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January 29, 2024

CCAO Executive Director Cheryl Subler joined First Lady Fran DeWine and Governor Mike DeWine at the recent unveiling of the Ohioans in Space mural in the Statehouse Atrium.

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to distribute $3.4 million to offset negative adjustments to Medicaid Income Maintenance allocations

On January 17, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services issued a communication to county agencies that $5 million in state GRF that had been earmarked for Medicaid performance incentives was incorrectly issued in July to counties with that year's Medicaid IM allocation. That $5 million was corrected through a negative adjustment to counties' SFY 2024 Medicaid IM allocation.

On Friday, the Department informed county agencies that it would allocate $3.4 million from previously unspent county subsidy funds to help offset some of the negative adjustment used to recoup the erroneously distributed funds. The allocations to each county are listed in this table circulated by the Department.

These payments are expected to go out this week.

If you have questions regarding the negative adjustment and subsequent allocation of unspent subsidy funds, please contact either CCAO Senior Policy Analyst Jon Honeck or Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association Executive Director Laura Abu-Absi.

Dan Kinsel appointed Perry County Commissioner

Congratulations to newly appointed Perry County Commissioner Dan Kinsel who took office earlier this month following Derek Householder's departure to become Perry County Auditor. Mr. Householder filled the county auditor position which was held by Drew Cannon before he resigned to take on his new position as municipal court judge. Commissioner Kinsel joins Commissioners Ben Carpenter and Scott Owen on the Board.

Congratulations Commissioner Kinsel!

Brandy Allen joins CORSA Claims team

Congratulations to CCAO Senior Accountant Brandy Allen, who will begin a new chapter in her career as a CORSA Claims Representative! Brandy's attention to detail along with her strong analytical skills make her a perfect fit to enhance CORSA's already exemplary claims team.

A native of Miami County, Brandy received her accounting degree from Edison Community College and has more than 18 years of experience in corporate accounting. She joined CCAO in 2016.

Congratulations on your new role, Brandy!

Northwest District to hold meeting on March 20

On March 20, Fulton County will host the quarterly meeting of the Northwest Ohio Commissioners and Engineers Association. The meeting will take place at the Fulton County Administration Building in Wauseon.

The meeting will feature announcements from CCAO, CEAO, CEBCO, and CORSA, and culminate in a tour of the recently renovated Fulton County Courthouse.

To register, please complete this form and send to Jessica Schuette via email at jschuette@fultoncountyoh.com, via fax at 41-337-9285, or mail to 152 S. Fulton Street, Suite 270, Wauseon, OH 43567. Registration must be submitted by March 6.

Notice to Clerks: Roster update form has been sent

As a note to clerks to boards of county commissioners, CCAO sent a form to your email addresses on Friday to provide updated information for the 2024 CCAO Roster. The Association is hopeful that this new form will streamline the process and allow for quicker updates and increased ease of use.

If you have not received the form or have trouble completing it, please reach out to Nedra Benson or Tim Hoverman.

Thank you for your work helping commissioners, county executives, and county council members!

A Special Thanks to our Pinnacle Partner:

PALMER ENERGY COMPANY

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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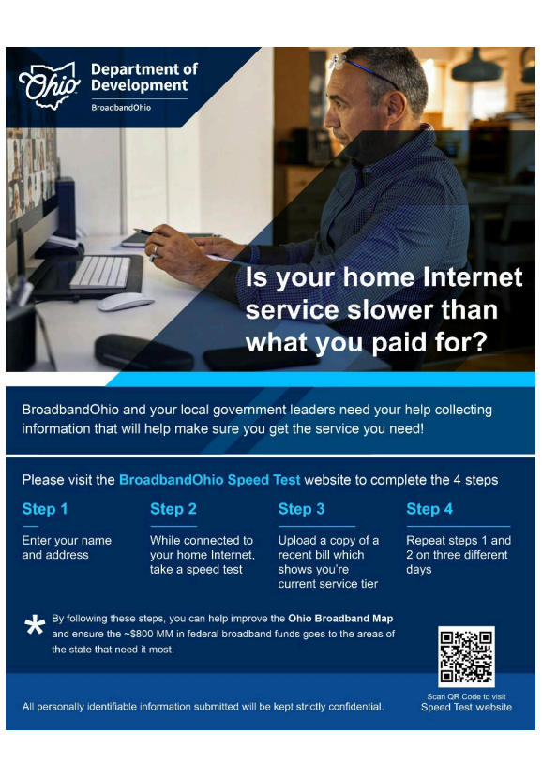
Last chance for broadband speed tests, challenge submissions

The Ohio BEAD challenge process is the final opportunity for Ohio to improve the Ohio Broadband map before the Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grant-Broadband Equity and Development grant rounds commence later this year.

Given the challenges that many Ohioans face with internet speeds, outreach to Ohioans to encourage them to take speed tests which are usable in the Ohio BEAD challenge process is vital. Note, residents can't themselves submit the challenges during the challenge process – but local government and non-profit leaders can submit them on their behalf.

BroadbandOhio will be hosting a webinar on February 14 to review the process local governments and non-profits will have to undergo to submit challenges based on residential speed tests. You can register for the webinar here.

Please take the time to circulate the guides below (click the image to download a copy) on conducting speed tests to ensure that Ohio's broadband map is as accurate as possible. The more accurate the map, the more targeted state and federal funding can be.



Ohio Department of Development
BroadbandOhio

Is your home Internet service slower than what you paid for?

BroadbandOhio and your local government leaders need your help collecting information that will help make sure you get the service you need!

Please visit the BroadbandOhio Speed Test website to complete the 4 steps

Step 1
Enter your name and address

Step 2
While connected to your home Internet, take a speed test

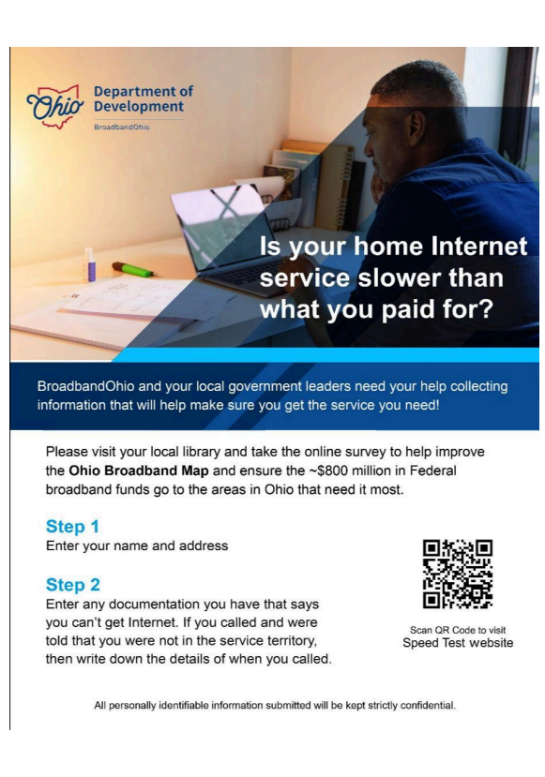
Step 3
Upload a copy of a recent bill which shows you're current service tier

Step 4
Repeat steps 1 and 2 on three different days

* By following these steps, you can help improve the Ohio Broadband Map and ensure the ~$800 MM in federal broadband funds goes to the areas of the state that need it most.

All personally identifiable information submitted will be kept strictly confidential.

Scan QR Code to visit Speed Test website



Ohio Department of Development
BroadbandOhio

Is your home Internet service slower than what you paid for?

BroadbandOhio and your local government leaders need your help collecting information that will help make sure you get the service you need!

Please visit your local library and take the online survey to help improve the **Ohio Broadband Map** and ensure the ~$800 million in Federal broadband funds go to the areas in Ohio that need it most.

Step 1
Enter your name and address

Step 2
Enter any documentation you have that says you can't get Internet. If you called and were told that you were not in the service territory, then write down the details of when you called.

Scan QR Code to visit Speed Test website

All personally identifiable information submitted will be kept strictly confidential.

Housing materials available from BrickerGraydon, Montrose Group

CCAO is making three housing policy related documents developed by outside groups available to our members.

First, last week the law firm of BrickerGraydon hosted a webinar on the challenge Ohio is facing with housing, both the lack of inventory and the high cost of available housing. Co-hosted with the Ohio Economic Development Association, discussed best practices on how communities can encourage residential development. The slide deck from the webinar is available here.

The second is a white paper and accompanying slide deck from the Building Association of Central Ohio and the Montrose Group on strategies to address Ohio's housing challenges. The white paper, available here, was published in December but will be rolled out at an Ohio Chamber of Commerce event occurring on Wednesday.

The white paper makes a number of policy recommendations to address the housing issue, most of which are at the state level. One local suggestion, however, is to create community development entities focused on tax credits for residential development.

You can access the white paper's accompanying slide deck here.

Rural Practice Incentive Program accepting applications for attorney loan forgiveness

Earlier in January, the Ohio Department of Higher Education announced the launch of the Rural Practice Incentive Program. The program, authorized under House Bill 150 of the 134th General Assembly, provides loan repayment on behalf of attorneys who have been licensed for eight or fewer years and who are employed by any of the following:

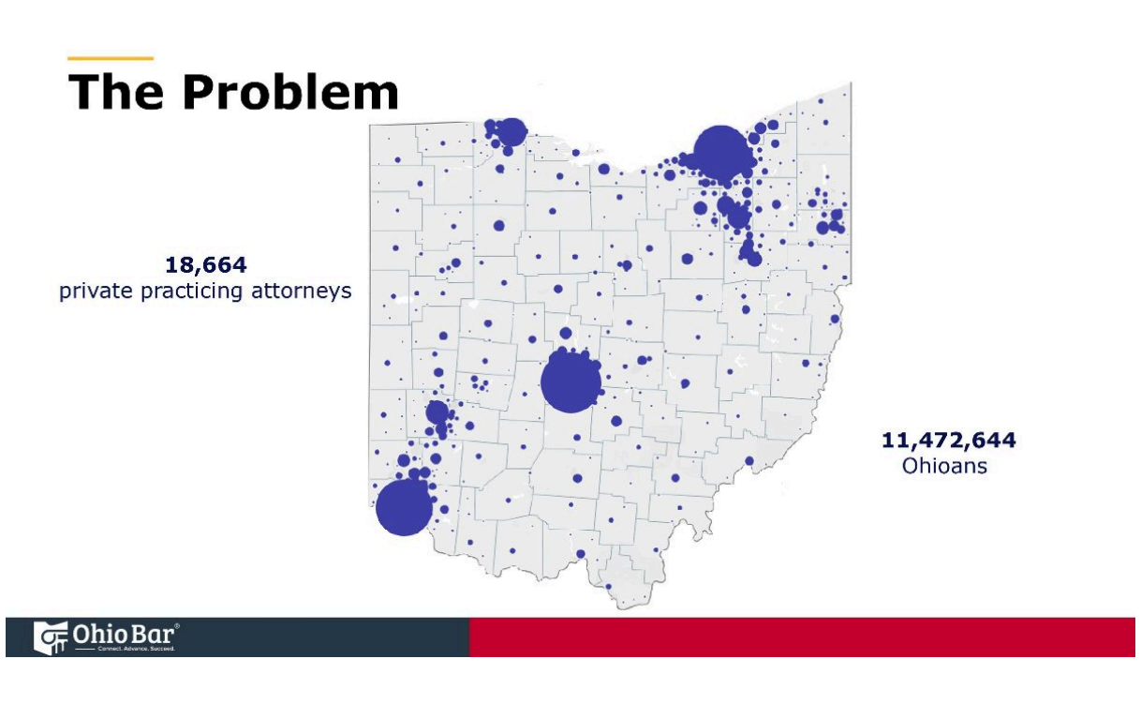
- The state public defender;
- A county prosecuting attorney;
- A county public defender commission;
- A joint county public defender commission; or
- Those who work as appointed counsel, provided they work in underserved communities for at least 520 hours each year.

One of the prime drivers of the indigent defense system cost is the lack of attorneys in rural areas of the state. The map at the end of this article highlights the uneven distribution of practicing attorneys across the state.

The Rural Practice Incentive Program will provide up to $10,000 a year of loan repayments for up to three years, with applicants having the ability to request a fourth and fifth year of repayment.

Applications are due under the program by March 15, so CCAO encourages counties to make this information available to attorneys in your area.

A full copy of the press release can be accessed 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.

OEPA to host water supply revolving loan program webinar

On February 8, the Ohio EPA will host a webinar to review updates and what is new for the Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) program as it approaches its 2025 program year.

The WSRLA offers low-interest loan funds for a variety of public drinking water system needs. The webinar will provide an update on activities and priorities of the program as well as highlight changes to the nomination process.

Registration is free and can be completed here.

Second round of America-250 grants open for applications

Last week, the Ohio Commission for the United States Semiquincentenial (also known as America 250-Ohio) announced that it was opening the second round of its grant program to fund educational and commemorative programing regarding the 250th anniversary of the independence and founding of the United States.

Applications for grants must be submitted by March 15.

There are two different levels of funding available:

- **Buckeye Impact Grants**
  - Up to $50,000 available per grant.
  - Intended for projects with statewide, regional, or significant local impact.
- **Trillium Local Activity Grants**
  - Up to $5,000 available per grant.
  - Intended for projects with a local or community-wide impact.

A wide variety of entities are eligible for the grants, including individuals. Individuals must apply through a fiscal agent or sponsor.

America 250-Ohio released a document with more information regarding the program, including details on eligible and ineligible use of funds.

If you have questions regarding the program, please contact grants@ohiohumanities.org.

Welcome Home Ohio program accepting applications

The Welcome Home Ohio (WHO) program, created in the state's operating budget, is accepting applications for its three constituent programs.

Welcome Home Ohio – Purchasing (WHO-P)

- Grant funds to pay the cost of purchasing qualifying residential property.
- No maximum defined for the purchase of property.

Welcome Home Ohio – Rehabilitation/Construction (WHO-RC)

- Grant funds to assist in the cost of rehabilitation or construction of qualifying residential property.
- A maximum of $30,000 can be applied to each qualified residential property.

Welcome Home Ohio – Tax Credits (WHO-TC)

- Tax credit is allocated once the qualifying residential property is sold to a qualifying individual.
- Maximum of $90,000 or one-third of the cost of rehab/construction, whichever is less.
- Tax credits shall be issued up to June 30, 2025.

Land banks, county land reutilization corporations, and counties that have adopted a resolution "of adopting and implementing procedures to facilitate the effective reutilization of nonproductive land" are eligible to apply for all three programs.

Each program will be funded with up to $25 million in each fiscal year of the current biennium. There is no maximum or minimum grant amount, but administrative and construction capacity must be detailed in the application.

Applications will be accepted through February 9, with further rolling applications accepted from February 12 to May 31, subject to available funding.

More information about the program, including links to FAQs, a webinar, and information about how to apply, can be found on the program's website.

Drug Law Enforcement Fund Grant program accepting applications

The Office of Criminal Justice Services in the Department of Public Safety is accepting applications through February 8 for the Drug Law Enforcement Fund Grant program.

The grant program is intended to defray expenses that drug task forces incur in performing functions related to enforcing the state's drug laws and other state laws related to illegal drug activity.

To be eligible for a grant, a law enforcement agency must meet a number of criteria, two of which are that the task force's implementing agency participates in the Ohio Incident-Based Reporting System or the FBI's NIBRS Collection Application and that there is a local match of at least 25%. Grants under the program are limited to $250,000 in a calendar year.

More information, including the other eligibility criteria and how to apply can be found in the grant's Request for Proposals.

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

Latest design unveiled for new Allen County administration building

Hometown Stations, January 25, 2024

The third time's the charm as Allen County Commissioners unveil the rendering of the new county administration building.

Elected officials who will be housed in the building are getting their first look at the comprehensive design and colored rendering of the new facility. It's 3 stories and 30,000 square feet that will house 7 departments. It also has a basement that will have the building and grounds along with the IT department. WDC Group out of Springfield has been working closely with department heads on their individual spaces and they are pleased with what has been designed.

"We're still on the third of the old courthouse right now but when the building is completed, we'll be up on the third floor of that. The pattern and flow of people and the ability to conduct our operations are going to be better in that regard and also, they'll be more secure than what they are right now as well," said Judge Matt Staley, Allen County Domestic Court.

Northeast District

Commissioners speak at Business Compass

Gazette News, January 26, 2024

The Ashtabula County commissioners spoke at the Business Compass, an ongoing series for successful business navigation, at the Rock Creek VFW on Wednesday, Jan. 17.

Rock Creek Area Chamber of Commerce President Bob Schultz introduced the commissioners and welcomed guests to the Business Compass.

The commissioners took turns speaking about some of the progress made in the county in 2023, as well as plans for 2024.

First up was Commissioner Kathryn Whittington, who is president of the Board of Commissioners this year.

“We look forward to this every year,” Whittington said of speaking at the Business Compass, which has become a tradition for the commissioners.

She said that when she first came on as a commissioner in 2017, one of her missions was to really look at the opioid epidemic.

Central District

Richland County commissioners deal with several contracts

Mansfield News Journal, January 25, 2024

Inflation appears to be slowing — at least for the cost of janitorial products for maintaining Richland County offices.

County commissioners on Tuesday approved a one-year contract renewal with Family Wholesale Co. of Wooster for trash bags and chemical and paper products that was an overall 2.16% increase over the past year.

Central Services Administrator Rachel Troyer said she was “very excited” when she received the new pricing under the one-year renewal, which is the first under the current contract with the company. She pointed out that the contract gives the company the option for an increase of up to 15% of the original total price.

“In years past we have been close to that just because of how volatile the market is, but I was very happy with what they came back with, and we are looking at a 2.16% so it is a very minimal increase,” Troyer said. “In the past we've seen them lower some of the prices, but this didn't happen to be that time, but I'm willing to run with this increase.”

Southwest District

Hamilton County offers free virtual workshop on pay equity

Cincinnati Herald, January 23, 2024

A Hamilton County coalition is starting out the year with a free educational opportunity to make the County more equitable in 2024. The Hamilton County Commission on Women & Girls (HCCWG) is teaming up with Ellequate and the Women's Fund of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation to announce the 2024 Pay Equity Learning Series, a virtual workshop designed to empower employers in achieving fair and equitable compensation within their organizations. Taking place on January 24 and 25, this informative series comes at no cost to participants.

“Building a just and equitable workforce is not just a goal, it's a responsibility,” says Mary Maune, program coordinator for the Commission on Women & Girls, “By equipping employers with the necessary resources, we can collectively foster a more equitable and prosperous future for all.”

“Leaders in our region know that achieving pay equity is not a box to check; it's part of a larger commitment to building fair workplaces for all,” says Nicole Armstrong, Founder and CEO of Ellequate, “They're investing in the potential of every employee—a prerequisite to an engaged and motivated workforce.”

“While some progress has been made, gender and racial wage gaps persist across sectors and educational levels. Adopting equitable employment practices is a proactive way to address disparities and provides employers with a competitive advantage to attract top talent,” says Alicia Miller, Executive Director of the Women's Fund.

Southeast District

NWTF chapter recognized by commission

Ironton Tribune, January 21, 2024

In their second business meeting of the year, the Lawrence County Commission recognized the South Hills Longbeards chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation for the awards they recently received at the state level.

Buddy Fry, of NWTF, was on hand and said the group had won the Full Fan Award for best overall chapter in the state, as well as numerous individual awards.

Commissioner Mike Finley praised the group for their efforts in handing out 1,200-1,500 turkey each year to food banks, pantries and other charitable groups in the region, while commission president Colton Coply said they were a true example of a group that “gives back.”

“We're glad the state is recognizing what we already knew here in Lawrence County,” he said.

The commission said they plan to host members of the group in the future to recognize them for the honors.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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FEBRUARY 9 - 14
NACo Legislative Conference

FEBRUARY 15
CCAO General Government Committee Meeting

FEBRUARY 16
CCAO Board of Directors Meeting

FEBRUARY 19
Presidents Day

MARCH 1
CEBCO Board of Directors Meeting

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