult day services cared for over 400,000 individuals in the US according to the National Center for Health Statistics, but much like other healthcare providers, the sector took a huge hit during the Covid-19 shut down. While hospitals, nursing homes, and urgent care centers continued to operate, adult day centers were closed for most of 2020 and into 2021 to contain the rate of infection among their vulnerable attendees. Due to the massive loss in revenue and attendance, hundreds of adult day centers have been forced to close or limit their services. A LeadingAge Ohio survey conducted during the Covid-19 shut down found that 83% of adult day participants in Ohio were forced to seek a higher and more expensive level of care and 74% of family caregivers reported having to choose between working or caring for their loved one previously enrolled in a day program.

Adult day providers are still working tirelessly to mitigate pandemic related losses, and the state of Ohio has allocated over $4 million in ARPA funds via HB45 which would support the development of new adult day centers and / or expanding the capacity of existing adult day centers. Additionally, Ohio's Healthy Aging Grants administered by the Ohio Department of Aging provide a unique opportunity for county commissioners to support services for older adults, including adult day services. While the Office of Budget & Management has yet to post the funding opportunity, it is anticipated in the coming weeks. Once posted, organizations will have a relatively short time frame—possibly as little as six months—to expend the awarded funds. For this reason, LeadingAge Ohio is working with other organizations, including the County Commissioners Association of Ohio, to raise awareness about the funding opportunity.

To learn more about the forthcoming adult day funding, please reach out to LeadingAge Ohio Workforce Director, Randi Hamill, at rhamill@leadingageohio.org.

ARPA and BIL RESOURCES

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US Treasury clarifies the definition of "obligation" for ARPA funds

Under the American Rescue Plan Act and subsequent Treasury regulations, counties and other recipients of ARPA – Local Fiscal Recovery Funds must obligate funds by December 31, 2024. Unobligated funds must be returned to Treasury. This deadline also applies to all ARPA funds including spending under the revenue loss category. Funds are considered "obligated" if an order has been placed for property and services and the government has entered into contracts, subawards and similar transactions that require payment. When the county has provided funds under a contract or agreement to a subrecipient organization, it is considered to have been obligated. The obligation deadline does not apply to the activities of the subrecipient organizations.

In November, the Treasury department issued an updated rule to clarify when a county or other ARPA grant recipient can obligate funds for certain administrative personnel expenses. These administrative expenses must be related to federal requirements that affect the county as a result of receiving or expending ARPA funds. Examples of these types of administrative requirements include:

- Reporting and compliance;
- Single audit costs;
- Records retention and internal control;
- Property standards;
- Environmental compliance;
- Civil rights and nondiscrimination laws.

For these types of administrative expenses, the county will have to develop an estimate of expected expenditures for 2025 and 2026, document a reasonable justification for the estimate, and report these amounts to Treasury by April, 2024, with an explanation of how the amount was determined. ***Please note that this update does not support the obligation of ordinary county program personnel costs to ARPA funds beyond the 12/31/2024 deadline under current ARPA rules***. An allocation or budget resolution does not suffice to demonstrate obligation. This is an issue that NACo is continuing to address with the US Treasury Department.

More information on this topic is available from NACo. The updated Treasury rule is available here.

COUNTY NEWS

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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

Commissioners updated on West Jennings Creek project

Delphos Herald, December 3, 2023

County Commissioners from Allen, Putnam, and Van Wert Counties got together by phone on Tuesday to discuss the latest information on the West Jennings Creek ditch project.

The ditch itself is in parts of all three counties and the commissioners all must sign off on the citizen-led petition in order for the cleanup project to move forward.

Van Wert County Engineers assistant Kory Thatcher recently met with Ohio Department of Natural Resource office officials to make sure everyone is on the same page.

"We've met with ODNR multiple times. We've got some responses back from them with a list of bullet points — six different items that they would like us to commit to and if we can, as a joint board, as a county, as a project, commit to those bullet points and send revised plans, they'll hopefully approve the project. They haven't fully committed to that but they have led us to believe they'll approve the project — if we follow those list of bullet points during the conference call," Thatcher said.

Northeast District

Cuyahoga County approves its 2024/2025 budget: Here are the key takeaways

Cleveland.com, December 5, 2023

Cuyahoga County Council passed its biennial budget Tuesday night with $1.6 billion assigned to 2024 and $1.7 billion to 2025.

The budget includes more money for MetroHealth, the hiring of more social workers and correctional officers, and more. At the same time, the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services board (ADAMHS) saw its county funding decrease by $2.5 million in both years.

Council cut ADAMHS board funding because of the board's large cash surplus. The board is not predicting any program cuts in 2024, but could see cuts in 2025, cleveland.com reported previously.

This is the first budget passed under the administration of Executive Chris Ronayne. Though the county budget is frequently amended throughout the year, the budget works as a blueprint for how the county plans to invest its money in the upcoming years.

Central District

Two nonprofits urge city, county to use federal dollars for housing

Columbus Dispatch, December 7, 2023

Members of two Columbus nonprofit groups on Wednesday night called on Columbus and Franklin County officials to use their remaining tens of millions of dollars in federal American Rescue Plan and Emergency Rescue Act funds to address the lack of affordable housing in the city and county.

More than three dozen members of both B.R.E.A.D., which stands for Building Responsibility, Equality and Dignity, and One ID Columbus gathered at Faith Mission in Columbus to urge Columbus City Council and Franklin County Commissioners to use those federal COVID release funds before they expire.

Franklin County officials said they have also spent millions on affordable housing and homelessness when contacted by The Dispatch.

The commissioners have annually allocated $17 million to address homelessness and affordable housing, and in 2019 they committed to an additional $65 million over the next 10 years.

Southwest District

County preparing to finalize '24 budget

Register Herald, December 1, 2023

The Preble County Commissioners' agendas aren't filled with hours of budget meetings as they work to finalize next year's budget, a difference from past years thanks to technology which allows officials to work ahead online.

"It's due to an improvement in our accounting system as to why we we can do it this way versus other ways," Commissioner Adam Craft said. "This is our third time with the totally online accounting system which allows us the opportunity to look through everyone's budget, kind of at our leisure."

The accounting system has always had the module to help with budgeting, but they started using it when current commissioners came on board, according to Commissioner Rachael Vonderhaar. "If you put all of your information in ahead of time, and there's not anything for us to really ask questions over, and we follow and understand, it makes it easier for everyone. It's when there's not detail that we have to go back and forth. We need more detail than what's been put in," she explained.

Commissioners hope to finalize the budget in coming days. They will be meeting with select departments beginning Monday, Dec. 4.

Southeast District

Meigs Commissioners meet, send letter of support for AEP grant

WV News, December 8, 2023

The Meigs County commissioners held a special meeting Nov. 28 8to discuss a letter of support for an AEP grant, new doors for the Village of Racine Volunteer Fire Department, a petition to vacate Lawson Road, and other county matters.

The regularly scheduled Nov. 23 meeting had been canceled due to the Thanksgiving holiday. Present were Vice President Zachary Manuel; member Shannon Miller, Clerk Tonya Edwards, Sheriff Scott Fitch and Sara Walpole from the County Garage.

The commissioners approved a letter of support for AEP Ohio's Application for the Preventing Outages and Enhancing the Resilience of the Electric Grid Grant. The commissioners support the proposed project and believe it will have wide-reaching benefits for residents in the area.

The Preventing Outages and Enhancing the Resilience of the Electric Grid Grants program is split between $2.5 billion in matching grants for industry, also known as the Grid Resilience Utility and Industry Grants, and $2.3 billion in formula grants for States and Tribes, also known as the Grid Resilience State and Tribal Formula Grant Program.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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DECEMBER 7 - 15
Chanukah

DECEMBER 25
Christmas

JANUARY 1
New Years Day

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