



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

OCTOBER 6, 2023

Buckeye Hills Regional Council

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order | Lenny Eliason, President
- II. Roll Call | Ron Moore, Vice President
- III. Consent Agenda | Lenny Eliason, President **TAB #1**
- IV. Legislator and Partner Agency Updates
 - a. Bradley Kennedy | Office of U.S. Senator Vance
 - b. Cody Pettit | Office of Ohio Treasurer Sprague
 - c. Susanne Simpson | Office of Ohio Auditor of State Faber
- V. Management Committee Update | Ron Moore, Chair **TAB #2**
 - a. Request for Approval of Expenditures
 - b. Updated Organization Chart
 - c. Staff Evaluations & Recommendation of Salary Increases for January 1, 2024
- VI. Aging & Health Division Update | Jennifer Westfall, Aging & Health Director
 - a. Healthy Aging Grants – ODA Funding Directed to County Commissioners
- VII. Development Division Update | Ryan Collins, Program Manager **TAB #3**
 - a. Resolution of Support for ARC 2024 Full Slate of Projects
- VIII. Executive Director Report | Chasity Schmelzenbach, Executive Director **TAB #4**
- IX. Citizen Participation
- X. Other Business
- XI. Adjournment

THE NEXT REGULAR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER 3, 2023

**Minutes of the August 4, 2023
Buckeye Hills Regional Council Executive Committee Meeting**

The Buckeye Hills Regional Council (BHRC) Executive Committee meeting was held June 2, 2023. The meeting was held at Buckeye Hills, Marietta, Ohio.

In attendance were:

OFFICERS:	Lenny Eliason, President Ron Moore, Vice President	Athens County Morgan County (Private Sector)
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:	Steve Patterson Jason D’Onofrio Zach Manuel Diane Burkhart Adam Shriver Jeff Dennis Josh Schlicher	City of Athens Hocking County Meigs County Monroe County Morgan County Perry County (Private Sector) City of Marietta
GUEST:	Jessica Dicken Danielle Mason Dawn Schultheis Juli Stephens	Hocking County Commissioner Office of Ohio Attorney General Yost OSU Extension – Noble County Office of Congressman Wenstrup
STAFF:	Ryan Collins Jen Huck Denise Keyes Angie Lawrence Brad Peoples Amanda Reeder Jada Riley Jenny Simmons Drew Tanner Dawn Weber Jennifer Westfall Melissa Zoller	Program Manager Fiscal Assistant Fiscal Director HR & Payroll Manager Development Specialist II Communications Specialist Development Specialist Executive Assistant Communications Director Home Care Director Aging & Disability Director Planning Director

CALL TO ORDER

Lenny Eliason, President, called the meeting to order.

ROLE CALL

Ron Moore, Vice President, conducted roll call.

CONSENT AGENDA

Jason D’Onofrio moved to approve the consent agenda which included the minutes from the June 2, 2023, meeting; Statement of Activities, Administrative Expense YTD; Quarterly Budget Report, Aging and Disability Programs Services and Funding Report for period July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023, and Division and Director’s Reports. Zach Manuel seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

LEGISLATOR AND PARTNER AGENCY UPDATE

Juli Stephens, Office of Congressman Wenstrup, provided updates to the members.
Danielle Mason, Office of Ohio Attorney General Yost, provided updates to the members.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

Jason D'Onofrio moved to approve the Management Committee Report for May 6, 2023, through August 4, 2023. Adam Shriver seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

Josh Schlicher moved to ratify the action by president to approve the Employee Years of Service Awards and Resolutions that were presented to staff on July 31, 2023. Steve Patterson seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

Ron Moore moved to approve the Executive Director to enter into contract with Jefferson Health Plan utilizing Mutual Health Services as the third-party administrator for health and prescription insurance starting September 1, 2023. Steve Patterson seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

Jason D'Onofrio moved to approve the request for approval of expenditures in the amount of \$14,280.00 for supplies and the ratification of expenditure in the amount of \$12,422.64 for Unitrends Forever Cloud Retention three-year subscription. Zach Manuel seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

Josh Schlicher moved to approve Perry and Associates in the amount of \$140,000 for financial statement compilation and Title III provider monitoring services for five years. Adam Shriver seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

PLANNING DIVISION UPDATE

Steve Patterson moved to approve the ODOT Authorizing Resolution Enhancing Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities, Ohio's Specialized Transportation Program for Monroe, Noble and Washington counties. Jason D'Onofrio seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

Steve Patterson moved to approve the ODOT Authorizing Resolution Capital Cost of Contracting for Monroe, Noble and Washington counties. Ron Moore seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

Adam Shriver moved to approve the Resolution of Support for ARC 2024 projects. Jason D'Onofrio seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried. The two projected listed were time sensitive. A full list of projects will be presented soon.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Steve Patterson moved to approve the Resolution for Appalachian Community Grant Program (ACGP) RFQs under the Technical Assistant Grant to support Round 2 development applications to be submitted in the fourth quarter of 2023, presented by Denise Keyes, Fiscal Director. Adam Shriver seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

Denise Keyes, Fiscal Director, presented updates from the Executive Director report to the members:

- The Small Communities, Big Impact: A Development Summit for Southeast Ohio scheduled for August 15 is sold out.
- District 19 Ohio Public Works Commission Round 38 applications are due September 1, 2023.
- District 18 Clean Ohio Greenspace Conservation Program Round 18 applications are due September 29, 2023.
- Buckeye Hills received \$100,000 READY LDDs Grant from ARC to help expand capacity and enhance the ability to provide additional technical assistance to communities in Southeast Ohio. The grant award was part of \$2.5 million in awards made throughout Appalachia by

the ARC.

- The Ridges Project:
 - The Developer has appointed the following individuals to serve as Developer representatives on the Board of Trustees of the Ridges New Community Authority, effective June 15, 2023:
 - Joe Recchie
 - Laura Recchie
 - Chasity Schmelzenbach
 - The City of Athens approved and appointed their members and will hold an organizational meeting late in September.
 - Continue to pursue a deed, all New Community Authority, Tax Incremental Financing, and Community Reinvestment Act structure in place, and be open to investment in Q4 of 2023.
- Appalachian Community Grant Program: Chasity was absent from this meeting because she is attending a meeting with all Planners, the other LDD's and the Mayor's Partnership for Progress.
- Governor DeWine announced locations for Interstate Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations. In the Buckeye Hills region, one of the new EV charging stations will be located at exit 25 on I-77 at McConnelsville Road in Noble County.
- OneOhio Region 12 Committee meeting is scheduled for 10:00 am on August 11 at the Noble County Health Department.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

No citizens present wished to address the committee.

OTHER BUSINESS

The members decided to cancel the September meeting since it falls on a Friday before a holiday weekend.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business, Steve Patterson moved to adjourn the meeting. Ron Moore seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

Approved By: _____
Chasity Schmelzenbach, Secretary

Date: _____



STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES July 1, 2023 through August 31, 2023

YEAR TO DATE ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE DETAIL

Administrative Expenses for Fiscal Year 2024 totaled \$997,344.87 at August 31. This total represents 15.49% of the Council's administrative budget utilized. Total spending for this time period is budgeted to be 17%. Individual line-item budgets and expenses are monitored monthly to ensure funds are utilized appropriately and budget revisions are requested from funding agencies as needed. Agency-wide quarterly budget revisions will be presented for review and approval. Specific line-item expenses over the budgeted spending percentage are the result of yearly renewals paid. The cumulative Indirect Cost rate for this period is 49%. Projected Total Indirect Costs for Fiscal Year 2024 are 46%. The one-time yearly renewal expenses created the overage as those are allocated to the Indirect Pool. The overall percentage will decrease in time.

AGING AND DISABILITY PROGRAMS SERVICES & FUNDING REPORT

The Aging and Disability Division worked with various service providers and helped administer a multitude of direct service programs to eligible residents of our eight-county region. Between July 1 and August 31, more than \$1.7 million in direct service dollars were utilized to provide the units of service listed in the report. BHRC continues to support our provider network to evaluate the needs of the communities and serve area seniors in the best way possible.



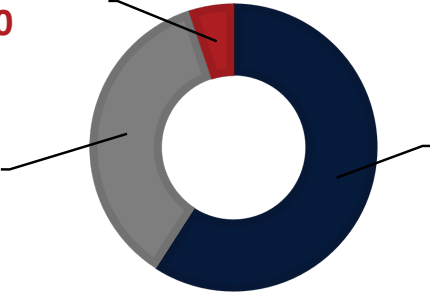
Administrative Expense Detail
For the Period July 1, 2023 -August 31, 2023

	2023 YTD Actual	2024 YTD Actual	2024 Budget	% of Budget
Salary	\$ 565,686.71	\$ 529,038.28	\$ 3,268,476.71	16.19%
Fringe Benefits	\$ 267,927.06	\$ 280,394.36	\$ 1,749,214.57	16.03%
Advertising	\$ 47,334.37	\$ 16,915.87	\$ 214,643.00	7.88%
Audit Costs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 32,000.00	0.00%
Building Maintenance	\$ 1,898.06	\$ 1,064.00	\$ 11,500.00	9.25%
Communications	\$ 19,566.36	\$ 14,641.51	\$ 104,550.00	14.00%
Conference Registration Fee	\$ 5,347.00	\$ 2,839.80	\$ 36,700.00	7.74%
Contract Services	\$ 3,743.75	\$ 5,688.47	\$ 173,250.00	3.28%
Employee/Governing Board	\$ 5,039.15	\$ 3,725.73	\$ 15,000.00	24.84%
Equipment Purchase/Maintenance	\$ 7,276.19	\$ 5,002.87	\$ 24,500.00	20.42%
Insurance	\$ 20,867.16	\$ 21,994.74	\$ 42,000.00	52.37%
Legal Costs	\$ 1,025.00	\$ 435.00	\$ 4,000.00	10.88%
Organizational Dues	\$ 6,835.00	\$ 486.70	\$ 40,000.00	1.22%
Other Costs	\$ 4,165.97	\$ 1,325.12	\$ 28,200.00	4.70%
Postage	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	20.00%
Printing Costs	\$ 135.00	\$ -	\$ 15,600.00	0.00%
Software & Licenses	\$ 9,741.41	\$ 18,107.65	\$ 115,315.00	15.70%
Space	\$ 42,556.83	\$ 42,556.83	\$ 255,342.00	16.67%
Staff Training Fees	\$ 2,420.58	\$ 1,736.77	\$ 10,000.00	17.37%
Subscriptions	\$ 2,527.88	\$ 4,081.18	\$ 6,520.00	62.59%
Supplies	\$ 7,501.54	\$ 6,116.98	\$ 65,875.00	9.29%
Travel - Mileage Reimbursement	\$ 15,423.92	\$ 23,599.00	\$ 105,698.00	22.33%
Travel - Out of Town Expense	\$ 13,807.90	\$ 14,594.01	\$ 105,698.00	13.81%
TOTAL EXPENSES FOR THE PERIOD	\$ 1,053,826.84	\$ 997,344.87	\$ 6,439,082.28	15.49%
INDIRECT COST RATE FOR THE PERIOD	43%	49%		

Buckeye Hills Regional Council

Aging and Disability Programs Services & Funding Report

July 1, 2023 - August 31, 2023

SERVICES PROVIDED		
Direct Service Hours Provided	Transportation Trips	Adult Day Service Days Attended
53,492	2,622	485
Adult Day Service Miles Traveled	Meals Provided	Home Medical Equipment & Emergency Response Units
3,454	40,387	659
Legal Services Contacts	Home Accesibility Modification And Pest Control Jobs	Senior Farmers Market Coupons Redeemed
69	13	10,782
Grocery Shopping and Delivery	Telephone Reassurance	Evidence Based Classes
106	81	150
Assisted Living Days	Alzheimers Education Contacts	Senior Volunteer Hours
2,182	0	0
TOTAL SERVICE FUNDING \$1,770,442		
Local Dollars \$89,377.00		Federal Dollars \$1,046,139.00
State Dollars \$634,926.00		
REGIONAL STATS		
Total Consumers Served	Total Population	Total Population Eligible for Services by Age (60+)
3,375	249,172	65,746

STATE BUDGET UPDATES

Healthy Aging Grants | *Update: Guidance on the allocation of these funds is coming shortly. ODA hopes to have guidance available by early October.* \$40 million in ARPA appropriated in 2024 but changes language from being distributed to **county commissioners**. These funds will be distributed by formula to each of Ohio's 88 counties. The amount awarded will be a \$100,000 base with additional funds based on non-Medicaid eligible population census. Funds must be used for projects serving older adults and must have measurable outcomes.

Rates and Adjustments | State Units are meeting to determine future rates. Rates are set to go live January 1 of 2024 for providers. We hope to have guidance soon on what the new rates will be for our local providers.

MyCare or Its Successor to Go Statewide | O4A and ODM have been meeting to work through the changes coming with the MyCare transition. The O4A network has been working together for best practices and lessons learned by the AAAs already involved with MyCare. The network is advocating for full delegation of services meaning AAAs will act as an extension of the MCO processing claims, serving consumers and handling incident reporting. It is estimated that this will result in growth among the AAAs in both funding and staffing needs.

Older Americans Act RFP is Open | The 2024-2025 RFP for BHRC's Older Americans Act funding is open. The application period will be open until October 13th. The RFP is available at www.buckeyehills.org/RFP

PROGRAM & SERVICE UPDATE

Aging staff will be attending the Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging Annual Conference in Columbus at the Easton Hilton October 18th and 19th. This is a great opportunity for networking and learning. If any board members would like to attend reach out to me at jwestfall@buckeyehills.org

Senior Farmers Market program coupons have been distributed throughout the 8-county region. If anyone is in need of assistance or additional information refer them to Janie at jcollins@buckeyehills.org BHRC has received additional funding that resulted in the waitlist being cleared. Please spread the word that coupons expire at the end of October and must be redeemed prior to the expiration date listed on the coupon.

Current program numbers:

County	Waitlist
Athens	516
Hocking	302
Meigs	352
Monroe	141
Morgan	277
Noble	181
Perry	464
Washington	951

BHRC's **Housing Grant and Home Modification Program** are in need of independent contractors to complete general contracting work. The types of work completed include bathroom remodels, ramps, doorways and

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minor roof repairs. Please reach out the Dave at dherbert@buckeyehills.org if you have any questions or a referral.

Assessments completed

June 2023

Athens	13
Hocking	14
Meigs	6
Monroe	3
Morgan	1
Noble	4
Perry	6
Washington	30
TOTALS	77

PASSPORT AND ASSISTED LIVING CASELOAD REGIONWIDE

- The current PASSPORT caseload is **747 individuals and 58 individuals** on the Assisted Living Waiver.

CONTACT: Jenn Westfall, Aging and Health Director | jwestfall@buckeyehills.org, 740-376-1038
Dawn Weber, Home Care Director | dweber@buckeyehills.org, 740-376-1041

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CURRENT INITIATIVES

HEAP Outreach | A run of paid ads for the HEAP Summer Crisis Program ended in August. We are continuing to push social media outreach until the end of September. The new budget was received for the upcoming grant year, and billboards and other forms of media are currently being purchased for our next advertising campaign, which will run January through March of next year.

Agging Outreach | The radio campaign promoting our Information & Assistance services and support programs continues through November. This includes nearly 2,000 radio ads airing across 10 stations covering all eight counties. Google Ads and Facebook campaigns started in late July, targeting searches for senior assistance across all eight counties. Through September, the Google ads have reached 3,340 individuals searching for assistance with a range of services for older adults and resulted in 362 clicks to our website and at least 36 calls to our Information & Assistance team. The Facebook ads have reached nearly 7,000 individuals age 65 and up. Recent outreach events included:

- Community Resource Event, August 27 – Washington County
- Falls Prevention at Athens Farmers Market, September 20 – Athens County
- Matter of Balance Presentation, September 28 -Washington County

If there is an upcoming outreach event in your community that we should attend or a civic group that would like to have a speaker on Aging topics, please contact Amanda Reeder at areeder@buckeyehills.org.

Medicare Outreach | General Medicare posts and information on Extra Help, Medicare Savings Programs, and Preventative Services run on a weekly basis across our social media channels. Preparation is underway for Medicare Open Enrollment advertising, which runs October 15- December 7.

Development Summit | Our first Development Summit since 2019 was a success, with more than 80 registered attendees. The summit's sessions were Small Communities, Big Impact (Logan Mayor Greg Fraunfelner, Caldwell Mayor Misty Wells, Shawnee Mayor Bev Trovato, McConnelsville Administrator Jennifer Ponchak); Chambers of Success (Hocking Hills Chamber Director Bailey Venzin, Belpre Chamber Director Karen Waller, and Meigs County Chamber Director Susan White); Inclusive Community Development (OneOhio Vice Chair Don Mason, BHRC Mobility Manager Julia Hinzman, Habitat for Humanity of Southeast Ohio Director Kenneth Oehlers, and Age-Friendly Athens Coordinator Amy Lipka). Rachel Mains of Bricker Graydon provided an overview of the recently passed Ohio budget for 2024-2025. The evaluation feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Suggestions for future summits include sessions featuring state and federal funders and grant information, collaboration, community engagement, resiliency and disaster response, and inviting the region's legislators so they can hear about the impact of programs and ideas for future development

Brownfields Site Visit with Ohio Rep. Mark Johnson | At the invitation of General Assembly legislative staff, members of BHRC's Planning staff met with Ohio Rep. Mark Johnson on August 29 to discuss the impacts of the state's brownfields funding in Southeast Ohio communities as the state prepares to roll out an additional \$350 million through the Brownfield Remediation Fund in 2024-2025. The Legislature again designated set-asides of \$1 million in funding for each of Ohio's 88 counties.

2024 State of the Region Planning | The first planning meeting for the 2024 State of the Region conference at Ohio University was held on September 5. Committee members began discussing the format for the 2024 conference.

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Affordable Connectivity Program Outreach | With support from BroadbandOhio and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Buckeye Hills launched an advertising outreach campaign across counties in our Rural Digital Inclusion Alliance footprint where enrollment in the Affordable Connectivity Program enrollment is below 50% of eligible households. This includes Athens, Meigs, Gallia, Belmont, Harrison, Jefferson, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, and Washington counties. The program is being promoted with newspaper, television, and social media advertising that ran through the month of September. The social media advertising campaign has reached 102,805 individuals in the region since its August 1 launch. Enrollment rates will be evaluated at the end of the advertising outreach campaign.

Website Request for Proposals | Buckeye Hills issued a Request for Proposals for Website Redesign and Development on August 15. Ten firms responded to the RFP by the September 15, 4:00 p.m. deadline. Proposals have been scored and ranked. The top proposal will be presented to the Executive Committee for approval. The target completion date is March 15, 2024, allowing time for the new website to be introduced at the April 2024 General Policy Council meeting.

Transportation Awareness Days | The Communications team is assisting with the coordination and promotion of a series of Transportation Awareness Days in October in Monroe (10/11), Noble (10/25), and Washington Counties (10/17). Fliers about the events are included in the Executive Committee meeting binders.

NEWS

• Recent News, Press Releases, and Notices

- July 26 – WTAP: [Summer Crisis Program helps locals keep their homes cool](#)
- July 28 – nextcenturycities.org: [Next Century Cities Hosts a Congressional Briefing for Local Leaders to Share Community-Based Insights on the Affordable Connectivity Program \(ACP\)](#)
- August 1 – Marietta Times: [Lower Salem obtains contract for playground project](#)
- August 4 – WTAP: [Internet payment assistance available for eligible households](#)
- August 11 – buckeyehills.org/rfp: [Request for Qualifications: Architectural and Structural Assessment for Appalachian Community Grant Program Projects](#)
- August 11 – buckeyehills.org/rfp: [Request for Qualifications: Healthcare Study for Appalachian Community Grant Program Projects](#)
- August 11 – buckeyehills.org/rfp: [Request for Qualifications: Legal Services for Appalachian Community Grant Program Projects](#)
- August 14 – buckeyehills.org/rfp: [Request for Proposals: Transportation Study/Plan](#)
- August 15 – buckeyehills.org/rfp: [Request for Proposals: Website Redesign & Development](#)
- August 15 – WTAP: [Buckeye Hills Regional Council hosts development summit for Southeast Ohio](#)
- August 21 – Associated Press: [A Vast Shortage of Homeless Shelters: Housing Insecurity in Ohio's Appalachian Counties](#)
- August 26 – Associated Press: [Broadband subsidy program that millions use will expire next year if Congress doesn't act](#)
- September 13 – buckeyehills.org/rfp: [Request for Proposals: 2024-2025 Older Americans Act Title III Services](#)
- September 15 – Marietta Times: [O'Neill celebrates Senior Center Month](#)
- September 15 – AVC News: [Noble County Commissioners Meet and Discuss Caldwell High School Demolition](#)
- September 18 – Times Leader: [Recovery money flowing](#)

CONTACT INFO: Drew Tanner, Communications Director | dtanner@buckeyehills.org | 740-376-1030

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CURRENT INITIATIVES

Resolution of Support for Appalachian Regional Commission 2024 Projects | Buckeye Hills staff has received, reviewed, evaluated and rated pre-applications for the LDD region; and prioritized project applications for funding based on the Buckeye Hills Fiscal Year 2024 ARC Pre-application Guidelines. The subsequent project pre-applications are initiated by eligible ARC applicants and are being recommended by Buckeye Hills leadership to the Governor's Office of Appalachia and ARC as listed in the table in the resolution.

Appalachian Community Grant Program Planning Continues | Buckeye Hills Regional Council continues to work with over 160 partners who have joined our technical assistance process. Several lead applicants have been identified for Round 2 Development grants and BHRC staff have worked to align projects with their lead applicants. Planning efforts continue to be on-going and BHRC Development Specialists continue to connect less competitive projects with alternative funding options. This is due to the projected overwhelming amount that will be requested from just the eight-county BHRC region. Our estimates show that, regionally, potential projects could be as low \$475 million and as high as \$531 million. This demand will not be met by the approximate \$430 million left in the program.

NEWS

Program & Service Updates

Building Resilient Economies in Coal Communities (BRECC) Action Challenge | The National Association of Counties' BRECC Action Challenge is a technical assistance program that will empower community partners to identify and advance projects for economic revitalization and diversification. The Action Challenge invites coal communities to form cross-sector teams and apply for capacity-building support. Community teams will receive 12-months of individualized expert coaching that will result in the development of a community-led economic diversification strategy. Seven community teams will be competitively selected to participate in the BRECC 2024 Action Challenge Cohort. Teams will be provided one-on-one coaching support, attend a virtual learning series with subject matter experts, network with other selected coal community teams and participate in an in-person capstone event. Please contact Sam Miller, Development Director, if your county is interested in applying.

Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 Launch | Please join us Thursday, October 12th from 2:00 - 3:30 PM EST for the national release AEP6! During this virtual event, we'll debut the latest economic and social impact findings. Not only will you be the first to learn the highly anticipated national impact numbers, but you'll hear from arts partner communities, elected officials, artists, and national strategic partners about how and why this study is vital to the work they do in building stronger communities. The AEP6 Launch event will be hosted by the legendary multi-award-winning actress, singer, dancer, and civil rights activist, Rita Moreno. To register, visit bit.ly/aep6-launch.

Buckeye Hills Development Selected for NADO Impact Awards | The annual Impact Awards program honors NADO members for their creative approaches to advancing regional economic development and improving quality of life. These projects have made significant impacts on their regions and demonstrate the diversity of services and program delivery provided by regional development organizations across the country. Three BHRC Projects were selected for this distinction:

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- *Appalachian Community Grant Program Convening*
- *Downtown Revitalization Guidebook*
- *RDIA Broadband Listening Sessions*

STAFF UPDATES

- **Ryan Collins** has been working through ARC applications that have been approved and continues to attend the Community Accelerator program as time allows.
- **Michelle Hyer** has continued to work with the team on the Appalachian Community Grant Program. Michelle has been assisting Jada Riley on the administration of the Ohio Public Works infrastructure program. She has been working closely with Meigs and Washington County Commissioners on bidding and requesting quotes for allocation projects and both Meigs and Washington critical infrastructure projects have been completed. Michelle has also been assisting Brad Peoples with both the NRAC/Clean Ohio program as well as the Region 12 OneOhio program.
- **Brad Peoples** has been working on organizing scoring criteria for OneOhio Region 12. Utilizing Buckeye Hills' previous experience with similar programs and their templates, the Grants Committee has been able to plug in their desired criteria and led to very precise discussion to build an accurate understanding of what the group's targets should be in Region 12. This is now part of a template that will be presented to the Region 12 Committee at the next OneOhio meeting.
- **Jada Riley** has been reviewing, scoring and ranking projects submitted to the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) State Capital Improvement Program (SCIP) and the Local Transportation Improvement Program (LTIP) program.
- **Emma Yeager** has been writing funding briefs for non-competitive ACGP projects and holding meetings with project contacts to go over alternate funding. Emma also completed her first Environmental Review.

CONTACT: Sam Miller, Development Director | smiller@buckeyehills.org | 740-376-1028

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CURRENT INITIATIVE

Staff Evaluations & Salary Increases | Staff evaluations have been completed and scores will be brought to the Management Committee during the October board meeting for a recommendation of January 1 salary increases.

Organization Chart | The organization chart has been updated to remove the Assistant Executive Director position and the specific titles listed under the Special Project Manager.

New Hires, Promotions, Resignations, Terminations Report | No changes since the last report

BHRC Employee Assistance Program | With the September change in insurance carriers, BHRC is now able to offer an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP provides confidential, professional counseling, education, and referral services to employees and their family members at no cost. Employees and family can contact the EAP 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

STAFF UPDATES

Brandi Hesson's (Information & Assistance Specialist) outstanding service to a Medicare consumer garnered the below 5-star review on our Google Business listing.



Tony B
36 reviews • 35 photos

★★★★★ 2 hours ago

I can't be happier with the information I was given at BHRC yesterday. I'm coming up on my 65th birthday and I was getting so much mail and telemarketing phone calls for Medicare coverage. Good GRIEF! It was so overwhelming. I made an appointment with Brandi Hesson, and she made it so much easier to understand. Thank you Brandi.

CONTACT INFO: Angie Lawrence, Human Resources Manager | alawrence@buckeyehills.org | 740-376-1031

NEWS

Program & Service Updates

- **House Bill 33- Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) Demo and Brownfield Program** | has been awarded \$350 million over 2024 and 2025 fiscal years. \$175 million is allocated to both assessment and cleanup and \$150 million (FY24) to the Demolition and Site revitalization program.
- **Regional Coordinated Plan for Transportation** | BHRC is working with ODOT and eight counties mobility managers to create guidance for the committee and develop a regional plan.
- **Transportation Awareness Events** | Mobility Managers will be hosting events in Monroe, Noble and Washington counties. The flyer has the dates and times of the events that will be held in October. Please come and join BHRC Staff at these events.

Staff Updates

- **Melissa Zoller** attended an ODOT scoping meeting with Monroe County Engineer Amy Zwick. The submission of final annual yearly report for RTP program was completed. She attended the first Appalachian GIS Collaboration with the other LDDs and Ohio University. She is working with the Village of Caldwell on an upcoming water project and holding interviews for the Transportation Planning Manager position. She attended the Triple WWW quarterly transportation meeting, is developing the guidance and application for round 3 and 4 of ODOT capital funds, attended Perry County JFS and Region 8 mobility solution center kick off meeting. And is working with a few counties on brownfield and demo projects through Ohio Department of Development.
- **Kate Dunn** RISE Ohio projects are beginning to wrap up and should be complete by the end of October 2023. Buckeye Hills staff are working with USEPA staff to select projects to move forward under the USEPA Brownfields Assessment Grant. Noble County Demolition and Brownfield Remediation projects are moving forward. The Perry County BRECC Action Challenge team continues to work together to develop an Economic Diversification plan for the county.
- **Keegan Gault** The main priority has been continuing to work on and complete the return-on-investment maps with Dru Sexton, Environmental Design group, Melissa and Kate for our 8 counties. He is a part of the Meigs County Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee who met this month, along with the Downtown Logan Strategic Plan Steering Committee who also met this month. The planning department has been meeting with Historic Harmar Bridge Company discussing how Buckeye Hills can be an integral part in aiding the combined effort of restoring the bridge and developing the areas around each side of the river. The planning department also met with the development department regarding housing impediments for our region and developed a plan of action for updating that document. Keegan has attended a few GIS webinars along with ODOT's transportation information database webinars and plans on attending a road safety audits course put on by ODOT later this month.
- **Kelly Isaly** has worked on and submitted applications for: Mobility Management, Capital Cost of Contracting and Regional Transition Plan. Planning and Preparing for Transportation Awareness Day in October. She participated in ODOT's Ohio Public Transportation Conference. She continues to distribute transportation surveys in the community. She attended quarterly meetings for the TAC for Washington,

Noble and Monroe Counties. She attended and presented to Monroe County Senior about mobility management. She attended the Ohio Sunshine Laws Training on September 28th.

- **Julia Hinzman** participated in a Panel for the Development Summit. She has worked on and submitted applications for: Mobility Management, Capital Cost of Contracting and Regional Transition Plan. Planning and Preparing for Transportation Awareness Day in October. She participated in ODOT's Ohio Public Transportation Conference. She continues to distribute transportation surveys in the community. She attended quarterly meetings for the TAC for Washington, Noble and Monroe Counties. She is working with RHDD, WASCO, Board of DD with transportation issues in Washington County.

CONTACT: Melissa Zoller, Planning Director | mzoller@buckeyehills.org | 740-376-1027

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JOIN US

October 11

10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Generations Complex
Woodsfield, OH 43793

October 17

12:00 - 3:00 p.m.
Armory Square
Marietta, OH 45750

October 25

10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Courthouse Square
Caldwell, OH 43724

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REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURE

October 2023

Website Redesign & Development

\$43,410

CH Web Agency

- Website Redesign & Development (April 2024 launch target)
 - Including
 - HCBS Provider Directory
 - Grant/Funding Opportunity Database

Funding Source(s): Indirect and General Admin

Audio/Visual Equipment Upgrades

\$14,675

Grandview Systems, Inc.

- Upgrades to Audio/Visual Equipment in Large Conference Room
 - Including

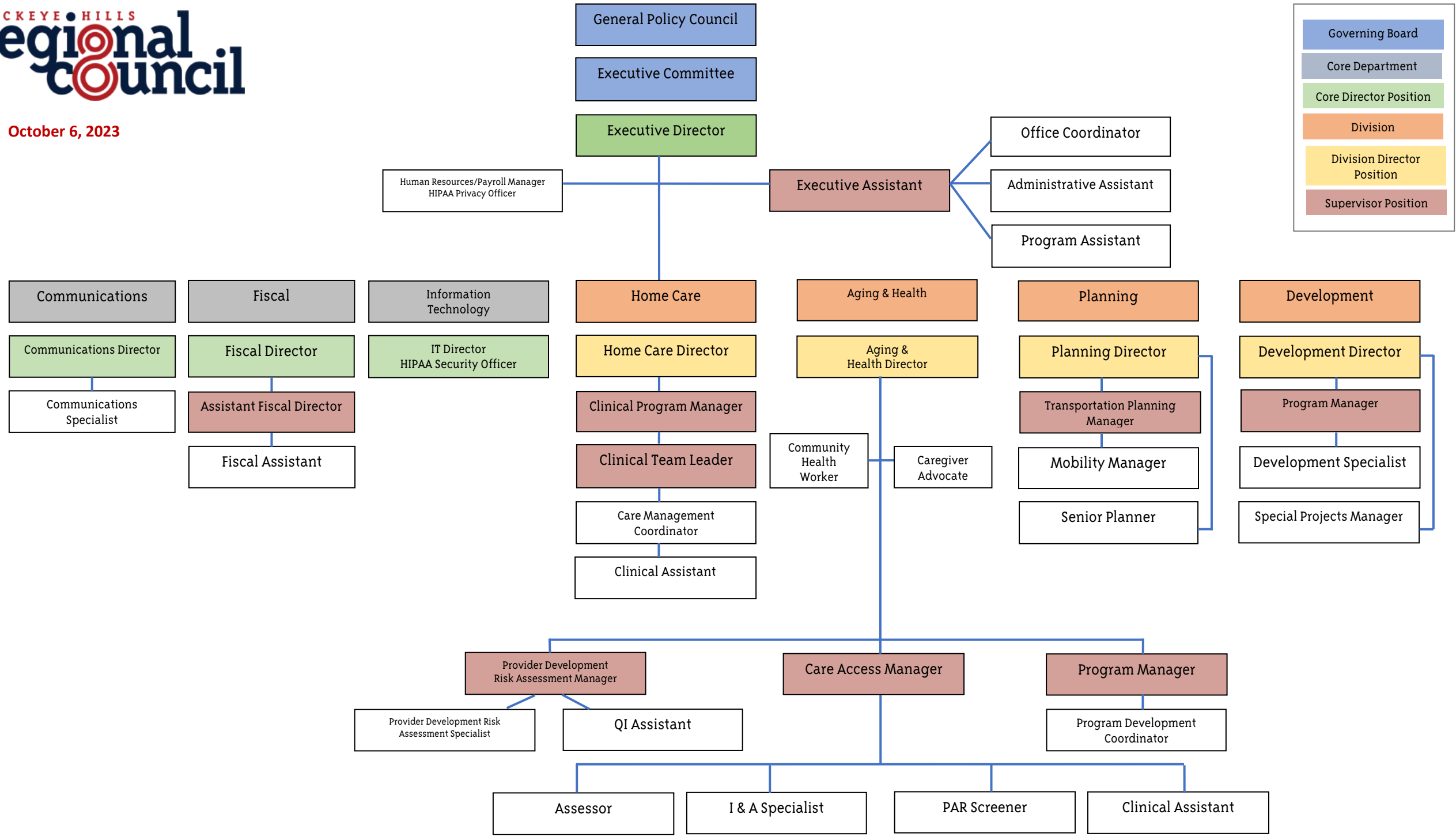
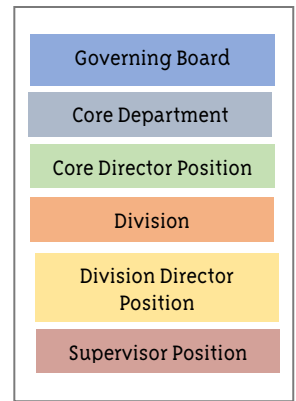
Funding Source: Regional Digital Inclusion Alliance Grant

\$58,085

Total Request



October 6, 2023





RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION 2024 PROJECTS

Recommendation to the State of Ohio Governor's Office of Appalachian and Ohio Department of Development to Support Funding of the Buckeye Hills Regional Council Pre-Application Priority of Projects in Fiscal Year 2024 for the Ohio Department of Development/Appalachian Regional Commission

Resolution #2023/10-01

WHEREAS, The Buckeye Hills Regional Council serves as the designated Local Development District (LDD) for the eight counties of Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Noble, Perry and Washington; and

WHEREAS, Buckeye Hills staff has received, reviewed, evaluated and rated pre-applications for the LDD region; and prioritized project applications for funding based on the Buckeye Hills Fiscal Year 2024 Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Pre-application Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, the subsequent project pre-applications are initiated by eligible ARC applicants and are being recommended by Buckeye Hills leadership to the Governor's Office of Appalachian and ARC as listed in the table; and

WHEREAS, the project pre-applications will advance one or more strategic goals as identified in the ARC Strategic Plan, including increasing economic opportunities; building a ready workforce; investing in critical infrastructure; strengthening natural and cultural assets, and developing leadership and community capacity.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Executive Committee of Buckeye Hills Regional Council hereby recommends the Fiscal Year 2023 ARC Pre-application Projects for Potential Submission, be approved as submitted and identified in this resolution to the Governor's Office of Appalachia, for their consideration and approval.

Passed this sixth day of October, 2023

Lenny Eliason, President

Ron Moore, Vice President

Projects for Potential Submission

Project Title	County	Project Grantee	Funding Requested	Total Project Cost
Sarahsville Storm Sewer Project	Noble	Village of Sarahsville	\$ 342,400.00	\$ 428,000.00
Lead Service Lines/Breezy Heights Tank/Proposed Wells	Meigs	Village of Pomeroy	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 2,164,100.00
Village of Middleport	Meigs	Village of Middleport	\$ 126,800.00	\$ 158,500.00
Canaanville Sewer Project-Athens County	Athens	Athens County Economic Development Council	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 350,076.00
New Lexington Connects: A Regional Workforce and Community Engagement Initiative	Perry	New Lexington Schools	\$ 249,582.00	\$ 1,408,538.00
Caldwell Water Project	Noble	Village of Caldwell	\$ 750,000.00	\$ 18,000,000.00
Lift Stations B-1 and B-6 Improvements	Perry	Village of Crooksville	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 2,122,000.00
Sanitary Sewer Extension	Perry	Perry County Commissioners	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 534,570.00
Hannibal Wastewater Collection and Treatment System Project	Monroe	Ohio & Lee Township Water and Sewer Authority	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 12,893,126.81
Wastewater Treatment Plant Replacement	Washington	Village of Lowell	\$ 571,000.00	\$ 3,423,878.00
SR 339 Transmission & Secure Supply and Barlow Tank & Booster	Washington	Washington County Commissioners to Little Hocking Water Association	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 7,972,400.00
Athens County 911/EOC Facility	Athens	Athens County Commissioners	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 8,250,000.00

Back Up List

Project Title	County	Project Grantee	Funding Requested	Total Project Cost
Water Storage Tank Improvements	Washington	Village of Beverly	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 1,120,900.00
Water System Improvements PFAS/PFOS	Washington	Village of Beverly	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 1,543,200.00
Water System Improvements	Washington	Tri-County Rural Water & Sewer District	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 1,371,600.00
State Route 93, Arnold Road, and Price Road Waterline Replacement	Perry	Old Straitsville Water Association	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 973,500.00
SR 13 Sanitary Sewer Extension	Perry	Perry County Commissioners	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 999,500.00
Water Systems Improvements	Morgan	Village Of Chesterhill	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 774,200.00
Village of Stockport Sanitary Sewer Replacement	Morgan	Village of Stockport	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 1,200,000.00
Water System Improvements	Perry	Village of Somerset	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 884,350.00
WWTP Electrical Upgrades	Washington	Village of Beverly	\$ 126,750.00	\$ 253,500.00
Junction City Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements	Perry	Village of Junction City	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 2,000,000.00
The Garrett Scott Memorial Teen Center and Music Program	Washington	Boys and Girls Club of Washington County	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 1,000,000.00
WWTP Sludge Press	Somerset	Village of Somerset	\$ 2,500,000.00	\$ 904,700.00
Main St. Underground Electric	Morgan	Village of McConnelsville	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 150,000.00
Water Systems Upgrades	Perry	Village of Roseville	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 366,500.00
Adams Township Building	Monroe	Adams Township Trustees	\$ 190,000.00	\$ 210,000.00
Connecting Underserved Morgan County	Morgan	Morgan County Commissioners	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 5,100,000.00
Water Systems Improvements- PFAS/PFOS	Morgan	Village of Chesterhill	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 1,233,000.00

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **October 23: Deadline for Comment on BroadbandOhio's Extremely High-Cost Location Methodology** | BroadbandOhio is extending the comment period for the **extremely high-cost location methodology** until Monday, October 23, 2023. This methodology will be used to determine the extremely high-cost areas in Ohio as required by the recently enacted House Bill 33. These will be the areas where fixed wireless providers will be able to compete for grant funds. This determination will be considered and voted on by the Broadband Expansion Program Authority as part of the process for announcing another round of funding for the Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grant Program. Contact Ryan Collins (rcollins@buckeyehills.org) to receive a copy of the methodology. Comments may be submitted via email to broadbandohio@development.ohio.gov.
- **Communities Receive Critical Infrastructure and Neighborhood Revitalization Grants** | Congratulations to communities in Hocking, Morgan, and Perry counties for receiving Neighborhood Revitalization and Critical Infrastructure Grants. Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, Lt. Governor Jon Husted, and Ohio Department of Development Director Lydia Mihalik **announced on September 15** that nearly two dozen communities will receive funding to complete critical infrastructure and neighborhood improvement projects that improve quality of life for local residents. The local grant awards include:
 - A \$500,000 Critical Infrastructure grant to assist the village of Stockport with sewer facility improvements
 - A \$750,000 Neighborhood Revitalization grant to assist the village of Murray City with water, stormwater, recreation, and street improvements
 - A \$750,000 Neighborhood Revitalization grant to assist Junction City with improvements to sidewalks, drainage infrastructure, street pavement, and recreation facilities
 - A \$750,000 Neighborhood Revitalization grant to assist the village of Shawnee with improved parks and recreation facilities, a street, fire protection facility/equipment, upgrades, sidewalks, and a community center

The grant awards are funded through the federal Community Development Block Grant program.

- **2024 ARC Appalachian Leadership Institute Fellows Include Two Southeast Ohio Leaders** | Congratulations to Bailey Venzin, Executive Director of the Hocking Hills Chamber of Commerce, and Jona Rinard, Dean of Transfer and Public Service at Washington State Community College, for being named among the 40 fellows selected for the 2023-2024 Class of the Appalachian Regional Commission's **Appalachian Leadership Institute**, a free leadership and economic development training opportunity for individuals currently living and working in one of ARC's 13 Appalachian states. The 2023-2024 class comprises a diverse network of professionals representing all 13 Appalachian states and a wide spectrum of perspectives and sectors, including tourism, healthcare, education, civil service, and more. Additional ALI Fellows from Appalachian Ohio include Amanda Crabtree, Marketing Director at Vinton County National Bank, and Chris Schaffer, Director of Grants and Sponsored Research at Shawnee State University.
- **Buckeye Hills Regional Council receives 2023 NADO Aliceann Wohlbruck Impact Awards** | Buckeye Hills Regional Council has received three **2023 Impact Awards** from the National Association of Development Organizations. The annual Impact Awards program honors NADO members for their creative approaches to advancing regional economic development and improving quality of life. These projects have made significant

impacts on their regions and demonstrate the diversity of services and program delivery provided by regional development organizations across the country. The 2023 class of awardees consists of 108 projects from 71 organizations spanning 28 states. The BHRC projects receiving recognition include our 2022 Appalachian Community Grant Program Convening, our [Downtown Revitalization Guidebook \(buckeyehills.org/downtown-revitalization\)](https://buckeyehills.org/downtown-revitalization), and our 2022 Broadband Listening Sessions. Award-winning projects will be featured on November 8 at the Impact Awards reception at NADO's [2023 Annual Training Conference \(ATC\)](#) in Cleveland.

- **ARC Makes INSPIRE Grant Awards to Support Appalachians Recovering from Substance Use Disorder** | On September 11, the Appalachian Regional Commission awarded nearly \$14 million to **43 projects** through its **Investments Supporting Partnerships In Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative**, which aims to address Appalachia's substance use disorder (SUD) crisis with investments in projects that create or expand services in the recovery ecosystem leading to workforce entry and re-entry. In the Buckeye Hills region, \$462,661 was awarded to Rural Action for the Expanding Pathways to Recovery through Entrepreneurship and Specialized Support (EXPRESS) project. EXPRESS will expand on the successes of Southeast Ohio Hope Center's pilot Recovery Community Organization and create the first recovery community organization in Meigs County. The model is designed to create and solidify linkages between post-treatment wraparound services, assisting individuals with maintaining recovery as they access employment supports through EXPRESS, including recovery-focused employment training, and improve 20 organizations by helping them employ program participants.
- **Planning Staff Discuss Brownfields with Ohio Rep. Mark Johnson** | At the invitation of General Assembly legislative staff, members of BHRC's Planning staff met with Ohio Rep. Mark Johnson to discuss the impacts of the state's brownfields funding in Southeast Ohio communities as the state prepares to roll out an additional \$350 million through the Brownfield Remediation Fund in 2024-2025. The Legislature again designated set-asides of \$1 million in funding for each of Ohio's 88 counties.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

- **The Ridges** The first meeting of the New Community Authority has been scheduled for October 9 and additional information regarding the development will be available after that time to update in the coming months.
- **Appalachian Community Grant Program Updates** | The program is moving along. There are seven potential Lead Applicants that are providing flyers to describe the application they want to put together for November and December. They are reviewing projects from across our region that Planners have provided. This week and next, meetings will be called to connect Lead Applicants with projects they are interested in so the communities can determine if they would like to work with them. The goal is for all projects to be connected by November 1.
- **BHRC Joins ARC, GOA on site visits to Monroe and Noble counties** | On Tuesday, September 26, I had the privilege of joining ARC Federal Co-Chair Gayle Manchin, ARC Congressional Liaison Guy Land and GOA Director John Carey on site visits to Shenandoah Local Schools in Noble County and Little Switzerland Local Schools, where ARC has supported investments in agricultural and maritime education programs, as well as school-based telehealth. The visit came ahead of the Appalachia Forward Conference at Belmont College in St. Clairsville.

STATE UPDATES

- **October 26: Nonprofit and Social Enterprise Information & Funding Workshop** | Ohio Department of Development, Sea Change, and the Columbus Urban League are hosting the Non-Profit and Social Enterprise Information & Funding Workshop on October 26, noon-1:30 p.m. at the Huntington Empowerment Center, 780, Mt. Vernon Ave. in Columbus. Speakers will discuss how these entities can secure funding and the distinction between social enterprise and nonprofit organizations. Register at forms.gle/GqpiKgAdVuvkbekn8.

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- Governor DeWine Announces Statewide H2Ohio Expansion Plans** | Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) Director Brian Baldrige today announced the statewide expansion of **H2Ohio's incentive program** for agriculture producers. The program, led by ODA, provides funding to producers to help offset the financial risk associated with implementing H2Ohio's proven agricultural best management practices (BMPs) that work to improve Ohio's water quality. Currently available only to farmers in the Western Lake Erie Basin, **producers anywhere in the state will be eligible to participate in H2Ohio beginning in 2024.** Enrollment for farmers outside of the Western Lake Erie Basin will open in early 2024, but enrollment is limited to a total of 500,000 new acres statewide. Incentives for new H2Ohio participants will be offered for the completion and implementation of Voluntary Nutrient Management Plans (VNMPs), H2Ohio's cornerstone practice that reduces the risk of the over-application of nutrients while also allowing producers to use practices that best fit their farming operations. Local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) work directly with each producer to approve VNMPs, assess the compatibility of implementing additional BMPs, and provide conservation education. Visit <https://ofswcd.org/about/find-your-swcd.html> to find your local SWCD.
- Volunteer Fire Department Safety Gear Funding Opportunity** | The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) now offers local volunteer fire departments the opportunity to receive up to \$15,000 in grants to help pay for firefighting safety equipment. BWC recently expanded eligibility for its Firefighter Exposure to Environmental Elements Grants (FEEEG) to include turnout gear for local volunteer fire departments. Volunteer fire departments interested in applying for FEEEG funding can visit [https://info.bwc.ohio.gov/for-employers/safety-and-training/safety-grants/firefighter-\(feeeg\)-grant](https://info.bwc.ohio.gov/for-employers/safety-and-training/safety-grants/firefighter-(feeeg)-grant).
- AOS Advisory: Ohio Electricity Litigation Settlements** | The Auditor of State's Office has received inquiries from local governments receiving digital payments and debit cards related to the First Energy "**Ohio Electricity Litigation**" settlement. On July 7, 2023, the United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio entered an Order Approving Distribution of Settlement Funds in the class action lawsuit Smith v. FirstEnergy Corp., et al., Case No. 2:20-cv-3755. On July 31, 2023, in accordance with the Order, the administrator began distributing payments to eligible Settlement Class Members. If you received an email from rewards@reward.tremendous.com or OhioLitigationRewards@rewards.tremendous.com, it is NOT SPAM. Tremendous is the digital payment provider for this settlement. The Auditor of State's office has provided guidance on how to handle these payments in their full advisory at https://ohioauditor.gov/publications/docs/PUCO_Debit_Card_Advisory_Sept%202023.pdf.
- Grade Crossing Elimination Program** | Governor DeWine created the Ohio Grade Crossing Elimination Program for fiscal years 2024 and 2025 through House Bill 33 (Operating Budget). The program provides \$100 million to help Ohio communities compete for grade crossing elimination grants from the Federal Railroad Administration's Railroad Crossing Elimination Program. Ohio communities will submit grade crossing elimination projects to the Ohio Rail Development Commission, which will identify the projects with the best opportunities for federal funding and assist communities in developing these sites into competitive federal grant applications. Any public entity that owns its road network, including cities, villages, townships, counties and Ohio Department of Transportation districts, is eligible to apply. There is no deadline to apply, however communities are encouraged to apply as early as possible in order to maximize opportunities to apply for federal funding. County Engineers, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and Rural Transportation Planning Organizations may apply on behalf of a local community. Learn more on the Ohio Rail Development Commission's website at <https://rail.ohio.gov/railroad-crossings/a-grade-crossing-elimination>.
- Ohio Local Government Bidding Clearinghouse** | Local governments can now post their project details for free on the new Ohio Local Government Bidding Clearinghouse (olgbclearinghouse.org). This service is provided to local governments by the Ohio Contractors Association. There are two videos on the main page of the website that will help you get up and running quickly. Registered companies/contractors who want to bid will automatically be notified of your project when you post it.

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FEDERAL UPDATES

- **November 10: Building Resilient Economies in Coal Communities (BRECC) Action Challenge Deadline** | Applications are now open for BRECC's Action Challenge, a one-year technical assistance program for coal-impacted communities. BRECC's Action Challenges is a competitive opportunity to receive capacity-building support, collaborate with peers, and develop an economic diversification strategy. The BRECC Action Challenge will empower community teams to advance projects for economic revitalization. For more information, visit www.naco.org/BRECC.
- **\$7.5 Billion in Available U.S. EPA Financing for Water Infrastructure Projects** | The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced \$7.5 billion in available Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) funding. This innovative low-interest loan program helps communities invest in drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure while saving millions of dollars and creating good-paying local jobs. To date, EPA's WIFIA program has announced \$19 billion to help finance 109 projects across the country. These projects are creating over 60,000 jobs. Learn more about the WIFIA program, selected projects, and this funding announcement at www.epa.gov/wifia.
- **American Rescue Plan Act State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Update** | On August 11, the U.S. Department of the Treasury published the 2023 Interim Final Rule, which implements new uses of State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) authorized in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023. The new eligible uses allow recipients to use program funds for emergency relief from natural disasters, community development, and surface transportation projects. See the [Overview of the Interim Final Rule](#) and a [one-pager](#) describing the changes and next steps. The existing eligible uses are generally unchanged, and recipients may continue to use SLFRF funds in accordance with the 2022 final rule. Recipients have the opportunity to submit comments on the 2023 Interim Final Rule through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at www.regulations.gov. Visit <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments> for more information.
- **USDA Meat and Poultry Processing Expansion Program** | The Meat and Poultry Processing Expansion Program (MPPEP) provides grants to help eligible processors expand their processing capacity, which creates new, better, and more processing options for meat and poultry producers. USDA Rural Development designed the MPPEP to encourage competition and sustainable growth in the U.S. meat processing sector and to help improve supply chain resiliency. Eligible applicants include entities that engage or plan to engage in meat and poultry processing, including private, non-profit, tribal, cooperative, state, or local government, among other entities. Private entities must be independently owned and operated. All entities must be domestically owned, and their meat and poultry processing facilities must be physically located and operated within the U.S. or its territories. The maximum award amount is \$10 million, or 30 percent of total project costs, whichever is less. The minimum award amount is \$250,000. Visit <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/meat-and-poultry-processing-expansion-program> for application details.
- **Proposed Rule on Web Access for Older Adults and People with Disabilities** | The U.S. Department of Justice [proposed the first-ever rule](#) to clarify how digital access applies to obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This rule focuses on those with disabilities; however, many older adults fall under the ADA umbrella, with 30 percent of Americans older than age 60 and 50 percent of people over 75 having some impairment that falls under the ADA. As state and local governments continue to move more of their programs and activities online – from applying for permits to checking the status of service requests, registering vehicles, and paying taxes and fees – the rule is aimed at ensuring that people with disabilities have equal access to these same services. Information about the proposed rule is available at <https://www.ada.gov/notices/2023/07/20/web-nprm/>.
- **Bipartisan SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act introduced** | Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Bill Cassidy (R-LA) and U.S. Representatives Brian Higgins (D-NY-26) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-1) introduced the SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act ([S. 2767/HR 5408](#)). The bipartisan legislation would raise SSI asset limits from \$2,000 to \$10,000 for individuals and from \$3,000 to \$20,000 for married couples, and index asset limits to inflation.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES & EVENTS:

- **October 11 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.: Monroe County Transportation Awareness Day** | Generations Complex, Woodfield
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- **October 12, 10:00 a.m.:** District 18 Natural Resources Assistance Council FY2024 Application Review | Buckeye Hills Regional Council, Marietta
- **October 13, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.:** Buckeye Hills Foundation River Cruise with Jimmy Burrow | Valley Gem Sternwheeler, Marietta. Register at <https://buckeyehills.org/cruise>.
- **October 20 & 27: ED Now – Planning for Economic Development Success** | Via Zoom. Register for free at <https://bit.ly/EDNOW>.
- **October 17, 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.:** Washington County Transportation Awareness Day | Armory Square, Marietta
- **October 25, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.:** Noble County Transportation Awareness Day | Courthouse Square, Caldwell
- **October 25, 10:00 a.m.:** Aging & Health Regional Advisory Council | Buckeye Hills Regional Council, Marietta
- **November 16-17: OEDI Economic Development Finance & Incentives Course** | Ohio University Dublin Campus. Register at <https://oeda.wildapricot.org/event-4508260>.

CONTACT INFO: Chasity Schmelzenbach, Executive Director
cschmelzenbach@buckeyehills.org | 740-376-1034

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