



## Trenton I. Weaver

Councilmember, Ward 4

Vice President of Council

[trenton.weaver@gahanna.gov](mailto:trenton.weaver@gahanna.gov)

---

### Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) Representative Report to City Council

August 19, 2024

---

#### Highlights

##### MORPC Commission/Committee Meeting:

- MORPC held its monthly commission and committee meetings on Thursday, August 8, 2024. [More information here.](#)
- Next meeting – September 12<sup>th</sup>.

##### Join the Public Policy Agenda Working Group:

- MORPC'S Government Affairs team is seeking MORPC members to participate on the 2025-2026 Public Policy Agenda Working Group. This group discusses key policy issues affecting Central Ohio local governments and produces our Public Policy Agenda, which guides our advocacy before the Statehouse and Congress.
- The PPA Working Group will meet monthly from July to September. Click the link to fill out an interest form. [More information here.](#)

##### MORPC Grant of the Month:

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is awarding \$50,000-\$1 million in Broadband Technical Assistance Grants for eligible entities looking to promote broadband expansion into a rural community. No local match is required.
- Applications are due August 20, 2024. [More information here.](#)
- To seek more available funding opportunities as a MORPC member, make sure to visit the [Drive Investment Portal.](#)

##### Other Funding Opportunities:

- Good Jobs Challenge
  - Department: Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration
  - Available funding: \$25 million available, awards will range from \$1 million to \$8 million
  - Application deadline: September 27, 2024
  - Eligible Applicants: Local government, States, Institutions of higher education, Public or private non-profits, Government organizations engaged in economic or infrastructure development
  - Eligible Projects: Design and implementation of training programs for established or emerging sectoral partnerships, such as: Registered apprenticeship programs, Skills training programs, Pre-apprenticeship programs, Work-and-Learn models, Certificate/credentialing programs, Labor management training programs

- Clean Energy to Communities Program: Expert Match
  - Department: Department of Energy – National Renewable Energy Laboratory
  - Available Funding: This is a technical assistance program that provides 40-60 hours of assistance over 3-4 months, based on application submission date.
  - Application deadline: Rolling
  - Eligible Applicants: Local government, Regional planning organizations, Community-based organizations, Nongovernmental organizations, Municipality or coop utility, Institutions of Higher Education
  - Eligible Projects: Free, short-term, technical assistance to address near-term clean energy challenges and questions
- Reconnecting Communities Pilot Grant Program
  - Department: Department of Transportation – Office of the Secretary
  - Available Funding: \$607 million in total program funding
  - Application Deadline: September 30, 2024
  - Eligible Applicants: States, State Governments, Local Governments, Non-profits, Metropolitan Planning Organizations
  - Eligible Projects: Transportation planning activities that restore community connectivity, Public engagement, Development of community connectivity facilities
- Recycling and Litter Prevention Grants
  - Department: Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
  - Available Funding: Awards range from \$10,000 - \$300,000
  - Application Dates: October 7, 2024 – December 6, 2024
  - Eligible Applicants: Ohio – Schools, Counties, Health departments, Municipal corporations, Non-profits, Park districts, Private sector businesses, Solid waste management authorities, State agencies, Townships, Villages
  - Eligible Projects: Initiate or expand recycling programs, Encourage sustainable practices, Stimulate economic growth, Support litter prevention efforts

#### MORPC Educational Benefits:

- MORPC has partnered with Ohio University and Otterbein University to enhance benefits for its members employees, and immediate family in some programs, by offering discounts on undergraduate and graduate programs. [More information here.](#)

#### Legislative Update:

- State lawmakers in both houses have passed a \$6.2 billion Capital Budget, HB 2, which includes appropriating over \$700 million in One-Time Strategic Community Investment Funds (OTSCIF). Over \$140 million in OTSCIF funding was appropriated for Central Ohio Projects.
- The Bill reappropriates nearly \$595 million for the Ohio Public Works Commission. It also imposes a 10% cap on annual funds that district public works integrating committees can give to political subdivisions seeking interest-free or low-interest loans under the State Capital Improvement Program.
- After passing HB 2 at the end of June, the Ohio Legislature is now in recess and won't be back in session until after the November election.

#### Money Mondays Archive & Upcoming Sessions:

- You can view previous MORPC "Money Mondays" with Regional Investment Officer, Dr. Todd Bradley, on the MORPC YouTube Channel [here](#). These sessions are an opportunity for members to learn more about key funding opportunities. To sign up for upcoming webinars, complete this [registration here](#). Upcoming Money Monday sessions include:
  - August 19 - The Community Development Block Program
  - August 26 - OSU Office of Academic Affairs Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and Reporting, Jay Johnson – Project Management
  - September 2- No Money Monday

## Upcoming Events

### **Safe Streets Central Ohio: Creating Vibrant Communities:**

*Thursday, September 26, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., at MORPC at Wigwam Event Center (10190 Blacklick Eastern Rd. Pickerington, OH 43147)*

- Safe Streets Central Ohio is an annual event hosted by MORPC in collaboration with key partners to highlight efforts throughout the region to reduce the number of traffic fatalities and severe injuries occurring on our roadways. This event provides an opportunity for local decision-makers, transportation professionals, and public health practitioners, advocates, and other partners to come together to share, learn, and network with a focus on transportation safety. [More information here.](#)

### **Rural Forum: Zoning for the Future**

*Wednesday, October 23, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., at Perry County Opportunity Center (5454 SR-37, New Lexington)*

- This forum is focused on how to start a zoning process in communities that have little to no zoning plans. Participants will learn why effective zoning programs help preserve valuable community assets while enabling leaders to plan for the future. Registration is free to MORPC members and lunch will be provided. Nonmembers are welcome to attend at the \$15 rate.
- A post event will be held in the Village of Somerset. Join Mayor Tom Johnson on the square of Somerset to hear his strategy for improving a community innovatively. For more information, please contact Eileen Leuby, MORPC Member Services Coordinator, [eleuby@morpc.org](mailto:eleuby@morpc.org)

### **Summit on Sustainability**

*Tuesday, October 29, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., at Hilton Columbus Downtown (401 North Street, Columbus, OH 43215)*

- The Summit on Sustainability is MORPC's signature environmental conference, bringing hundreds of community leaders together to explore and share sustainable ideas and solutions. This event will also celebrate individuals and collaborative sustainability efforts with the Regional Sustainability Awards. The Summit will feature two plenary sessions and breakout sessions that will focus on MORPC's sustainability programs. [More information here.](#)

## News

### **ASPYR RECEIVES \$4 MILLION ABA GRANT TO EXPAND REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS IN CENTRAL OHIO**

Aspyr (formerly known as the Workforce Development Board of Central Ohio) has been awarded a \$4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to establish and grow registered apprenticeships in Central Ohio. This grant will allow Aspyr and South Central Ohio Workforce Partnership (SCOWP) to expand high-quality training and employment opportunities to individuals in the region including Franklin, Fairfield, Ross, Pickaway, Hocking, and Vinton Counties. The grant, provided through Apprenticeship Building America (ABA), will enable Aspyr and SCOWP to develop and implement registered apprenticeship programs in various in-demand industries, such as healthcare, manufacturing, and education. These programs will provide individuals with hands-on training and valuable skills, leading to well-paying jobs and career advancement opportunities.

Aspyr and SCOWP are excited to begin the implementation of these registered apprenticeship programs and look forward to the positive impact they will have on the community. For more information about Aspyr or SCOWP please visit their websites at [www.aspyrworkforce.org](http://www.aspyrworkforce.org) or <https://www.scoworkforcepartnership.org>.