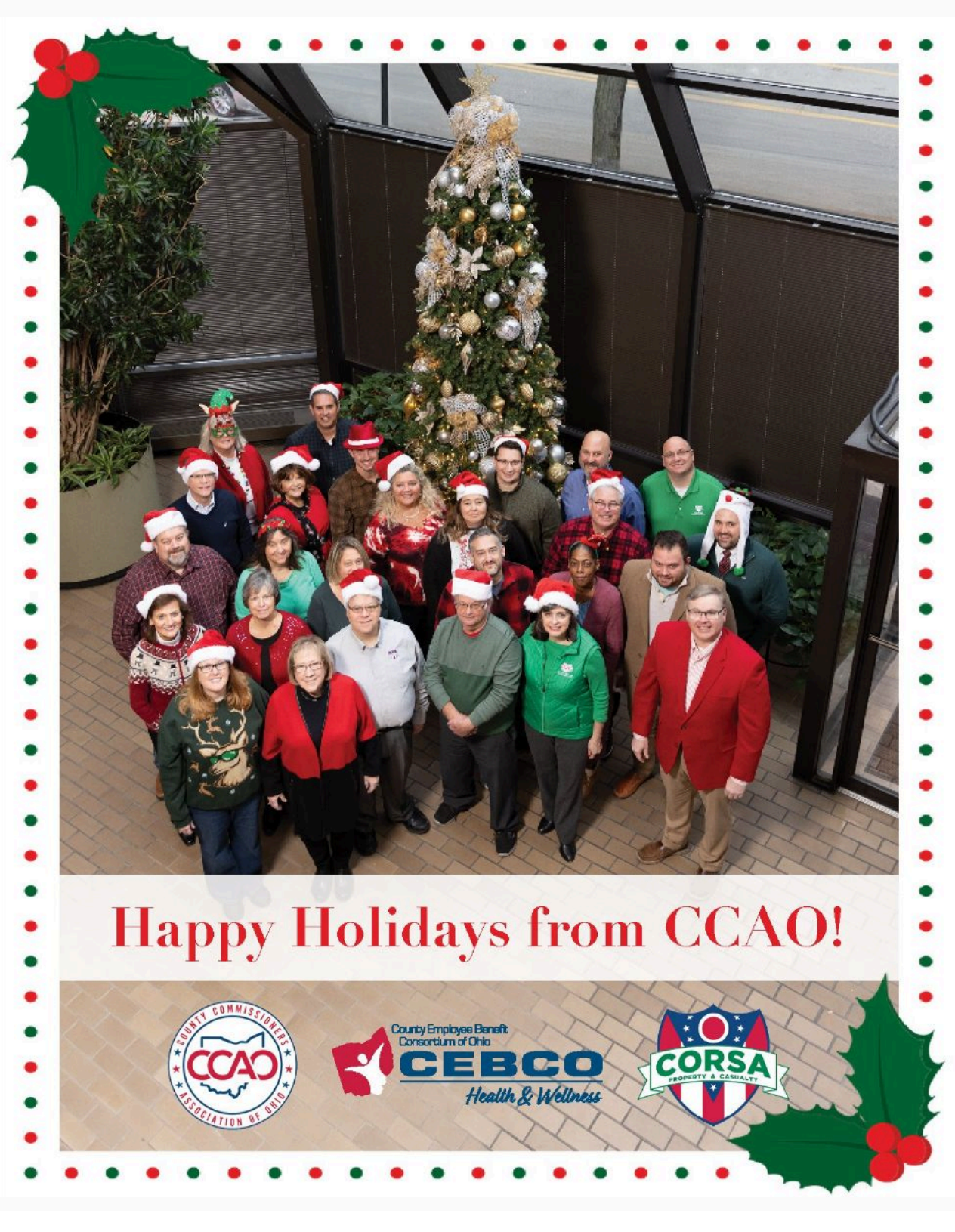
Happy Holidays from CCAO!
CCAO
County Commissioners Association of Ohio
County Employee Benefit Consortium of Ohio
CEBCO
Health & Wellness
CORSA
Property & Casualty

December 26, 2023

Merry Christmas from CCAO! We wish you a happy, healthy, and safe holiday season!

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 | Dates to Remember

ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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CCAO conducting two surveys: jail projects and legislative relationship practices

County Jail Projects

CCAO and the Buckeye State Sheriffs Association have partnered to gather data on statewide capital funding needs for county and regional jail facilities. We hope to have all information gathered by January 31, 2024.

When we last conducted a survey into these needs in 2019, we identified nearly $1.4 billion in funding needs across 44 counties and four regional jails. Since 2019, the DeWine-Husted Administration and the General Assembly have provided $175 million to jail projects across the state, helping to bring needed improvements to county jails.

As we head into the third capital budget since the state-county partnership on jail construction was renewed, both associations believe it is time to provide lawmakers an updated estimate of the statewide need, particularly given how costs have increased since 2019.

You can access the survey through the link below and can provide answers either through the questions in the survey or through a document upload link included at the survey's end.

Please complete the survey here.

If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact Kyle Petty, Managing Director of Policy for CCAO, and/or Bob Cornwell, Executive Director of BSSA.

Legislative Relationships

At its September meeting, the CCAO Board of Directors voted unanimously to create a Statehouse Advocacy Task Force. The mission of the task force will be to strengthen the advocacy efforts of CCAO members through effective relationship building strategies with members of the Ohio General Assembly and education on key CCAO policy priorities.

As part of the Task Force's mission to strength the Association's members' advocacy efforts through effective relationship building strategies with members of the Ohio General Assembly, CCAO is asking members to take a few minutes to complete a brief about how our members currently advocate and build relationships with their legislative delegation.

You can access the survey here. If you have any questions regarding the survey, please contact either Kyle Petty or Nick Ciolli.

Three Commissioner Handbook chapters receive updates

Last week, CCAO published updates to three Commissioner Handbook chapters, a result of our continuing mission to provide our members with the most up-to-date information regarding the various duties they are responsible for in their role as county commissioners, executives, and council members.

Chapter 24: Purchasing was updated to include changes made in House Bill 33, the state's operating budget for SFY 2024 and 2025, most notably provisions regarding use of county credit cards. Prior to the changes made in HB 33, counties could only use credit cards to pay for certain goods and services explicitly prescribed by the Revised Code. The updated handbook chapter explains the new flexibility counties have in their use of credit cards.

Chapter 136: Ohio State Extension was updated to include more timely data regarding the statewide Extension office's budget and recent changes to the cost-share between counties and the statewide office as it pertains to educator salaries.

The final update published this week was to Chapter 47: Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services. This chapter had last been updated in 1994, so it was not provided online due to how out of date it was. As part of CCAO's renewed objective to ensure our publications are as useful for our members as possible, the Association worked with the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities to update the chapter and ensure our members have accurate information regarding this important component of the county human services apparatus.

The Policy Team is targeting several chapters for updates in 2024, including those covering services for individuals with developmental disabilities, veterans services, county homes, the Local Government Fund, county 9-1-1 systems, and more.

Sign on as an official America 250-OH community!

As 2026, the United States' 250th anniversary, approaches, CCAO is encouraging counties to complete the process to be designated an official America 250-OH Community.

To start the process of becoming an official community, each community must designate a primary contact for the application, then complete the application and pass the attached resolution.

You can learn more about the process at America 250-OH's website. If you have questions about the process, contact Taylor Tomu, Community Engagement & Outreach Specialist at ttomu@ohiohistory.org.

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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Ohio 9-1-1 Program Office releases presentation recording, supporting documents for NG 9-1-1 implementation

Following a series of informational sessions held across the state in October, the Department of Administrative Services' (DAS) 9-1-1 Program Office has released a virtual version of the presentation and a number of supporting documents that counties can utilize as they develop their new Next Generation 9-1-1 county plans. These documents are linked to below.

The office will be sending out a form in early January to complete for requirements established under R.C. 128.06 (E)(1), with the goal being that counties can utilize this form to satisfy 128.06(E)(1) and the annual expenditure documentation.

Please be advised that all counties should be following the procedural guidelines found in R.C. 128.08(B) for adoption of the final plan that is to be filed with DAS on April 3, 2024. After the final plan has been filed on April 3, 2024, anytime a county wishes to make revisions, the county will do so following the procedural guidelines for adoption found in R.C. 128.12.

DAS will also be creating an "amendment template" which can be used to amend the final plans in the future, once the April 3, 2024, final plans have been filed with the Ohio 9-1-1 Program Office.

Links:

- Presentation
    - Recording
    - PowerPoint PDF
- ORC 128.06 (A) Template
- ORC 128.06 (B) Template
- ORC 128.06 (C)(1) Template
- ORC 128.06 (C)(2) Template
- County Final Plan - Guidance and Recommendation PDF
- County Election Form

BroadbandOhio BEAD Challenge Process to begin in January

Last week, BroadbandOhio announced the kick-off of the Ohio Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program Challenge Process. The goal of the BEAD Challenge Process is to finalize the map that will be used for Ohio's BEAD subgrantee selection process which is expected to begin in Q2 2024 (April - June).

The map of eligible locations to be used for the Challenge Process is published in the challenge portal and is accessible today, via BroadbandOhio's website. The challenge phase, during which eligible participants can submit challenges, will officially begin in January. If you are a service provider, member of state or local government, or if you represent a non-profit during the challenge process, please register here.

BroadbandOhio will host technical assistance events to provide support to Ohio stakeholders beginning in January. CCAO will distribute information about these events as BroadbandOhio sets the.

County governments and non-profits are also encouraged to assist other entities (such as local businesses and private individuals) complete the speedtesting process. You can do a speed test and take a survey about your internet connectivity at this link. Please help spread the word with Ohioans to take a part of the BEAD Challenge Process.

Please visit BroadbandOhio for more information on the BEAD Challenge Process.

Thank you for your continued partnership in closing the digital divide in Ohio!

Ohio Department of Development releases All Ohio Future Fund guidelines; webinar to take place January 5

The All Ohio Future Fund (AOFF) is a new $750 million state program that will be administered by Ohio Department of Development (ODOD). The purpose of the fund is to make strategic investments across the state of Ohio to increase the state's inventory of project-ready economic development sites. Assistance will be provided mainly in the form of loans, which may be partially forgivable, although some grants may be available.

Counties are eligible to apply, along with port authorities, community improvement corporations, land banks, and other local governments. Eligible costs include public roadwork, water/wastewater and related infrastructure, design and engineering, demolition, wetland mitigation, utility-gap funding, and other one-time site enhancements. Funding cannot be used for land acquisition.

Members are encouraged to read the complete guidelines. All applications require evidence of formal county support, even if the county is not the lead applicant or project manager. There is no minimum acreage for a project site, but preference is given to sites that meet JobsOhio's Site Certification criteria and have the following capacities:

- 200 acres
- 500,000 GPD water capacity
- 500,000 GPD sewer/wastewater capacity
- 111 MCF per hour gas capacity
- 40 MW electrical capacity

Organizations that are interested in applying must submit an indication of interest (IOI) outlining the project. The IOI portal will remain open for one year, but projects will be approved on a rolling basis. ODOD will coordinate review of applications with JobsOhio and other state agencies to conduct due diligence and to determine if more appropriate alternative funding options exist.

An informational webinar will be held January 5, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. CCAO will forward registration information when it becomes available.

Members with questions should contact Jon Honeck, Senior Policy Analyst, jhoneck@ccao.org, 514-220-7982.

Supreme Court of Ohio offers conflict resolution services for public officials

Government Conflict Resolution Services (GCRS) is a program offered by the Supreme Court of Ohio to provide flexible and practical assistance in resolving and preventing conflict among public officials on various matters including, but not limited to, budget issues, public records requests and other organizational issues, without court involvement.

GCRS is provided at no cost to public officials and will take place at a location agreed upon by the parties.

There are three services offered through GCRS:

Neutral Evaluation: The parties to a dispute present their claims and/or defenses and describe their evidence to a neutral third party. The third party then shares their impressions about the strengths and weaknesses of each side.

Mediation: A neutral third party called a mediator helps the parties communicate and negotiate with each other to help them reach a voluntary agreement regarding the dispute.

Facilitation: A process that focuses on the tasks needed to run a productive and impartial meeting. A neutral third-party moderates discussion and is primarily aimed at assisting individuals refine communication and organizational skills so they can work more efficiently with each other in a group setting.

You can acquire more information, as well as forms to request services, on the Supreme Court of Ohio's website.

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.

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

Wood County Fair Board sets budget policy to facilitate financial planning

BG Independent News, December 22, 2023

The Wood County Fair Board adopted a budget policy to provide adequate financial planning for the Wood County Agricultural Society.

After the agricultural society's annual Christmas party Thursday night, attended by about 100 members, the board approved a new budget policy to ensure budgeted non-emergency expenses are handled properly and consistently.

According to the approved policy, each year at the November board meeting, the budget committee will present a working budget for discussion and adoption. Prior to the November meeting, department chairs will be asked to submit a budget request form by the October meeting.

Because the budget is considered a working budget, Paul Perry, second vice president, said, the budget gives guidance to committees to recommend the expenditure of funds to the governing board for all events, projects or shows that use board funds.

Any expense by a department, committee or associated third party purchase over $500, requires approval by a majority vote of the governing board regardless of the budget. The proposal originally suggested purchases over $100 should be managed. Fair Board Director Steve Speck suggested the proposed $100 amount was "not realistic." An amended amount of $500 was approved.

Northeast District

Mahoning, Trumbull leaders award $2M for Valley Vision

The Vindicator, December 20, 2023

The Western Reserve Port Authority officially accepted a combined $2 million Wednesday from county commissioners from Trumbull and Mahoning counties for the Valley Vision 2050 economic development project.

The group hopes to stabilize and expand existing businesses; increase public awareness of arts and cultural industries; increase public participation in workforce training; expand education and employment opportunities; and increase stability of nonprofit organizations and businesses.

The economic and recovery plan is being developed through the Mahoning Valley Partnership, which includes the Western Reserve Port Authority, Eastgate Regional Council of Governments, Valley Partners, Youngstown Foundation, the Youngstown / Warren Regional Chamber and others.

"This is a really exciting moment in my lifetime," Anthony Trevena, executive director of the port authority, said. "This is really unprecedented to see our community coming together the way it is."

Guy Coviello, president and CEO of the Youngstown / Warren Regional Chamber, said his organization as well as the others involved in the partnership had become dissatisfied with certain metrics regarding the direction of the local economy.

Central District

Richland County investment earnings set a new record

Mansfield News Journal, December 20, 2023

Richland County earned a record $3.9 million in investment income this year and results could be similar for 2024, which could help offset an anticipated decline in sales tax revenue next year.

County commissioners received the good news Tuesday during a meeting of the county investment advisory board that is chaired by Treasurer Bart Hamilton and includes commissioners Tony Vero and Darrell Banks.

Hamilton reported the record was based on a 2.6% average rate of return, which has climbed from 0% since March of 2022. He also said the figure got a big boost from the state's STAR Ohio (State Treasury Asset Reserve) fund.

"A lot of the interest earnings are from STAR Ohio, because STAR Ohio has been at 5¾% and we've made a fantastic amount of money on it," Hamilton said.

Southwest District

Warren County's 2024 general fund budget continues showing growth with no debt

Journal-News, December 22, 2023

Warren County commissioners adopted its 2024 general fund budget that will be larger than the previous year.

In 2024, the general fund spending budget will be more than $89.9 million, about 4.5% larger than the general fund budget was for 2023. The general fund is the main operating fund for the county.

Martin Russell, deputy county administrator, said anticipated revenues for 2024 will be more than $93.6 million, which is higher than the $90.4 million anticipated for 2023. He told commissioners that the revenue actually received for 2023 is nearly $104 million as of Dec. 12, 2023, or 114% over projection. Spending is at 79% of budget, he said.

Historically, the commissioners have targeted increased budget spending at 4% but Russell noted the county is continuing to feel some wage pressure in hiring people at entry level and certified levels. In addition there are inflationary increases for energy and supplies and vehicles.

Southeast District

Commissioners Hear Plans Concerning the Future of the Lorena

WHIZ News, December 18, 2023

The Muskingum County Commissioners listened to details concerning one of the County's most iconic attractions, the Lorena Sternwheeler.

Zanesville-Muskingum County Chamber of Commerce Vice President Kelly Ashby shared some of the discussion about the 2023 season, such as attendance and revenues, along with how the popular, historical attraction plays a role in today's economy.

"It was a wonderful season for the sternwheeler," Ashby said. "We had a great turnout. We always have out-of-town guests that come in and truly enjoy the Lorena sternwheeler. And we also noticed that when we offer activities for families and children, those seem to be definitely the times that ridership is really up for the sternwheeler. So we look forward to doing more story time, more characters, more themed cruises in 2024 that children and families can enjoy."

The City of Zanesville, Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the county have partnered to share the expenses that keep the ship afloat as well as coordinating themed cruises that most resonate with the passengers.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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JANUARY 1
New Years Day

JANUARY 8
Date by which boards of county commissioners must hold organizational meeting

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