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June 30, 2025

Montgomery County Commissioner Mary McDonald recently met with Michael Schulz, Executive Director of Mission of Mary Cooperative, to tour the organization's urban farming operation. The Cooperative is helping transform vacant lots into spaces of growth, nourishment, and opportunity for the Twin Towers Neighborhood in Dayton.

Learn more about the Mission of Mary Cooperative.

Photo courtesy of Commissioner Mary McDonald.

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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CORSA issues vehicular, cybersecurity safety bulletin ahead of Independence Day

You can view a PDF of this bulletin here.

The United States has the Most Per Capita Traffic Deaths of Any Developed Country
The number of road deaths per 100k in population in the U.S. is more than four times that of Germany despite there being no speed limit on the Autobahn. Over the July 4th holiday in 2024, Ohio saw an increase in every significant road safety category versus 2023 including deaths, DUI, crashes, citations, etc. Obviously, the roads are more dangerous than ever. We must do what we can to reduce our risk.

We strongly encourage members to take advantage of in-person defensive driver training and online training at CORSA U. All courses offered by CORSA are available to member counties at no cost to the county and count toward the 2025 Loss Control Incentive.

For more information on in-person defensive driving classes or to schedule a class please contact Frank Hatfield, CORSA Assistant Director, at fhatfield@ccao.org or (614) 560-1474. Online CORSA U defensive driving classes and/or model driver eligibility criteria may be found at www.corsa.org.

Cybercriminals Attack while We're on Holiday
The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), part of the Department of Homeland Security, warns that holidays are a period of elevated cybersecurity threats. Organizations should prepare for increased holiday security threats including but not limited to: Beware of Employees Taking Work/Hardware on Vacation; Avoid Open wi-fi and Public USB Ports; Focus on Training and Messaging About Holiday Cyber-Risks; and Be Prepared to Implement an Operations Continuity Plan, if necessary. As part of your cybersecurity risk control and training programs please take advantage of CORSA no cost resources accessible at www.corsa.org.

Members are encouraged to take advantage of CORSA's 2025 Cyber Grant Reimbursement and CTAP testing as part of the 2025 Loss Control Incentive Bonus as well as view Jim Hale's Top 2025 Cybersecurity Threats that can be found at: 2025 Top Cybersecurity Threats. For more information, please contact Frank Hatfield, at (614) 560-1474 or fhatfield@ccao.org or Jim Hale at (614) 246-1630 or jhale@ccao.org.

Have a safe and happy holiday!

Ohio counties receive 22 NACo Achievement Awards, including one Best in Category

Last week, NACo released the winners of 2025 NACo Achievement Awards. Seven Ohio counties brought home 22 awards, with Cuyahoga County, Fairfield County, Franklin County, Hamilton County, Montgomery County, Summit County, and Warren County all receiving recognition.

A special congratualtions to Montgomery County, which received a Best in Category award in the Human Services category for its collaboration with GOODLIFE and Her Story to reduce substance abuse through a robust continuum of care.

The number of awards and the award categories each was honored under are listed below.

- Cuyahoga County (3): Children and Youth; Information Technology; and Parks and Recreation
- Fairfield County (2): Planning
- Franklin County (4): Criminal Justice and Public Safety; Human Services; and Information Technology
- Hamilton County (5): Children and Youth; Community and Economic Development; and Human Services
- Montgomery County (2): Human Services; and Civic Education and Public Information
- Summit County (2): Children and Youth; and Criminal Justice and Public Safety
- Warren County (4): Children and Youth; Community and Economic Development; Human Services; and Transportation

Ohio counties have received more than 200 NACo Achievement Awards since 2009.

Congratulations to all the award recipients!

General Assembly passes budget, bill awaits vetoes and signature from Governor

Last week, the House and Senate both voted to pass House Bill 96, the state operating budget, by votes of 59-38 and 23-10, respectively. The bill now is in the hands of Governor Mike DeWine for vetoes and signature. These must be completed by the end of the day.

This article summarizes how CCAO's priorities for the budget, as well as notable other local government provisions, fared. The priority areas were children services, indigent defense, Next Generation 9-1-1, child care access, and county jails. Also discussed are provisions related to county official pay and property taxation.

A more in-depth review of budget provisions can be found in last week's *Statehouse Report*.

Summary of CCAO Priorities in the Budget

- Increases funding for the State Child Protection Allocation (SCPA) by $25 million in SFY 2026 and $30 million in SFY 2027.
- Provides $10 million in each fiscal year to assist communities in starting regional child wellness campuses.
- Establishes a process for the Department of Children and Youth to increase cost transparency and predictability for placement costs, but exempts foster and kinship providers from the requirements.
- Maintains executive budget levels of funding for indigent defense reimbursement, which is expected to result in an approximate 80% reimbursement throughout the biennium.
- Maintained language and funding for a state administered indigent defense pilot.
- Increased the Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1) monthly user fee from $0.40 to $0.60. The distribution formula is modified to increase the percentage of fee revenue to counties while correspondingly decreasing funding to the state. The state allocation still adequately funds the state NG 9-1-1 system.
- Maintained eligibility for publicly funded child care at 145% of the federal poverty level (FPL).
- Funds the Child Care Choice Voucher program at $100 million in each fiscal year. The program provides publicly funded child care to families up to 200% FPL.
- Maintained the removal of funding for jail construction projects from the executive budget proposal.
- Include the requirement that the Ohio Department of Medicaid submit an 1115 waiver to allow for Medicaid coverage of a 30-day supply of medication, behavioral health, mental health, and substance abuse treatments for the incarcerated population.

Children Services
Funds the State Child Protection Allocation (SCPA) at $180 million in SFY 2026 and $185 million in SFY 2027, an increase of $25 million and $30 million respectively. These funds go directly to county public children services agencies for placement costs of children in foster care.

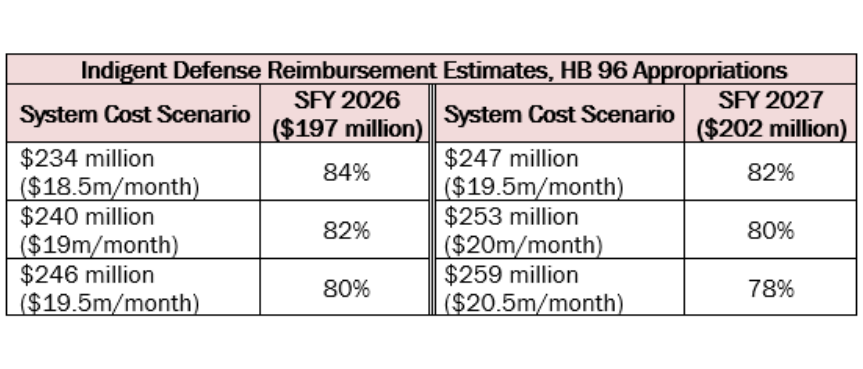
Provides $10 million in each fiscal year for regional child wellness campuses that would provide short-term crisis stabilization placements.

Authorizes the Department of Children and Youth to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) to establish statewide rate cards for placement and care of children eligible for foster care maintenance payments. Providers would report to DCY the rates for various services provided, and counties would then pay those rates when placing. Foster and kinship caregivers are exempt from the process.

Indigent Defense
Retains statutory authorization and funding for the Northwest Regional Hub.

Removes caps that would have limited reimbursement to counties for appointed counsel at $75 an hour for non-death penalty cases and $140 an hour for death penalty cases.

Appropriates $197 million in SFY 2026 and $202 million in SFY 2027 for county reimbursement. The Office of the Ohio Public Defender (OPD) provided the table below with estimated reimbursement rates for the biennium.

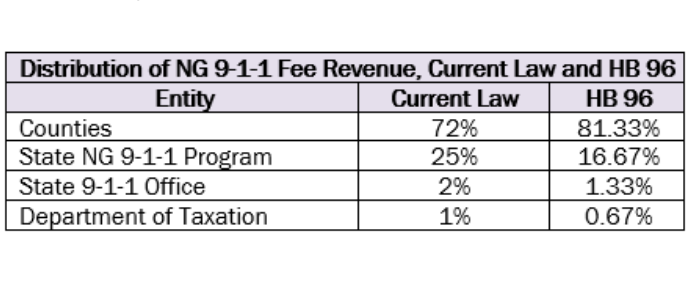


Indigent Defense Reimbursement Estimates, HB 96 Appropriations			
System Cost Scenario	SFY 2026 ($197 million)	System Cost Scenario	SFY 2027 ($202 million)
$234 million ($18.5m/month)	84%	$247 million ($19.5m/month)	82%
$240 million ($19m/month)	82%	$253 million ($20m/month)	80%
$246 million ($19.5m/month)	80%	$259 million ($20.5m/month)	78%

Next Generation 9-1-1
Repeals a current provision of law that would, beginning October 1, 2025, lower the Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1) access fee from $0.40 to $0.25.

Increases the user fee level to $0.60 per month.

Modifies the revenue distribution formula to continue to fully fund NG 9-1-1 at the state level, while simultaneously providing local governments with a larger percentage of revenue from the fee. The table below is a comparison between the current revenue distribution formula and the House Bill 96 formula.



Distribution of NG 9-1-1 Fee Revenue, Current Law and HB 96		
Entity	Current Law	HB 96
Counties	72%	81.33%
State NG 9-1-1 Program	25%	16.67%
State 9-1-1 Office	2%	1.33%
Department of Taxation	1%	0.67%

Child Care
Preserves initial eligibility for publicly funded child care at 145% of the federal poverty level (FPL), which is current law.

Funds the Child Care Choice Voucher program at $100 million in each fiscal year. The program provides publicly funded child care to families up to 200% FPL.

Funds the new Child Care Cred Program at $10 million in SFY 2026 which would allow the cost of child care to be split between the employee, employer, and Department of Children and Youth. The cost split is 40% by the employee, 40% by the employer, and 20% by the Department of Children and Youth.

Funds the new Child Care Provider Recruitment and Mentorship Grant Program at $1 million in SFY 2026 and $1.85 million in SFY 2027 to help increase the number of licensed child care providers in Ohio and to assist recruited entities and individuals.

County Jails
Requires the Department of Medicaid to submit an 1115 Waiver to allow for Medicaid coverage of a 30-day supply of medication, behavioral health, mental health, and substance abuse treatments for inmates incarcerated in the county jail. If approved at the federal level, the waiver would offset some of the county's costs associated with providing medical treatment in the jail.

Reappropriates the $75 million jail construction grants contained in House Bill 33 of the 135th General Assembly and replaces the formula used to determine project awardees to language that mirrors the capital budget process for county jail grants. The new language provides the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction with flexibility in distributing these dollars to counties and determining an appropriate county match for a jail project.

County Official Pay
Includes a pay raise for members of the judiciary, county elected officials, township elected officials, and members of county boards of elections of 5% for 2026 through 2029. A cost-of-living adjustment starting in 2030 that was proposed earlier in the budget process was not included in the final language.

CCAO is preparing pay tables and will make them available upon completion.

Due to the constitutional prohibition on in-term compensation increases, county elected officials will not be able to receive the increased salary until their next term begins (for auditors and the January 1 seat on the board of county commissioners, that will be in 2027, and for the other row officers it will be in 2029).

Judges are allowed to accept raises mid-term and board of elections members are not elected so both can receive the increased compensation upon the budget's effective date.

If a vacancy occurs in a row office position and is filled after the budget's effective date, that individual can receive the adjusted salary.

CCAO is working with the Attorney General's office regarding the supplement that county sheriffs and some county prosecutors receive and if that is also subject to the prohibition on in-term compensation increases.

The bill also retains language that alters the compensation that a county engineer can receive for contracting to provide services for county with a vacant engineer from 100% of the compensation that the elected engineer in that county would receive to between 80% and 100% of that compensation, as determined by the contracting board of county commissioners.

Property Taxation
The Conference Committee included several property tax reform provisions that, with some exceptions, had not been in prior iterations of the budget.

The most important thing to know about property tax provisions in the budget is that HB 96 ***does not eliminate inside millage***. It had been a concern that the elimination of inside millage would end up in the budget after the introduction of House Bill 335 earlier in June, but that ultimately did not end up occurring.

HB 96 makes the following changes regarding property taxes:

- Eliminates the authority to levy replacement property taxes after January 1, 2026. Existing replacement levies would not be repealed, but upon their expiration they would have to be put on the ballot either as renewal or a renewal with an increase.
- Requires ballot language to refer to property tax value as "the market value" instead of the current "the county auditor's appraised value."
- Eliminates the ability for school districts to levy the following property tax types:
  - Fixed-sum emergency levies.
  - Substitute emergency levies.
  - Combined income and fixed sum property tax levies.
  - Any new levy if the district carry-over balance is above 100%.
    - Renewals of existing levies are still permitted.
- Adds emergency, substitute, incremental growth, and conversion levies, as well as the property tax portion of a combined income and property tax levies to a school district's 20-mill floor calculation.
- Creates a statewide screening system administered by the Department of Taxation to ensure proper compliance with eligibility requirements for the 2.5% owner-occupancy credit and the homestead exemption.
- Permits boards of county commissioners to create a county homestead property tax exemption and an owner-occupied exemption that mirror the current state programs.
  - The county does not receive reimbursement for foregone revenue from these permissive programs, nor is the county obligated to reimburse other local governments that may lose tax revenue from the programs.

The Senate also makes changes to county budget commissions (CBCs). There is no change in membership, although a county commissioner (as selected by the board of county commissioners) is made the designated alternate if the county prosecutor recuses themselves.

The language also includes the following changes to the budget commission's authority:

- Requires the CBC to reduce millage on school district property taxes if the school district has a carryover percentage of 40% or greater.
  - Establishes a tiered millage reduction amount by the size of the district's carryover in dollar terms.
- Allows the CBC to reduce millage on any voter-approved tax levy other than debt levies.
  - If the property tax is levied by an entity with members who are elected to local offices, the CBC cannot reduce a levy to a point where it collects less revenue than the prior year unless certain conditions are met.
- Requires CBC to offer at least one public meeting each year that describes the concept and function of inside millage.
- Requires political subdivisions to disclose all funds in their control including those not already required for inclusion in annual tax budgets.

Registration open for 2025's Summer Symposium!

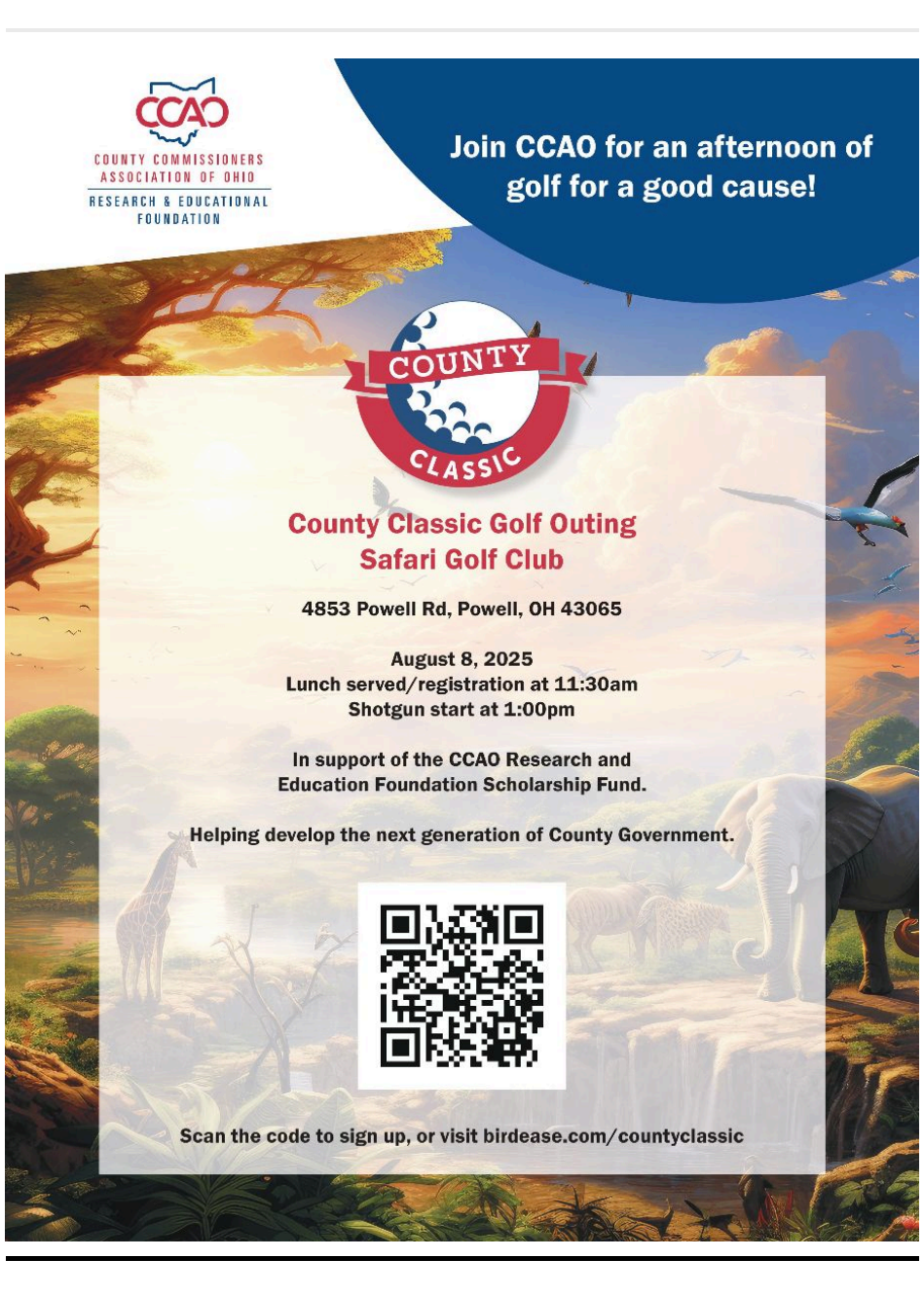
CCAO Summer Symposium 2025 Registration and Reservations are now open! Click here to get started on your registration today!

Tentative Agenda Timeline:

1. Sunday Afternoon - Registration will open at 1:00 p.m. in the lobby at Hocking Hills Lodge and Conference Center. There will be at least one session that will start at approximately 3:00 p.m. (tentative time)
2. Sunday Evening - Bus will leave the lodge at 5:00 p.m. for downtown Logan tour and food. Bus will return to lodge at 8:00 p.m.
3. Monday – Join us for a full day of CCAO education and thought-provoking discussions, all complemented by our signature hospitality – including breakfast, lunch, and weather permitting, dinner on the patio. Entertainment and networking to follow.
4. Tuesday – Start the day with a hot breakfast, followed by the final symposium session(s), CCAO Board of Directors Meeting (all CCAO members are welcome to attend) and lunch will be provided either to go or to eat onsite.

Final Agenda coming soon!

Please visit our Events page on our website for future updates!


CCAO
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF OHIO
RESEARCH & EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION
COUNTY CLASSIC

Join CCAO for an afternoon of golf for a good cause!

County Classic Golf Outing
Safari Golf Club

4853 Powell Rd, Powell, OH 43065

August 8, 2025
Lunch served/registration at 11:30am
Shotgun start at 1:00pm

In support of the CCAO Research and Education Foundation Scholarship Fund.

Helping develop the next generation of County Government.

Scan the code to sign up, or visit birdease.com/countyclassic

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Ohio's Economic Development Corporation

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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Inaugural meeting of NACo's Great Lakes Regional Forum to be held on July 12

The National Association of Counties (NACo) Board of Directors voted in May to approve the formal creation of the Great Lakes Regional Forum. This body will meet at least biannually at the NACo Legislative and Annual Conferences to hear from different speakers, discuss challenges facing Great Lakes Counties, support the development of best practices and improve information sharing.

The Great Lakes Regional Forum will have its first official meeting at the NACo Annual Conference in Philadelphia on **July 12, from 2:30 – 4:30 PM at 107 AB, 100 Level in the Pennsylvania Convention Center.** At this meeting, attendees will receive an update on federal actions relating to the Great Lakes, hear from leaders of other Great Lakes-focused intergovernmental groups and help chart the trajectory of the body. To learn more about the session, please visit the session's page on the NACo website.

No RSVP is required, and attendance is **not** limited only to counties that immediately border the Great Lakes. Any county that is in the Great Lakes watershed or is economically or environmentally tied to the lakes is more than welcome to attend.

If you have any questions, please contact Ben Gilsdorf (bgilsdorf@naco.org), and he'll be happy to provide more information.

Public Defender Commission to hear public comment on reimbursement qualification administrative rule

The Ohio Public Defender Commission is holding an informational meeting on July 18 to hear feedback on reimbursement qualifications for appointed counsel. The meeting is to hear public comments on Administrative Code 120-1-10 as is required under Ohio's five-year review schedule for all administrative rules.

The meeting can be attended in person at the Midland Building's 3rd floor conference room, 250 E Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio, or remotely through Zoom. The Zoom meeting information is available at the meeting's page.

Public Defender Commission to hear public comment on reimbursement qualification administrative rule

The Department of Children and Youth (DCY) recently updated its call line structure and encourages stakeholders and government offices to update internal documents.

The reorganization was done in part to transfer phone numbers of programs that newly fall under DCY to the DCY call tree, and to streamline prompts to reduce misdirected calls.

The Department has released this memo to explain the changes and provide suggested steps to ensure that stakeholders and local governments can best direct those seeking services to the proper helplines.

Federal Advocacy: SNAP Changes in Reconciliation Package

The U.S. Senate is currently considering the reconciliation package, H.R. 1, which would make several changes to the SNAP program.

NACo recently put out several documents related to the SNAP changes:

- An overview of the SNAP changes
- A sample letter for counties to send to their Senators
- A memo regarding the potential impact of the SNAP changes

CCAO and the Ohio Job and Family Services Directors Association (OJFSDA) have partnered to advocate regarding the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provisions of the bill. If passed in its current form, the legislation would:

- Reduce the federal match for SNAP administration from 50% to 25%, resulting in a statewide increase of $65 million, up to $40 million of which could fall to the responsibility of the county JFS agencies without an additional revenue source.
  - This provision is the same in both the House and Senate versions of the reconciliation package.
- Require the state to contribute to the cost of SNAP benefits on a sliding scale, based on the statewide SNAP error rate. In Ohio, this could be up to $480 million in each fiscal year.
  - This provision changed in the Senate Agriculture Committee. Ohio would be responsible for between 0% and 15% of our benefit costs, depending on the error rate.

The National Association of Counties (NACo) and the National Association of County Human Services Administrators (NACHSA) sent letters to House leadership prior to the vote expressing concerns over the changes. CCAO also shared information with Ohio's congressional delegation regarding the proposal's specific impact on county administration and budgets.

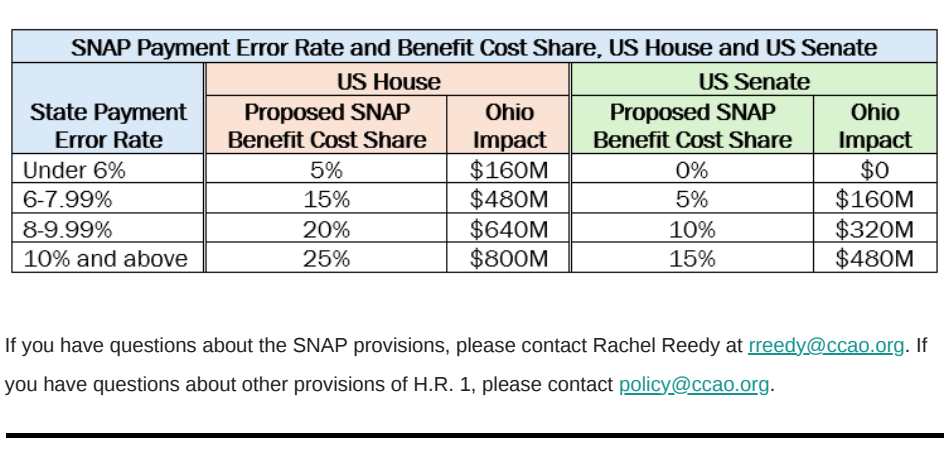
We urge our members to share information with Senators Husted and Moreno about the local impact your county will feel if these changes become law. Below are some statewide talking points that might be useful in your conversations:

SNAP federal match reduction

- H.R. 1 would reduce the federal match for SNAP administration from 50% to 25%.
- If no other administrative factors changed, Ohio's portion of the costs would increase by $65 million per fiscal year.
- In Ohio, the state and counties share the cost of administration. This shift could increase administrative costs by up to $40 million per fiscal year for counties.
- County budgets are already tight, and this would put a strain on an already underfunded system.
- The Senate changed the implementation date of this provision to Federal Fiscal Year 2027, which means it would take effect in October 2026.

SNAP state benefit cost share

- Since the program's inception in 1964, the federal government has fully funded the cost of SNAP benefits.
- The Senate proposal would require states to contribute to the cost of SNAP benefits beginning in Federal Fiscal Year 2028, which is State Fiscal Year 2028. The required state share increases if a state has a higher error rate (see table below).
- The Senate parliamentarian approved revised that would require states to use either their Federal Fiscal Year 2025 or Federal Fiscal Year 2026 error rate for Federal Fiscal Year 2028. In Federal Fiscal Year 2029, states will be required to use the error rate from three fiscal years prior.
- **Under the Senate proposal, Ohio would likely need to contribute at least $320 million per state fiscal year, but depending on Ohio's error rate, this amount could rise to $480 million per state fiscal year**.



SNAP Payment Error Rate and Benefit Cost Share, US House and US Senate				
	US House		US Senate	
State Payment Error Rate	Proposed SNAP Benefit Cost Share	Ohio Impact	Proposed SNAP Benefit Cost Share	Ohio Impact
Under 6%	5%	$160M	0%	$0
6-7.99%	15%	$480M	5%	$160M
8-9.99%	20%	$640M	10%	$320M
10% and above	25%	$800M	15%	$480M

If you have questions about the SNAP provisions, please contact Rachel Reedy at rreedy@ccao.org. If you have questions about other provisions of H.R. 1, please contact policy@ccao.org.

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.

Federal Rural Development Office offering grants

US Department of Agriculture's Office of Rural Development has released a list of available funding opportunities to enhance life in rural America. While not every opportunity below is available to counties, they all may be useful to your communities.

Funding Opportunities for Infrastructure

Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program
U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDA Rural Development provides funding to develop or improve essential public services and facilities in rural areas. Projects include fire and rescue stations, town halls, health care clinics, hospitals, childcare centers, assisted living facilities, rehabilitation centers, public buildings, schools, libraries, and many other community-based initiatives. **Application deadline: Open**

Rural Housing Site Loans
U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDA Rural Development offers specific loans to eligible entities to purchase and develop housing sites for low- and moderate-income income families. **Application Deadline: Open**

Single Family Housing Repair Loans & Grants
U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to very-low-income homeowners to repair, improve, or remove health and safety hazards to their homes. **Application deadline: Open**

Telecommunications Infrastructure Loans & Loan Guarantees
U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDA Rural Development provides financing to eligible service providers that will construct, improve, or expand telecommunication and broadband networks in rural areas. **Application deadline: Open**

Water & Waste Disposal Loan Guarantees
U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDA Rural Development helps private lenders provide affordable financing to qualified borrowers to improve access to clean, reliable water and waste disposal systems in rural areas. **Application Deadline: Open**

Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program
U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)
U.S. DOT Federal Transit Administration makes federal resources available to recipients to replace, rehabilitate and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities, including technological changes or innovations to modify low or no emission vehicles or facilities. Except for projects proposed by Indian tribes, all projects in rural areas must be submitted by a State. **Application deadline: 7/14/2025**

Funding Opportunities Supporting Community and Economic Development

Business and Industry Loan Guarantees (B&I)
U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDA Rural Development offers loan guarantees to lenders to provide loans to rural businesses. Qualified lenders may be located anywhere. **Application deadline: Open**

Mutual Self-Help Housing Technical Assistance Grants
U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDA Rural Development provides grants to organizations to help them carry out local self-help housing construction projects. Recipients supervise groups of very-low- and low-income individuals and families as they construct their own homes in rural areas. **Application deadline: Open**

Timber Production Expansion Guaranteed Loan Program (TPEP)
U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDA Rural Development assists qualified lenders in providing loan guarantees to eligible applicants who want to establish, reopen, expand, or improve a sawmill or other wood processing facility. **Application deadline: Open until funds are depleted**

Coastal Program
U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI)
The U.S. DOI Fish and Wildlife Service offers this community-based program which provides technical and financial support to address conservation challenges of priority coastal ecosystems through cooperative agreements. The goal is to restore and protect fish and wildlife habitats on both public and private lands. **Application deadline: 9/30/2025**

Targeted Technical Assistance for Rural Hospitals Program
A federally funded initiative that offers comprehensive technical assistance to rural hospitals to address financial and operational challenges and maintain essential health services for their communities. **Application Deadline: 9/30/2025**

COUNTY NEWS

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Each week Counties Current highlights the happenings in our counties in the words of their local media. One story from each of the CCAO's five districts is highlighted, and on occasion other stories may be highlighted as well.

Northwest District

County apiary program continues
Review Times, June 27, 2025
The Seneca County Board of Commissioners met for their regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, June 26 to hear an update on the county's Apiary program, led by Barrett Zimmerman.

Additionally at the meeting, Zimmerman was recognized with a proclamation not only for his efforts with the county apiary program, but also for his service as an educator in Seneca County.

Zimmerman began by sharing a few numbers in regards to Seneca County, noting that as of June 2025 there are 121 registered apiaries and 58 beekeepers– 5 of which are new this year, and a total of 700-800 colonies of bees.

"An apiary is a location where beekeepers maintain their colonies, many beekeepers have several apiaries and that's why the numbers are not close in value," noted Zimmerman.

He continued his presentation with a brief introduction, explaining his role in the apiary program, and some of the issues beekeepers are currently facing in the county.

"Nationally we lost 60% of our colonies of bees over the year last year," said Zimmerman. "Most of those numbers are commercial beekeeper numbers, people that moved their colonies out west or down south for the different vegetable and fruit seasons."

He continued, noting that locally his role is to oversee the bee population and sound the alarm if a problem is found.

"We collect samples, the comb, the brood, etc. and send them to various labs across the country," said Zimmerman, noting his samples were sent to Beltsville, MD.

At this time, his largest concern is varroa mites — something that is always an issue for beekeepers.

Northeast District

'This is a necessity': Lorain County considers sales tax hike to rescue Sheriff's Office budget
Cleveland.com, June 26, 2025
With federal COVID relief dollars expiring and the Sheriff's Office grappling with inherited debts and rising costs, Lorain County Commissioners are exploring a 0.25% sales tax increase to provide sustainable funding for law enforcement operations.

The proposed tax, which would generate an estimated $13 million annually, was discussed at two public hearings last week. Commissioners say the measure would effectively restore a sales tax that was eliminated in 2020, a move that created a funding gap temporarily filled by federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars.

But with the loss of those funds looming, the Sheriff's Office is projected to soon face deficits.

"If you take $13 million out of a $75 million budget, I think you can see what the cuts would have to be," said Commissioner Jeff Riddell. "We lucked out because the federal government decided to pump money into the economy during COVID... and that money runs out this year."

Commissioners are expected to decide in July whether to place the measure on November's ballot. If they proceed, Lorain County voters will ultimately determine whether to approve the tax increase.

At both hearings, Chief Deputy Tanya Czack, who oversees the Sheriff's Office budget, outlined the fiscal challenges it faces.

Czack said that when Sheriff Jack Hall assumed office in January, the new administration found a budget with little historical data, more than $250,000 in unpaid 2024 bills and $1.8 million in accounting errors.

"It has not been an easy process over the last six months to make sure that we had every dime accounted for," Hall added.

Central District

Commissioners approve three-year bed tax plan
Peak of Ohio, June 26, 2025
After being tabled since May 27, on the 29th, the Logan County Commissioners officially approved a proposal from the Logan County Visitors Bureau regarding short-term rental bed tax collections.

Commissioner Mike Yoder expressed support for the plan, stating that despite efforts, the Board had not received sufficient data from the Indian Lake Chamber of Commerce to consider an alternative structure.

He emphasized the need to move forward and backed the Visitors Bureau's proposal, suggesting the bed tax funds should be directed to that organization.

Commissioner Joe Antram, who resides in Indian Lake, shared concerns over how the finances and collections had been outlined, noting the complexities built up over years of discussion.

He referenced a long-standing arrangement that would have allowed the Indian Lake Chamber to receive $10,000 annually from the Visitors Bureau for local events and tourism, while also maintaining a voting seat on the Bureau's council.

Despite these concerns, Antram stressed the importance of creating a policy that works for all parties and recognized the need for Logan County to modernize its approach to short-term rental revenue — citing insights from other counties like Hocking, which already benefit from substantial Airbnb tax income.

Commissioner Antram also voiced support for the proposal, calling it a reasonable step forward.

Following the discussion, Commissioner Yoder moved to adopt the Visitors Bureau's plan, with Commissioner Fitzpatrick seconding the motion.

The Board unanimously approved the plan for a three-year period, effective January 1, 2026.

Southwest District

Multiple levies on November ballot in Butler County worries officials
Journal News, June 27, 2025
The Council on Aging likely has tax levy competition in a number of Butler county communities on the November ballot at a time when most taxpayers are already over-burdened by huge tax bills.

The Butler County commissioners approved asking voters for a renewal of the 1.3-mill Elderly Services tax levy, plus an additional .7-mill levy on the November ballot.

If approved the two levies combined would cost taxpayers an additional $24.50 per $100,000 of value. The total cost would double to $50 per $100,000 — and reap $20.4 million.

"A straight renewal levy will not meet the growing needs of the population," Ken Wilson, vice president of program operations told the county commissioners recently. "It would continue to generate $10.9 million a year and that would require a dramatic restructuring of the program and a really big gap in need within the county that we would not be able to serve."

COA manages the elderly services levy that provides programming so seniors can stay at home as long as possible, the agency served 4,079 clients last year. It pays for services including transportation, meals, mental health, adult day services, housekeeping and repairs.

Wilson told the Journal-News the cost differential between someone being able to stay independent or go into a nursing home is $450 a month versus $8,000. They say the need for elderly supportive services has risen exponentially since the last levy increase two decades ago — the number of residents age 60-plus has grown 79% and keeps multiplying rapidly.

Taxing jurisdictions have until Aug. 6 to get levy requests certified for the November ballot. According to County Auditor Nancy Nix — entities must file resolutions of intent with her office to find out the cost to taxpayers — there are as many as six other money requests that could be on the ballot.

Southeast District

Belmont County Commissioners Cautiously Optimistic on EORH
Intelligencer, June 28, 2025
Belmont County commissioners are crossing their fingers for a bright future for East Ohio Regional Hospital in Martins Ferry.

Closed in March, it was announced Monday that 360 Healthcare Inc. purchased the hospital and that company President Harold Ramsey has launched efforts to reopen it in the fall.

Commissioner Jerry Echemann said he is cautiously optimistic due to the facility's recent history.

"It's been through some ups and downs, some challenges, but there's a new leadership team in place that really feel that they have a pretty solid plan in terms of how they're going to address some of the past challenges the facility has and make them successful in the county," he said. "For a project like this, the county doesn't … assist in incentives or anything of that nature, but definitely can be there to provide some guidance or answer questions for the local and state level."

Commissioner J.P. Dutton added that the board is more than willing to assist the new buyer in any way it can.

Echemann added that the plan is for 360 Healthcare Inc. to reopen as soon as this fall, which he said is sooner than he would've thought.

"The timetable seems kind of aggressive, which I guess is good if they can get in there cleaning it up, get it all done. I wish them well, and if our board can help in any way, you know, obviously we will," he said. "Hopefully they'll be successful in Belmont County."

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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JULY 4
Independence Day - Holiday

JULY 25
CEBCO Board of Directors Meeting

AUGUST 8
2025 County Classic Golf Outing

AUGUST 15
CORSA Board of Directors Meeting

AUGUST 24 - 26
2025 CCAO Summer Symposium
CCAO Board of Directors Meeting (August 26)

AUGUST 29
CEBCO Board of Directors Meeting

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