



Stronger Counties. Stronger Ohio.

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Cheryl Subler, Executive Director

March 31, 2020

TO: ALL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, COUNTY EXECUTIVES, COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS,
COUNTY ADMINISTRATORS AND COUNTY CLERKS

FROM: CHERYL SUBLER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
RACHEL MASSOUD, POLICY ANALYST
ADAM SCHWIEBERT, POLICY ANALYST

RE: MARCH 31, 2020 COVID-19 UPDATES

Key Resources

1. [CAB on Virtual Meetings during COVID-19](#)
2. [CAB on COVID-19 Employment Related FAQs](#)
3. [Other HR Related CABs](#)
4. [County Purchasing Authority during COVID-19](#)

[CCAO COVID-19 Resources Page](#)

Gov. DeWine's COVID-19 Press Conference

In today's press conference, Gov. DeWine and Dr. Amy Acton announced that Ohio now has 2,199 confirmed cases. There have been 55 COVID-19 related deaths.

The governor announced that Dr. Amy Acton will sign an order creating a statewide inventory of ventilators and other breathing machines.

If you want to help Ohio's response to this pandemic, you can contact the state at together@governor.ohio.gov.

A video of the governor's March 31st press conference can be found [here](#). The administration plans to continue daily press briefings at 2 pm. Press conferences can be viewed on www.ohiochannel.org.

Preparing for tough budgeting decisions to come

It is almost a certainty that county revenues, especially the sales tax, will be falling off in response to the downturn in the economy. LGF revenues will be lower as state revenues decline, and casino revenues will stop since the casinos are currently closed. There is also concern that property tax collections will be strung out due to the inability of certain property owners to make their full 2nd half property tax payment. As a result, many counties have already begun to evaluate their 2020 budget and identify ways to reduce expenditures.



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As counties work their way through their budget adjustment analysis, CCAO has some initial thoughts, and we recommend you review our [CCAO Commissioners Handbook Chapter 22 - County Budgets and Fiscal Control](#).

Begin discussions now with your other elected county officials: The only guidance available on reducing budgeted appropriations is from a court of appeals case out of Geauga County where in a budget crunch/recession the commissioners imposed an across-the-board percentage cut, and the sheriff challenged that decision in court. The court of appeals decision held that a board of commissioners cannot simply impose an across the board percentage cut but must look at each county office's statutory duties and provide the necessary funding for the office to complete those duties. Therefore, it will be important to have the statutory duties of each elected office defined and some understanding regarding the office holder's estimated costs to maintain those duties. You may consider involving your department heads and elected officials by asking them to prepare a range of reduction, i.e., 5, 10 and 15%, strategies for their departments or offices.

Examine the opportunities for the obvious reductions: Look to savings that can be gained from reducing scheduled general fund expenditures for maintenance and repair, equipment and supplies, building operation costs and utilities. For personnel costs evaluate wage and hiring freezes and taking advantage of any employee attrition by not rehiring, unless it's mission critical. Suspend travel and staff development training programs.

Sales tax revenue estimates: The Department of Taxation is being asked to consider providing an early estimate of the monthly sales tax collections to counties after vendor filings which are due the 23rd of the month following collection. The revenue isn't transferred to the counties, however, until the middle of the second month after collection. This provides almost 2 and a half months of lag time. If the department could provide a quick unaudited number shortly after the monthly vendor filing date, counties would have advanced knowledge of what their receipts are going to be and give them almost 3 months of lead time to adjust to reductions in sales tax receipts they know are coming. Stay tuned for further updates.

Register for Friday's HR Webinar: Update to Employment Implications and Options During the Coronavirus Pandemic

CCAO will hold an HR webinar this Friday, April 3rd at 1:00 pm. As the issues relating to the coronavirus change, there are more employment-related questions. This webinar will provide an update on these issues along with the latest information concerning the application of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

Presenter: Jeffrey A. Stankunas, Attorney at Law, Isaac Wiles Burkholder & Teetor LLC

[Click here](#) to register for this timely educational opportunity. If you are unable to register to the link above, please email [Nedra Benson](mailto:nbenson@ccao.org), nbenson@ccao.org, CCAO administrative professional, and provide her with your email address.

CCAO/CORSA/CEBCO Bi-weekly COVID-19 Briefing Calls

CCAO, CORSA and CEBCO will host a biweekly COVID-19 briefing call for members every Monday and Thursday at 3:30 p.m. The next call will be Thursday, April 2nd. The call-in information is:

Dial 1-877-273-4202
Access code 889-229-624

Our goal with these briefing calls is to provide our members with an informative and positive experience. In order to better achieve this goal and due to the volume of callers, we have decided to change the format. We

ask that participants pose questions during the call by **texting** Rachel Massoud (CCAO policy analyst) at **513-543-3723**. Rachel will read the questions to our speaker(s) and state the name and title of the person who posed the question. Participants will remain muted throughout the duration of the call. We hope this format will reduce duplication, keep our calls focused and concise, and provide the best experience possible for our participants.

Other Resources

As a reminder, the NACo COVID-19 webpage <https://www.naco.org/resources/featured/coronavirus-disease-2019> includes nationwide information about county response as well as information about federal relief packages relating to COVID-19.

Visit <https://ccao.org/resources/coronavirus-updates/> for updates, FAQs and previous memos. Current information from the Ohio Department of Health can be found at www.coronavirus.ohio.gov. If you have questions regarding this memo or best practice suggestions relating to COVID-19, please contact Adam Schwiebert, policy analyst, at aschwiebert@ccao.org, or Rachel Massoud, policy analyst, at rmassoud@ccao.org.