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February 2, 2026

The CCAO Board of Directors held its first meeting of 2026 on January 23.

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Indigent defense cost estimates must be submitted by July 31

Last week, the Ohio Public Defender (OPD) sent a memo to counties with a reminder of a requirement that was a part of the state operating budget.

Each county, through the board of county commissioners, is required to submit a cost estimate for its indigent services over the next two state fiscal years (covering July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2028), to OPD by July 31. The cost estimates are intended to help guide OPD in developing its executive budget proposal for the indigent defense reimbursement funding request.

The cost estimate can be completed via an online form, accessible here.

If you have any questions or need technical assistance with the form, please reach out to the OPD via email (outreach@opd.ohio.gov) or via phone (614.466.5394).

County Loss Control Coordinators Association accepting new members

Renewals for 2026 are now open!

The County Loss Control Coordinators Association (CLCCA) is a CCAO affiliate organization supporting county Risk Management and HR professionals throughout Ohio with access to education, resources, and networking.

Benefits of CLCCA Membership include:

- Quarterly risk management training opportunities that frequently qualify for Ohio BWC two-hour safety training requirements
- Access to CCAO information and legislative updates
- Potential CORSA premium discounts through the Loss Control Incentive, often offsetting membership dues
- Networking with Risk Management and HR peers
- Free membership in the Public Risk Management Association (PRIMA) as well as an opportunity for a PRIMA scholarship
    - *Only available to Professional Members*

CLCCA encourages eligible county employees with loss control or risk management responsibilities to join.

Types of Memberships

- **Professional Memberships** are available for those who are designated by their Board of County Commissioners as being responsible for loss control/risk management.
- **Associate Memberships** are available at a lower cost for all other county employees who may wish to become members
    - *Please note a Professional Membership is required to add Associate Memberships in your county.*

Membership forms and details are available at CLCCA's website and should be returned to the CLCCA Secretary/Treasurer by ***March 1***.

If you have questions, please contact a member of our Board of Directors.

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STATE AND FEDERAL

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Ohio Housing Finance Agency updating Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program

The Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) serves as the allocating entity for the Ohio's Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (OLIHTC), and may reserve OLIHTC from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2027. The intent of the program is to create additional rental housing that would not have otherwise been created using federal, state, or private financing.

OHFA has made the SFY 2027 OLIHTC draft guidelines available for public comment through February 17, with comments to be sent to StateTaxCredits@ohiohome.org. The draft changes and an interactive map of program boundaries is available on the program's webpage.

Modeled after the federal program of the same name, OLIHTC allows owners of qualifying affordable rental projects to claim tax credits against state taxable liabilities over a 10-year Credit Period. These credits are then exchanged by investors and syndicators for equity to help construct or preserve affordable rental housing throughout the state.

OLIHTCs are limited by a state statutory credit ceiling of $100 million per state fiscal year. The $100 million annual credit cap is the full 10-year credit period amount. It also must be paired with affordable rental housing proposals that have secured a reservation of federal LIHTCs pursuant to the applicable Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP).

OEPA seeking input regarding State Solid Waste Management Plan

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA)'s Division of Materials and Waste Management is requesting input on the State Solid Waste Management Plan.

R.C. 3734.50 requires OEPA, with the advice of the Materials Management Advisory Council, to review the progress Ohio has made toward achieving the objectives in the State Plan every three years. Based upon the findings of the review, Ohio EPA may prepare and adopt a revised State Plan. Following the most recent three-year review of the current State Plan, OEPA, with the advice of the Materials Management Advisory Council, recommends revisions to the State Plan.

The following questions may help guide you as you develop your comments.

- What specific objectives will further reduce reliance on the use of landfills for management of solid waste?
- What changes to the objectives in the current State Plan would overcome the challenges associated with achieving those objectives?
- What new objectives should OEPA consider?
- Should the State Plan set different objectives for urban, suburban, and rural areas? For example, R.C. 3734.50 requires the agency to take into consideration the feasibility of waste reduction, recycling, reuse, and minimization measures and landfilling restrictions in urban, suburban, and rural areas.
- What strategies can OEPA pursue, and what resources can Ohio EPA make available to assist with achieving the objectives in the State Plan?
- Is there any information or data OEPA should be aware of as the agency evaluates the objectives in the State Plan?

This request for stakeholder input is only for the State Plan and does not seek comments for statutory amendments or rulemaking. Upon adoption of the revised State Plan, OEPA will amend Ohio Administrative Code Rule 3745-27-90. OEPA will conduct early stakeholder outreach at the beginning of that rule update process.

OEPA will accept written comments through the close of business on February 28, 2026. Please submit input to SWMDPlanners@epa.ohio.gov.

Auditor of State's CPI Bulletin issued for GAAP capital asset calculations

The Auditor of State has released Bulletin 2026-001, the office's annual Consumer Price Index bulletin.

Political subdivisions reporting in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles may have to calculate the historical cost of a capital asset. Listed below is the consumer price index (CPI) for years ranging from 1935 to 2025 that may be used for such calculations.

Please note that the base year of the index is "1967" (at 100.0).

EDUCATION AND GRANTS

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Chamber of Commerce to host Housing Summit in February

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce will be hosting a Housing Summit on February 26, which will convene housing experts, business leaders, policymakers, and community partners for in-depth conversations on the opportunities and challenges shaping Ohio's housing landscape. Participants will explore the factors affecting housing supply, accessibility, and affordability—and how these issues directly influence Ohio's ability to attract and retain a growing workforce.

Through collaborative discussions, case studies, and forward-looking insights, the series will highlight innovative approaches, policy considerations, and community-driven strategies aimed at strengthening Ohio's housing market. Attendees will gain a clearer understanding of the interconnected needs of employers, workers, and local communities as Ohio continues to grow and compete for talent.

The full agenda can be found here.

Registration costs $99 for Chamber of Commerce members and $149 for non-members.

COHHIO to host webinar on continuum of care funding and updates

On February 25, the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO) will be hosting a webinar about housing, homelessness & the continuum of care. The one-hour webinar will include discussion of federal continuum of care funding and the impact that funding has on local communities, how local leaders can get involved, and tips on federal advocacy.

Registration is free and can be completed here.

COHHIO
Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio
and Housing in Ohio
HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS TRAINING
An Update on Ohio Continuums of Care for Counties and Local Governments
February 25, 1-2pm
Virtual Training
To register for the training click here.

Historical records training scholarship available

The Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board, in conjunction with the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, is pleased to offer scholarship aid to support continuing education for graduate students and individuals who care for the historic record. The Board will award two scholarships of up to $1,000 each to assist individuals in attending, either virtually or in person, a professional development opportunity of their choosing. Funding is available to support attendance at trainings, meetings, or conferences.

Applicants must be individuals who are full-time (minimum of 9 credits) graduate students currently enrolled in an Ohio institution of higher education; individuals working or volunteering in an Ohio library, archive, special collection, or government repository; individuals who serve as a state, county, municipal or township officials or their designees and whose main responsibility is to maintain public records; and those who work or volunteer in other roles caring for or providing access to records within the State of Ohio.

The application for the scholarship is available here.

To be considered, the application must be received no later than **March 1**. Applications received after this date will not be considered. Applicants will be notified by phone or email of their status respectively.

The completed application and required narrative should be sent or emailed to: Chris Shaw, Delaware County Records Center, 2079 US Rte. 23 North, PO Box 8006, Delaware, OH, 43015. Or cshaw@co.delaware.oh.us.

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

From drones to digital defense: How Lucas County is modernizing its emergency response

WTOL, January 27, 2026

The Lucas County Board of Commissioners voted Tuesday to adopt an update to the county's emergency response strategy, marking the first refresh of the plan in four years.

Known as the 2026 Emergency Operations Plan, the document serves as the official guidebook for how local leaders and emergency workers across the county will coordinate during large-scale disasters.

The plan replaces all previous versions and is designed to be flexible enough to handle everything from natural disasters like tornadoes and floods to modern digital threats.

One of the changes in the 2026 update is the inclusion of a specialized section dedicated entirely to cybersecurity.

With digital crimes and breaches being even more common than when the previous EOP was adopted in 2022, the county has a system to protect essential government services and resident data.

The plan now states that third-party vendors and contractors are responsible for patching and maintaining any programs or systems they sell to the county. They must provide audits and test results to prove they are independently meeting security standards.

IT staff are now required to maintain a "Cyber Incident Response Go-Bag" containing specialized software and tools, along with a high-priority contact list for federal agencies like the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security.

Beyond just having a plan, the county must also hold a full-scale cyber emergency exercise at least once every three years to ensure that all agencies know their roles.

Northeast District

Commissioners to revisit idea of public defender commission in 'a couple weeks'

The Chronicle, January 27, 2026

Lorain County commissioners are taking another several weeks to make sure they're getting it right when creating a county public defender's office.

The board on Tuesday voted to rescind two resolutions it adopted Dec. 19 and Jan. 16 establishing a five-member board to study the idea of a public defender's office in Lorain County and appointing four people to serve on it.

"We're going to revisit this in a couple weeks and get the wording right and it should be back on track," Commissioner David Moore said.

The board was created Dec. 19 and four members appointed Jan. 16 as an advisory panel that commissioners asked to investigate the idea and make a report.

Some confusion about the legal language and whether a sitting judge may sit on the board resulted in Tuesday's vote.

The board appointed Grafton Township Fiscal Officer Amy Richards and attorney Richard Ramsey while Common Pleas Judge Chris Cook, presiding judge of that court, appointed attorney Zach Simonoff and Elyria Municipal Judge Gary Bennett.

Questions were then raised about whether the appointments were legal. A sitting judge is not allowed to serve on a county or state public defender commission in Ohio, and Cook said he was told his appointment was to a board to study the idea, not the final commission.

Commissioners confirmed that following the Jan. 16 vote.

The Sixth Amendment guarantees the right to an attorney, even if a defendant can't afford one. Some Ohio counties have public defender offices, while Lorain County judges typically appoint private defense attorneys for indigent defense.

Central District

Commissioners deny request to vacate Bat Nest Road in Union Township

Knox Pages, January 30, 2026

After doing their due diligence and listening to national and local groups, the Knox County commissioners unanimously denied the request to vacate Bat Nest Road.

"We've had hearings. We've had a lot of feedback on Bat Nest Road. There have been discussions with the township trustees," Commissioner Bill Pursel said on Thursday.

"We have had two different groups, national groups, that have done their PR work. We've had some local people do some PR work. We have done our due diligence with the county engineer and the map department."

The Knox County Convention & Visitors Bureau opposed the vacation, as did local residents. Recreational groups, including the American Motorcycle Association and Gravel Grinders, also opposed vacating the road.

"I want to answer the incredible efforts of our community and those across the nation by voting down the vacation," Commissioner Drenda Keesee said.

Union Township trustees requested that the commissioners vacate a short stretch of road that runs through James Miller's property. The trustees do not maintain the road.

Miller cited the inability to drive his pickup truck to his property due to road conditions. He also cited trash and trespassing issues as reasons for requesting the vacation.

Ted Atkinson of Fairfield County asked the commissioners whether Miller must meet a timeframe to request vacating the road segment again.

Pursel said there is no time frame. If the landowner submitted a second request to the township, the township trustees would have to hold hearings and repeat the process.

Southwest District

Butler County morgue, 911 dispatch complex work moves forward contracts in place

Journal News, January 27, 2026

Butler County is making headway on a decade-old space reutilization plan to better serve taxpayers with a package of construction contracts totaling $9.2 million.

Construction will begin appearing on the Princeton Road campus in Hamilton now that the commissioners have approved a $7.4 million batch of contracts for the new 911 dispatch/coroner's morgue complex.

The new 37,000-square-foot shared building on the Princeton Road campus where the Board of Elections lives is estimated to cost $35.3 million. The commissioners last week approved eight construction contracts totaling nearly $7.4 million, plus contingency costs.

In all, 19 contractors bid the various pieces — outside walls, roof, electrical and more — in Phase II of the project and the highest bids totaled $9 million.

The county hired Turner Construction for $900,000 last year to manage the project and paid $2.97 million for the first phase of the project to prepare the site for construction. County Administrator Judi Boyko said so far "the bids and the awards came back consistent with what we budgeted through those two phases so right now everything appears to be on budget."

Work will begin soon on this phase of the project, the final phase of the project includes internal wiring, furnishings, fixtures, landscaping and other finishing work.

Since county Coroner Dr. Lisa Mannix can't move into the new complex until it is complete in the summer of 2027, the commissioners also approved a new two-year lease — at a cost of $62,865 annually — for the warehouse that currently houses the morgue.

Southeast District

County looks at grant funding

Weirton Daily Times, January 30, 2026

The Jefferson County Commissioners are taking advantage of an opportunity to try to secure much-needed funding for water projects.

Commissioners Thursday gave Robert Naylor, executive director of the Jefferson County Port Authority, and Andrew Dawson of Arcadis Engineering, the county water-sewer department's engineering consultant, the go-ahead to apply for grant funding through the Water Resources Development Act. While funding through the act is not guaranteed, the commissioners concluded with so many OEPA-mandated water upgrades on the horizon, if there's even a chance they can secure grant funding to help offset project costs they have to try.

Applications are due at 6 p.m. Saturday. Commissioners agreed to cover the 25 percent local match that would be required should a Jefferson County Water and Sewer District project be funded.

"We (made) a commitment that we will come up with the match if we get a grant," Commissioner Tony Morelli said. "We need every nickel we can get for our water and sewage district."

The water department is an enterprise fund, meaning it's supposed to be self-supporting, generating money needed to finance operations, system maintenance and capital improvement projects through its fee structure.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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FEBRUARY 13
CCAO Board of Directors' Meeting

FEBRUARY 16
Presidents' Day - Holiday

FEBRUARY 20
CORSA Board of Directors' Meeting

FEBRUARY 27
CEBCO Board of Directors' Meeting

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