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2023
CCAO
County Commissioners Association of Ohio
CORSA
Property & Casualty
CCAO
County Commissioners Association of Ohio Service Corporation
County Employee Benefit Consortium of Ohio
CEBCO
Health & Wellness

January 2, 2024

Happy New Year! We look forward to ensuring that 2024 is another productive and fruitful year for Ohio's 88 counties!

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

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 begins this month

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 them.

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 ***FRIDAY***

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.

Reminder: Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grant applications due ***FRIDAY***

As a reminder, applications for the second round of Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grants must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on Friday (January 5).

BroadbandOhio will then review each application and allow applicants up to 14 days to "cure" the application and correct any errors or omissions.

If you have planned on applying for a grant, please ensure that it has been submitted or will be in condition to submit by Friday.

If you have any questions concerning the application or experience issues with submitting it, please forward questions to bbohgrants@development.ohio.gov.

Ohio Homeland Security hosting inaugural Counterterrorism Conference January 17-20

From January 17 - 20, the Ohio Homeland Security agency within the Department of Public Safety is holding a counterterrorism conference on the Ohio Health Administrative campus of Riverside Hospital. The conference is being co-hosted with the FBI and Franklin County Emergency Management & Homeland Security.

The conference is split into two parts: the first two days (Wednesday and Thursday) are open to all public safety personnel and government partners with registration costing $100 per individual. The two days will include case studies of the recent mass shootings in Buffalo and Las Vegas as well as briefings from Secret Service and ATF representatives.

The second two days (Friday and Saturday) are open only to law enforcement and fire/EMS personnel. Registration for these days is $110 per individual and include two courses, one on behavior pattern recognition and the other on domestic terrorism and hate group investigations. Eight continuing professional training credits are available for each course.

You can register for the event and access the full agenda here.

USDOT offering $1.5 billion in grants for transportation projects

The US Department of Transportation (USDOT) recently announced $1.5 billion in funding through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program. These grants have previously been known as TIGER and BUILD grants.

In the FY 2023 round of RAISE grants, Ohio communities received four grants totaling $30.47 million:

- City of Toledo: $20 million
- City of Kent: $5.25 million
- Western Reserve Transit Authority: $2.94 million
- City of Cincinnati: $2.28 million

In the new round of RAISE grants counties are eligible to apply directly to USDOT for grants. Multiple jurisdictions may submit joint applications, provided a lead entity is identified.

Projects are broken into two categories:

- **Capital Projects**
  - Maximum award available for a single project is $25 million, with the awards being no less than $5 million if located in an urban area or $1 million if located in a rural area.
- **Planning Projects**
  - Maximum award available for a single project is $25 million. There is no award minimum.

No single state may receive more than $225 million. The grants are competitive, and states are not guaranteed a certain amount. USDOT encourages applicants to consider how their projects will address climate change, improve racial equity, and/or remove barriers to opportunity. Applications that address these factors will be more competitive.

CCAO encourages counties to work with your local transit authorities, your municipalities and townships, and your neighboring counties to bring these federal funds to Ohio communities.

Please visit NACo's summary of the program and the official Notice of Funding Opportunity for more information. Applications are due by February 28 and must be submitted through Grants.gov.

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: Capital projects, finances on solid footing going into '24
LimaOhio, December 28, 2023
When it comes to the year that was, Allen County commissioners believe there are reasons for optimism when it comes to the direction that county government is taking, and while questions remain concerning the direction of the economy overall, the commissioners maintain they are putting the county in the best place financially to succeed long-term.

When asked to look back on some of the major developments of the past year, commissioners pointed to the recent acquisitions of property along North Main Street, including the building formerly occupied by the now-closed Hofeller, Hiatt and Clark men's clothing store. The end goal will be a new county administration building designed to house multiple county agencies.

"It was a pretty big moment for us acquiring these properties over here and keeping the administration building downtown," Commissioner Brian Winegardner said. "We looked for areas downtown, but nothing seemed to work out for us. We always had a plan B in the back of our minds, which is out south of town in the industrial park there, but [John] Heaphy approached us and said that he had these available."

Northeast District
Ashland County emergency officials brace for 2024 solar eclipse
Ashland Source, December 28, 2023
Ashland emergency planners are preparing for a solar eclipse that will make the area go dark for about three minutes on April 8, 2024.

Officials estimate up to 150,000 visitors could travel to Ashland County on that date, according to a power-point presentation prepared in partnership with the Ohio Emergency Management Agency.

The Ohio EMA, on its dedicated website for the eclipse, said the astronomical event is rare, happening "somewhere on Earth only once ever 1.5 years."

"Only 21 total solar eclipses have crossed the lower 48 states in the entire existence of the United States," reads the website.

Central District
County holds service awards for employees
Richwood Gazette, December 21, 2023
Union County's inaugural Employee Service Awards Program kicked off with a set of significant milestones.

The event highlighted over 40 employees who reached milestone years of service throughout 2023.

County officials celebrated everything from five and tenyear marks up through decades of service to the community, including one employee who hit 50 years with the county.

Commissioner Steve Robinson said that the employees' dedication to the job is what makes the county great.

"We are honored that these employees have chosen to work here," he said. "They help make our community better each day."

Southwest District
Ross County Auditor: 2024 Budget is Best Financial Situation in a Generation
Scioto Post, December 29, 2023
The county auditor says they are in the best financial position in years, with about $35.2 million in the general budget, and a grand total of about $107 million including special revenue funds. He said the $17.7 million cash carryover is huge.

I feel it's always good to get an expert opinion on the new year's budget to help give closure to the old, so after Ross County Auditor Jeff Lehner offered to give me that, I took him up on it after the commissioners adopted the budget Tuesday. (They let the numbers simmer for a week until passing them after the Christmas holiday.)

The smaller general budget is funded by taxes collected by Ross County or for it by the state, which funds county departments. Essential county government is only about 33% of the 2024 total.

The larger special revenue part of the budget is funded by each fund's levies, fees, or grants, and is thus outside of the general fund.

Southeast District
Washington County Commission prepares for the new year
Marietta Times, December 29, 2023
The Washington County Commission held its last meeting of the year and approved the Appropriations Resolution for 2024 Thursday morning in their assembly room.

During the regular business meeting, commissioners approved one Then and Now item, a memorandum of understanding for the Wellness Program for the County Home unionized staff for a health insurance discount, and a Subgrant Agreement with Eve for Jobs and Family Services for 2024 Supervised Visitations.

"This is our fourth or fifth year partnering with Eve on this," said Director of Jobs and Family Services Flite Freimann on the subgrant agreement. "It helps provide supervised visitations with Eve for families in a safe environment instead of at the jail."

Commissioners also amended and approved two requests from Human Relations for increases to reimbursement rates.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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

JANUARY 11
CCAO Tax and Finance Committee Meeting

JANUARY 15
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

DID YOU KNOW?

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Tuscarawas County

With his election as CCAO President at last year's Winter Conference, Tuscarawas County Commissioner Chris Abbuhl became the fourth commissioner from Tuscarawas County to be the president of the CCAO Board of Directors.

With four presidents, Tuscarawas County is tied with Allen, Butler, Mahoning, and Summit counties as having produced the third-most CCAO president. Only Montgomery County (seven) and Franklin County (five) have produced more Association presidents*^.

The four Tuscarawas County presidents (Chris Abbuhl, 2024; Kerry Metzger, 2009; Charles Lorenz, 1991; and William Winters, 1983) are pictured below.

**Note 1: CCAO has a complete list of presidents since 1939 and an incomplete list of presidents from 1901 to 1938.*

^Note 2: Individuals are counted once, even if they served as president more than once. This has happened three times since 1967 and it appears it was common practice between 1903 and 1921 for presidents to serve two-year terms.

2024 CCAO President Chris Abbuhl

2009 CCAO President Kerry Metzger

1991 CCAO President Charles Lorenz

1983 CCAO President William Winters

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