



Stronger Counties. Stronger Ohio.

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Cheryl Subler, Executive Director

April 29, 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: APRIL 29, 2020 COVID-19 UPDATES

Key Resources

1. [CAB: COVID-19 Employment Related FAQs](#)
2. [CAB: Layoffs and Furloughs Under Civil Service Law](#)
3. [Treasury Guidance CARES Act Funds 4.22.2020](#)
4. [Treasury FAQs 4.22.2020](#)
5. [CAB: COVID-19 and Collective Bargaining Issues](#)
6. [Reopening Information](#)

[CCAO COVID-19 Resources Page](#)

Gov. DeWine's COVID-19 Press Conference

In today's press conference, Gov. DeWine announced that Ohio now has 17,303 cases. There have been 937 COVID-19 related deaths. These numbers include both confirmed and probable cases as reported by ODH. To read the press release, click [here](#).

Gov. DeWine announced that nearly \$16 million in grant funding is now available for local law enforcement agencies, probation and parole offices, local courts, victim service providers, and adult, juvenile, and community corrections agencies.

This funding was awarded to the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS), a division of the Ohio Department of Public Safety, as part of the CARES Act and will support agencies in:

- Taking measures to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 such as purchasing cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment
- Taking measures to prepare for COVID-19 such as supporting proper planning, staffing, and communications to ensure effective operations and maintain the safety of criminal justice employees, citizens, and correctional populations



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- Taking measures to respond to the spread of COVID-19 such as medical visits, hospitalizations, purchasing medical supplies, and securing alternative housing

OCJS will accept applications on a continual basis while funding is available, and there is no cap. For more information, please visit www.ocjs.ohio.gov.

Current information regarding reopening can be found at <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/responsiblerestartohio>.

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 April 29th press conference can be found [here](#). The administration plans to hold press conferences daily at 2 p.m. Press conferences can be viewed on www.ohiochannel.org.

Clarification on Face Coverings and Reopening Guidelines

Today, Gov. DeWine and Lt. Gov. Husted clearly stated that **face coverings are required for all employees**, unless not advisable by a healthcare professional, against documented industry best practices, or not permitted by federal or state laws/regulations. When an employee is sitting alone in a closed workspace, they don't need to wear a face covering. When you are a customer in an Ohio business, you should wear a face covering but you are not required to. The governor indicated that employers can require everyone, including customers, to have face coverings in their business – it is an employer decision.

The most up to date guidelines can be found [here](#). County government should follow the [General Office Environment](#) guidelines. The administration and state agencies are also following these guidelines.

As we get closer to May 4th, it is crucial that county commissioners, county executives, and county councils convene other county officials to develop a countywide strategy for following the guidelines listed above as Ohio reopens. We will continue to share sample plans with you. If your county has examples you would like to share, please contact Policy Analyst Adam Schwiebert at aschwiebert@ccao.org.

Further reopening information can be found at <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/responsiblerestartohio>.

State Sales Tax Revenue Forecast to Decline in Second Quarter

One of the most difficult financial questions facing counties in the current economic environment is developing a revenue forecast for the sales tax. In its *Monthly Report* for March (released April 10), the Ohio Office of Budget and Management (OBM) reported a decline in revenue collected from the state sales tax of 8.3 percent vs estimates, and a decline of 3 percent vs actual revenue from March 2019. As the report noted, however, these numbers mostly reflected purchases made in February and the early part of March, before the Ohio Department of Health orders closed most retail outlets and consumer confidence dropped because of widespread layoffs.

The U.S. Department of Commerce *Monthly Retail Trade Survey* reports an advance estimate of a decline in nationwide March retail sales of 8.7 percent vs. February, and a decline of 6.2 percent vs March 2019 sales. It is likely, however, that retail sales in Ohio declined more rapidly than in other states that were not as comprehensive in their stay-at-home orders.

OBM has shared a preliminary, unofficial forecast with CCAO that the state is forecasting a decline in sales tax revenue potentially in the 20 – 25 percent range in the second quarter compared to original estimates.

Forecasting in a turbulent environment is extremely difficult. In Ohio, over 700,000 individuals are now receiving unemployment compensation, and the state has acknowledged that other individuals have had difficulty filing claims. Some unemployed individuals will return to work in the coming months but only time will tell the strength of the economic recovery. Nationally, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) is expecting unemployment to average 15 percent in the second and third quarter, and to remain over 11 percent in the fourth quarter. If this is the case, high unemployment numbers will continue to exert a drag on retail sales.

CCAO will continue to seek guidance from OBM and other sources about the likely direction of sales tax revenue in the coming months.

Members with questions should contact Jon Honeck, Senior Policy Analyst, 614-600-8900, jhoneck@ccao.org.

ACTION NEEDED: Urge Your U.S. Representatives to Join Bipartisan Effort to Provide Direct Aid to Counties

NACo and CCAO are requesting that future federal legislation providing economic relief make funds available to alleviate the general fiscal distress experienced by counties. Yesterday, Reps. Abigail Spanberger (D-Va.), John Katko (R-N.Y.), Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) and Rodney Davis (R-Ill) began circulating a "Dear Colleague" letter urging direct funding for county governments in the next coronavirus relief package. The letter can be found [here](#). **Please contact your congressmen and ask them to sign on to this bipartisan letter.** The deadline to sign on is tomorrow, April 30th.

CCAO/CORSA/CEBCO COVID-19 Weekly Briefing Call

CCAO, CORSA and CEBCO are hosting a weekly briefing call during the COVID-19 pandemic. **The calls will be on Thursdays at 3:30 p.m.** The next call will be Thursday, April 30th at 3:30 p.m. 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

[ODJFS Updated Q&A 4.29.2020](#)

[FEMA 4.29.2020 Daily Briefing Points](#)

[Editable #InThisTogetherOhio Logo](#)

[NACo COVID-19 webpage](#)

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.