



Stronger Counties. Stronger Ohio.

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Cheryl Subler, Executive Director

September 3, 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: SEPTEMBER 3, 2020 COVID-19 UPDATES

Key Resources

1. [CCAO CARES Act Funds Resources Webpage](#)
2. [OBM Ideas on How to Use Coronavirus Relief Funding](#)
3. [OBM CARES Act Funds Guidance 7.16.2020](#)
4. [CCAO Guidance on Using CARES Act Funds](#)
5. [Treasury Guidance CARES Act Funds 9.2.2020](#)
6. [Treasury CARES Act Funds FAQs 9.2.2020](#)
7. [CAB: Employees Returning to Work FAQs](#)
8. [CAB: Layoffs and Furloughs Under Civil Service Law 7.15.2020](#)

[CCAO COVID-19 Resources Page](#)

Gov. DeWine's Press Conference: Coronavirus Wastewater Monitoring Network; FEMA mask distribution; new Public Health Advisory System Map

During today's press conference, Gov. DeWine noted that today marks six months since his administration's, in conjunction with the City of Columbus, decision to cancel spectators at the Arnold Classic in Columbus.

The governor discussed the Ohio Coronavirus Wastewater Monitoring Network. Information on this program can be found [here](#). The network studying samples of wastewater at sewage treatment plants to look for the presence of gene copies/fragments of the virus that causes the disease. There are currently 22 active sites across Ohio with more being added soon. The governor stated that this testing can provide early warning signs of COVID-19 positive cases.

FEMA is donating 9 million masks to Ohio. The administration will distribute 4 million masks to K-12 schools, 144,000 masks to ODJFS for childcare centers, 1 million to higher education institutions and 2 million to organizations that support underserved groups across the state. The remaining masks will be stored.

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) order regarding reporting of COVID-19 in K-12 schools will be released today. Once published, it will be available at coronavirus.ohio.gov. The order outlines guidelines for parents



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notify schools if their child tests positive, schools notifying parents if a child tests positive in the school building and the sharing of this information with the public. The order will be effective September 8th.

The administration released this week's [Public Health Advisory System](#) map. There are seven Red Level 3 counties (newly Red in bold): **Butler**, Lucas, Mercer, Montgomery, Preble, **Putnam** and **Wayne**.

Gov. DeWine noted that this week there are 39 Yellow Level 1 counties, the most since the system was implemented in July. 26% of Ohioans live in a yellow county.

Two counties dropped from Red Level 3; Lorain County moved to Yellow Level 1 and Erie County moved to Orange Level 2. Twelve counties moved from Orange Level 2 to Yellow Level 1.

A copy of the new map can be found [here](#). The state's Public Health Advisory System website now includes an interactive map detailing indicators in each county, which you can find [here](#). A county by county list of indicators for the week can be found [here](#). A chart of case rates by county can be found [here](#).

There was an increase of 1,345 total COVID-19 cases statewide from yesterday's data. For more COVID-19 numbers, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.

A video of the governor's September 3rd press conference can be found [here](#). **The next COVID-19 press conference is scheduled for Tuesday, September 8th at 2 p.m.** Press conferences can be viewed on www.ohiochannel.org.

US Treasury releases additional Coronavirus Relief Fund Guidance

Federal funds released to the states and local governments through the federal CARES Act – Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) are subject to regulations developed by the US Treasury. In order to inform recipients, Treasury uses a formal [guidance document](#) and a separate document with [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQs). Both documents have been periodically revised throughout the spring and summer. On September 2, Treasury added important new language to both documents.

The formal guidance adds two new sections: (1) "Supplemental Guidance on Use of Funds to Cover Payroll and Benefits of Public Employees" and (2) "Supplemental Guidance on Use of Funds to Cover Administrative Costs." The first section reiterates that a public employer may presume that public health and public safety employees are substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to COVID-19, unless the chief executive or the relevant government determines that specific circumstances indicate otherwise. Work performed by such employees is considered to be a *substantially different use* than accounted for in the most recently approved budget as of March 27. Therefore, all of the costs of these employees may be covered with CRF resources.

The guidance clarifies that "public safety employees would include police officers (including state police officers), sheriffs and deputy sheriffs, firefighters, emergency medical responders, correctional and detention officers, and those who directly support such employees such as dispatchers and supervisory personnel." (p. 6)

The guidance also clarifies that "Covered benefits include, but are not limited to, the costs of all types of leave (vacation, family-related, sick, military, bereavement, sabbatical, jury duty), employee insurance (health, life, dental, vision), retirement (pensions, 401(k)), unemployment benefit plans (federal and state), workers compensation insurance, and Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) taxes (which includes Social Security and Medicare taxes)." (p. 7)

The second section related to administrative costs reminds recipients that they cannot apply traditional federal indirect costs rates to CRF payments. If they track time consistently across a department, however, they may

cover the portion of payroll and benefit costs of employees that spend time on administrative work necessary because of the COVID-19 emergency.

The FAQ document contains new information about four issues: (1) costs related to safe reopening of schools; (2) expenses related to public health infrastructure such as improving access to running water; (3) instructions for entities that have a fiscal year starting July 1 or October 1; and, application of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to CRF payments. The FAQ related to schools is reprinted below:

May Fund recipients incur expenses associated with the safe reopening of schools?

Yes, payments from the Fund may be used to cover costs associated with providing distance learning (e.g., the cost of laptops to provide to students) or for in-person learning (e.g., the cost of acquiring personal protective equipment for students attending schools in-person or other costs associated with meeting Centers for Disease Control guidelines).

To this end, as an administrative convenience, Treasury will presume that expenses of up to \$500 per elementary and secondary school student to be eligible expenditures, such that schools do not need to document the specific use of funds up to that amount. [FAQ #53, p. 10]

CCAO will post the updated documents on its CARES Act [Resources page](#). Members with questions should contact Jon Honeck, jhoneck@ccao.org, 614-600-8900.

CCAO Membership Call with Gov. DeWine – September 9 at noon

CCAO will host a membership call with Gov. DeWine on Wednesday, September 9th at noon. The conference call information is as follows:

Dial: 1-877-273-4202

Room ID: 889-229-624#

Participants will remain muted throughout the duration of the call. We ask that participants pose questions during the call by texting Rachel Massoud at 513-543-3723. Rachel will read the questions to Gov. DeWine and state the name and title of the person who posed the question.

Upcoming CCAO Webinar: How Counties Are Using CARES Act Dollars: Examples from Henry and Ottawa Counties – September 9 at 9:30 a.m.

CCAO is pleased to offer a one-hour webinar on Wednesday, September 9, 2020, at 9:30 a.m. titled “How Counties Are Using Cares Act Dollars: Examples from Henry and Ottawa.”

This presentation will provide a high-level overview of how counties are utilizing federal Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) payments made available by Ohio House Bill 481 and the August Controlling Board release. Counties have until October 15, 2020, to obligate all of the funds they have received in order to become eligible for the auditor’s October 22 redistribution of any unspent CRF funds within the county. Speakers from two counties will describe how they have established county spending priorities and will provide an overview of programs and services that are being funded with CRF resources. Examples include public safety and public health personnel costs, economic development, social services, and technology and equipment, PPE, and other uses. Speakers will also describe how they are tracking CRF spending and documenting their decision-making for audit purposes.

Henry County Speakers: Commissioner Glenn Miller; EMA Director, Tracy Busch

Ottawa County Speakers: Commissioners Mark Stahl and Don Douglas; County Auditor Jennifer Widmer; County Clerk Rhonda Slauterbeck

[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.

Ohio Jobless Claims for Sunday, August 23, through Saturday, August 29, 2020

Ohioans filed 18,719 initial jobless claims last week, according to statistics the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) reported to the U.S. Dept. of Labor today. This was 255,496 fewer than – or less than 7% of – the peak earlier this year. Ohioans filed 339,957 continued jobless claims last week, which was 436,345 fewer than – or less than half (43.8%) of – the peak earlier this year. To read more, click [here](#).

Request for counties to share CARES Act spending plans with CCAO policy team

With CARES Act funds being distributed to local governments across the state, counties have a number of options for how they may utilize their funds. As your county decides how to spend its CARES Act funds, please share your ideas with the CCAO policy team. Your ideas can serve as valuable examples to other counties considering different funding options. Please send any resolutions or spending plans to Jon Honeck at jhoneck@ccao.org.

Other Resources

[ODJFS Updated FAQ Document 9.2.2020](#)

[Public Health Advisory System Map and Resources](#)

[Ohio COVID-19 Travel Advisory Information](#)

[Current Information Regarding Reopening](#)

[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 want to help Ohio's response to this pandemic, you can contact the state at together@governor.ohio.gov. If you have questions regarding this memo or best practice suggestions relating to COVID-19, please contact Rachel Massoud, policy analyst, at rmassoud@ccao.org.