



Stronger Counties. Stronger Ohio.

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Cheryl Subler, Executive Director

***** ADVOCACY ALERT *****

CCAO ADVOCACY FOR CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUNDS

TO: CCAO MEMBERS

FROM: CHERYL SUBLER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DATE: AUGUST 17, 2020

RE: TALKING POINTS FOR STATE AND FEDERAL ADVOCACY

Over the past several weeks, CCAO has heard from members who are increasingly concerned about the lack of progress at the state and federal levels on issues related to Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) resources, which were made available from the federal CARES Act. Congress and the White House have failed to reach agreement on ways to make the CARES Act dollars more flexible or to provide additional fiscal relief for states and local governments. At the state level, \$850 million in CRF funds are still remaining to be distributed by the legislature. Under current law, counties and other local governments are facing a year-end deadline to spend these funds.

The following pages contain talking points for state and federal advocacy on these issues. CCAO is asking members to reach out to state legislators and to the Ohio Congressional delegation over the next week. It is crucial that state and federal leaders continue to hear about county priorities and come back into session to address these issues.



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State Policy: Talking Points for Ohio Legislators

- The federal CARES Act, signed into law in March, created a \$150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) to assist states and local governments with costs related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Under federal guidelines, the State of Ohio is to distribute \$1.2 billion of these funds to counties and other local governments so they can be spent by December 31, 2020.
- Ohio House Bill 481 distributed \$350 million in CRF resources to counties and other local governments in June. This leaves \$850 million remaining in the state Treasury for future distribution.
- Counties are using CRF funds to strengthen their communities and offset the costs of the pandemic. Examples include support for small businesses and individuals that are facing financial hardship; purchasing PPE and other supplies for the county and community organizations; strengthening COVID-19 testing and the overall public health response; implementing new procedures to protect corrections officers and prisoners at county jails; and, purchasing new technologies to allow the public to access county services online. [ADD EXAMPLES FROM YOUR COUNTY]
- State leaders have been waiting to distribute the remaining funds in the hope that Congress and the White House would amend the CARES Act to provide more flexibility and make revenue replacement an eligible use.
- Congress and the White House were unable to reach an agreement on the next round of Coronavirus relief legislation prior to the August break, and it is unclear when, or if, an agreement will be reached. *With counties still facing a spending deadline of December 31, it is vital the state act now to distribute the remaining CRF funds so that counties can use these resources to help their communities.*
- We ask the General Assembly and Administration to distribute funds in the fastest way possible, such as State Controlling Board action or September legislative session.
- If you have feedback or suggestions after talking with state legislators, please contact Adam Schwiebert, aschwiebert@ccao.org, 419-966-6255.



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Federal Policy: CCAO/NACo Talking points for the Ohio Congressional Delegation

- Counties provide front-line responses to the pandemic. We need a strong federal-state-local partnership to address the far-reaching health, safety and economic impacts of this crisis. We are requesting that Congress return to Washington to continue working on the next round of Coronavirus relief legislation.
- We appreciate Congressional action to provide money to states and local governments in the CARES Act - Coronavirus Relief Fund, but we need more flexibility to use the funds. The CARES Act should be amended to codify US Department of the Treasury guidance that allows CRF funds to be used to keep previously budgeted public safety and public health employees on the payroll, as well as to allow for corrections officers.
- Also, as the pandemic continues with no end in sight, the close-out date of the CRF grant should be extended to December 31, 2021, and recipients should be allowed to use the funds to replace lost revenue.
- The next round of legislation should include funds for counties. The National Association of Counties (NACo) and Ohio counties are urging new financial support directly to counties of all sizes to keep front-line county employees on the job. The aid should be flexible and allocated based on population, without a requirement that forces counties to sub-allocate to other jurisdictions. Each county is different, and it strengthens our intergovernmental partnership to allow local governments to decide how best to spend relief dollars.
- Counties are using CRF funds to strengthen their communities and offset the costs of the pandemic. Examples include support for small businesses and individuals that are facing financial hardship; purchasing PPE and other supplies for the county and community organizations; strengthening COVID-19 testing and the overall public health response; implementing new procedures to protect corrections officers and prisoners at county jails; and, purchasing new technologies to allow the public to access county services online. [ADD EXAMPLES FROM YOUR COUNTY]
- Please send any feedback to Jon Honeck, [jhoneyck@ccao.org](mailto:jhoneck@ccao.org), 614-600-8900.



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