



Each quarter we feature a photo of one of our members. This quarter we feature the Metro-Parks of Butler County.

#### Highlights of this Issue:

- 2026 Leadership Academy

#### Fall Trainings:

- HR Luncheon
- Payroll Forum

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## Center for Local Government Winter 2026 Newsletter

### 2026 Leadership Academy

CLG is currently in the process of preparing for the 13th annual Center for Local Government Leadership Academy. This year's Academy will hold its first class on March 25th. Registration materials will be released on January 28th, so please keep an eye out. Aimed towards local governments, the CLG Leadership Academy is its flagship program, with per person fees typically being below \$1,000.

The Leadership Academy consists of six classes: Local Government 101, Effective Communications, a Xavier Leadership Center class (taught by Xavier University), Human Resources Management, Finance and Budgeting, and Economic Development/Land Use. These classes are designed for anyone who works in local government, and we have had participants from a variety of positions go through the program, from intern and assistant city manager to public safety and public works personnel. Any employee who works for a CLG or Miami Valley Risk Management Association (MVRMA) member government is eligible to participate.

We are looking forward to another year of the Leadership Academy and meeting this year's class. Stay tuned!





## The Center for Local GOVERNMENT

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Sharonville, OH 45241  
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### ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION:

The Center for Local Government (CLG) located in Cincinnati, OHIO is a unique non-profit 501 (c)(3) corporation, created in 1990 as a clearinghouse for inter-governmental collaboration, training and information sharing.

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mike Thonnerieux, Washington Township (President)

Jim Lukas, Sharonville (Vice President)

Vicky Earhart, Anderson Township (Secretary / Treasurer)

Noah Powers, Norwood

John Lewis, Liberty Township

## Effective Governance Through Collaboration



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## Voinovich Academy Training: Governing Essentials

**Governing Essentials** is an innovative course for newly elected or appointed officials at the municipal, township and county level. The course, which is offered in a hybrid format (in-person and virtual) provides a high-level understanding of the fundamentals of local government: **finance, economic development, planning, public works, communication, public safety and ethics**. While designed with newly elected officials in mind, the course is also appropriate for more experienced elected officials seeking a refresher, as well as appointed staff in local government.

The course is offered by the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service at Ohio University using seasoned practitioners and academic experts, each providing valuable insight into the workings of local government. It is designed to fit the schedules of busy participants. The two in-person workshops are hosted in Central Ohio.

The \$800 registration fee includes all five workshops, an economic development field trip, meals and parking for in-person workshops. The field trip for the 2026 program will be to the Transportation Research Center and Automotive and Mobility Innovation Center in Marysville.

Registration for the 2026 program opens in January, 2026.

For more information, visit: <https://www.ohio.edu/voinovich-school/academy/training#upcoming>



## New Faces in New Places

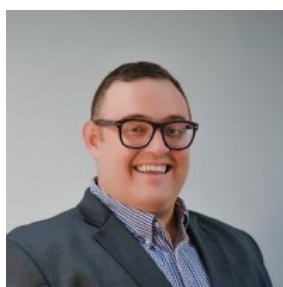
At the start of 2026, several leadership changes took place: **Chris Fine** became City Manager of the City of Miamisburg, succeeding Keith Johnson; and former CLG Assistant Director **Cody Smith** is now Zoning Administrator for the City of Riverside, after serving as the Township Administrator with Bethel Township. Also, CLG would like to extend a warm welcome to the City of South Lebanon's new City Administrator, **Chris Hacker**. Prior to his appointment, Chris has worked with the cities of Hamilton, Centerville, and Fairfield in municipal procurement and finance. We would also like to welcome **John Lewis**, Liberty Township's Assistant Township Administrator, who joined the CLG Board of Trustees as an at-large member.

CLG is also excited to welcome a new government into our membership. Our new member is MetroParks of Butler County. Please reach out and welcome MetroParks of Butler County Executive Director, **Jackie O'Connell** ([joconnell@yourmetroparks.net](mailto:joconnell@yourmetroparks.net)). This brings CLG's membership total to 71 governments.

If we missed anyone, please let us know and they will be included on the next edition of the CLG newsletter.



**Chris Fine**



**Cody Smith**



**Chris Hacker**



**John Lewis**



**Jackie O'Connell**

**Interesting Fact:** In 1993, the CLG Board consisted of 8 members, with two townships and six cities represented.





The Center for Local  
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## HR Luncheon

Back in October, CLG partnered with Hylant's Risk Management Representative, Greg Hennecke, to deliver a presentation on De-Escalation and Difficult People. This session was hosted at the Sharonville Community Center and attended by a variety of local government personnel. From Human Resource, Finance/Tax, to Administration and Development, this session was attended by 19 different jurisdictions.

If you would like to be added to the HR contact list, please contact Ziah Huett (ZHuett@C4LG.org).



## Payroll Administrators Forum

In November, CLG held its second Payroll Administrators Forum at Terwilliger Lodge in Montgomery, Ohio, where members discussed best practices, legislation, and payroll solutions. The event brought together HR, finance, and other payroll personnel from across the network.

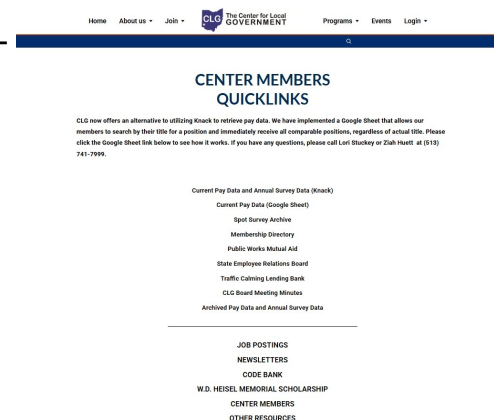
Additionally, CLG hosted a virtual "No Tax on Overtime" session for its Payroll Administrators group on January 6th. Delivered by Clark Schaefer Hackett's Jackie Mastin, this session discussed the implications of this policy and what local governments need to know in preparation for its implementation.



## Annual Survey & CAO Pay Data

CLG began its Annual Survey in September 2025, with data currently being processed. This year, 41 of 70 members (59%) participated. The biannual CAO Pay Data request in October saw responses from 33 of 64 members (52%).

Access the Pay and Benefits Data Center via the CLG website, or contact Ziah Huett (ZHuett@C4LG.org) for questions.





## Public Works Mutual Aid Pact

CLG's Public Works Mutual Aid Pact program underwent its biennial update this past Fall in October. Out of the 38 participants in the program, 28 (74%) of them responded with their updates, which are being consolidated into an updated manual.

If your community is interested in joining the program, please reach out to Ziah Huett (ZHuett@C4LG.org).



The Center for Local  
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2024-2025 Public Works  
Mutual Aid Manual

## Investment Insights: Knowledge From Our Portfolio Management Partners

The Center for Local Government [Treasury Asset Management Collaborative \(TAMC\)](#) offers an opportunity for member government to take advantage of professional portfolio managers with ample experience in public sector finance. Since 2011, CLG has partnered with SJS Investment Services and RedTree Investments, to provide participating governments with financial management expertise.

Governments participating in the TAMC have a choice between both firms to determine which investment approach is most appropriate for their entity's investment needs. Each entity has the option to set up separate investment accounts with one of the firms. And no entity is required to **ONLY** invest with one of these two firms. To provide an introduction:

Since 2011, **SJS Investment Services** has been a trusted advisor in the CLG's Treasury Asset Management Collaborative, helping members manage investments with clarity and confidence. Our team supports public entities with cash flow analysis, navigating interest rate and bond market shifts, and aligning portfolios with each entity's goals, liquidity needs, and fiduciary responsibilities.

**RedTree Investment Group** is an independent investment advisory firm specializing in fixed-income portfolio management for public entities. We partner with local governments to develop customized investment strategies that prioritize safety, liquidity, and return. Our experienced team provides transparent guidance and dedicated service to help clients navigate the complexities of public funds investing.

*Each quarter, a representative from SJS or RedTree will use this column to provide money management insights to the CLG membership. This month, the column will be written by*



### Liquidity Tiers: A Practical Structure for Purpose-Driven Investing

*By Kirk Ludwig*

Public entities across Ohio manage cash that serves many different purposes, yet those dollars often sit in a single undifferentiated pool. When short-term yields are attractive, it can feel logical to keep everything in an overnight option like STAROhio. When rates fall, pressure shifts toward stretching maturities to preserve income. Neither approach is inherently wrong, but both are reactions to market conditions rather than reflections of a long-term funding plan. A more durable structure begins with separating cash by purpose and timing before considering yield.

**Continued on Next Page...**



## Investment Insights: Knowledge From Our Portfolio Management Partners

A useful way to do this is through *liquidity tiers*, an approach that organizes funds according to when they will reasonably be needed. This creates clarity, reduces emotional decision-making, and aligns investments with the financial rhythm of your entity rather than the daily rhythm of interest-rate movements. While each entity is unique, a tiered structure typically includes three components:

- **Operating Liquidity (0–6 months):** Funds supporting payroll, public safety, routine vendor payments, classroom needs, road maintenance, and other predictable obligations. These dollars belong in highly liquid, low-volatility vehicles where immediate access is essential.
- **Intermediate Liquidity (6–18 months):** Dollars earmarked for seasonal expenses, small-to-mid-sized capital items, recurring maintenance cycles, or the early phases of infrastructure planning. These funds can often be matched to CDs, Treasuries, or agencies maturing in alignment with expected uses.
- **Strategic Liquidity (18–36+ months):** Resources intended for longer-term projects such as fleet replacements, road resurfacing, facility improvements, technology upgrades, or multi-year capital plans. These can be invested along a measured maturity ladder to generate steadier income and reduce reinvestment risk.

This structure is valuable because it reframes decision-making. Many entities feel tension between the safety of STAROhio and the potential income of a bond portfolio. Liquidity tiers clarify that the question is not *STAROhio versus bonds*. The question is: *Which dollars need to remain liquid, and which can be allowed to work over a defined horizon?* Once timing is established, the appropriate vehicle often becomes self-evident.

A disciplined tiering model also helps counter a familiar temptation. When overnight yields exceed those of two- or three-year securities, holding everything short may appear prudent. But that choice ties investment decisions to short-term rate cycles rather than to the future obligations of the entity. If rates fall, project dollars in overnight cash are suddenly exposed to reinvestment risk at precisely the moment they are needed to support a capital plan. Tiering avoids this by assigning dollars to their purpose first and then selecting investments within the allowable options under Ohio Revised Code Section 135.14 that reflect that purpose.

Over time, liquidity tiers create a shared framework for fiscal officers, administrators, boards, and councils. They provide transparency around why certain funds remain liquid while others are placed in structured maturities. They also can offer predictability, which supports budgeting, capital planning, and long-range financial stability without requiring an interest-rate forecast or constant portfolio adjustments.

In a period when public entities face both rising operational demands and heightened scrutiny around financial stewardship, structure matters. Purpose-aligned liquidity tiers can transform a single pool of cash into a plan that balances safety, access, and reasonable return. By organizing dollars according to when they are needed, not just where yields happen to be today, Ohio's public entities can build a more resilient investment approach that supports both daily responsibilities and long-term community priorities.

### *Important Disclosure Information:*

*There is no guarantee investment strategies will be successful. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Diversification neither assures a profit nor guarantees against a loss in a declining market.*



## **GUEST ARTICLE: LIBERTY TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT MAINTAINS ESTEEMED ISO CLASS 2**

The Liberty Township Fire Department (LTFD) is proud to announce that it has once again maintained its Class 2 rating from the Insurance Services Office (ISO) Public Protection Classification (PPC) program – an achievement that reflects the department's ongoing commitment to excellence in fire protection and community safety.

The LTFD first earned this top classification in 2017 and continues to uphold the high standards required to maintain it. The ISO PPC program evaluates key elements of fire protection services including emergency communication systems, firefighting operations, water supply infrastructure, and community risk reduction efforts such as fire prevention and public education.

"Maintaining a Class 2 rating for nearly a decade is a testament to the dedication of our firefighters, the strength of our partnerships and our community's investment in public safety," stated Fire Chief Ethan Klussman. "A special thank you to Assistant Fire Chief Dave Greve, whose leadership and coordination were instrumental in helping the LTFD maintain this high standard. We are proud to serve Liberty Township with professionalism and consistency every day."

### **Why It Matters to Residents and Businesses**

The ISO PPC score is a tool used by most property insurance companies when determining rates. A better PPC classification – like Liberty Township's Class 2 – can lead to lower insurance premiums for homes and businesses.

A Class 2 rating indicates very strong fire protection services, based on a comprehensive evaluation of dispatch operations, training, staffing levels, response times, water supply systems and proactive safety initiatives.

## **GUEST ARTICLE: PIERCE TOWNSHIP FIRST RESPONDERS, GOOD SAMARITAN HONORED BY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The Pierce Township Board of Trustees dedicated a portion of Wednesday's meeting to recognizing nine Pierce Township first responders and a civilian for their efforts in saving the life of a four-year-old child.

On October 23<sup>rd</sup>, the boy nearly drowned in his family's swimming pool. He was pulled from the water by his father, but he was not breathing and did not have a pulse.

In a panic, the boy's father ran to the road for help and flagged down the right person – Jaraka Hazelbaker.

Ms. Hazelbaker, thankfully, had CPR training and immediately started life-saving efforts.

Minutes later, Pierce Township Police Officer Dustin Wade made it to the house and rushed to help. He asked Ms. Hazelbaker to flag down the responding medics and continued CPR.

The crew from the Pierce Township Fire Department was there just two minutes later, and Lieutenant Elijah Hammonds and Firefighter Kevin Barkley III took immediate action. They continued care with the assistance of Assistant Fire Chief Jim Watkins, Lieutenant Eric Wehrum, Firefighters Eric Nause, Kyle Kollhoff, Gabriel Kayser, and Ethan Watren.

The boy was taken to Cincinnati Children's Hospital, and after several days of intensive care, the child was stabilized and released on October 31<sup>st</sup>.

To recognize the incredible efforts on that day, the Pierce Township Board of Trustees presented public service commendations to all first responders involved with the rescue.

Ms. Hazelbaker, as a civilian, was given a certificate of recognition for her crucial role in saving the boy's life.



## News Bits

### Membership Dues

We would like to thank all of our members for their continued participation. Membership dues invoices will be distributed to all current members in mid-January. If you have any questions about your dues, contact Drew Tilow at DTilow@C4LG.org.

### OCMA Conference

The 2026 OCMA Conference will be held in the city of Sharonville, OH at the Sharonville Convention Center (11355 Chester Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45246). Please click here to register: [OCMA Conference - Registration](#).

### Upcoming Trainings/Events

CLG has numerous trainings and events coming up in the first half of this year. From the "No Tax on OT" session, CAMA/NKCCMA Joint Meeting, to the return of the Local Elected Officials Training, we are committed to offering the best training opportunities for our members. Please see below for what else we are offering.

## Upcoming Events from CLG and Partners

**No Tax on Overtime Virtual Session, January 6, 2026**, 9:00am - 10:00am, via Zoom (Link Will Be Provided). [Please click here to see the flyer](#) with more details and registration information.

**CAMA/NKCCMA Luncheon, January 9, 2026**, 12:00pm – 1:30pm at the OneNKY Center (209 Greenup Street, Covington, KY 41011). [Please click here to see the flyer](#) with more details and registration information.

**Ask the Organizers, January 14, 2026**, 11:30am-12:30pm, free MVCC training link from training partners. [Please click here to register](#).

**CLG Water Works Forum, January 22, 2026**, 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM at The Exchange Conference Room (4010 Executive Park Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45241). Please click here to see the flyer with more details and registration information.

**Tort Liability & Risk Management for Public Agencies – Webinar Series January 27, 28 & 29**. Please [click here to see flyer](#) with details.

**Behaviors in the Workplace Training, January 29, 2026**, presented by MVCC 8:30-3:00pm at MVCC (1195 East Alex Bell Rd., Centerville, OH 45459). Cost is \$75 for members, \$85 for Affiliates, and \$95 for Non-members. [Please click here to register](#) and for more information.

**Thriving at Work: Boosting Health, Wellness and Engagement Training, February 3, 2026**, 8:30-11:30am at MVCC (1195 East Alex Bell Rd., Centerville, OH 45459). Cost is \$55 for Members, \$65 for Affiliates, and \$75 for Non-members. [Click here to register](#).

**Snow and Ice Circuit Rider Training, February 18, 2026**, 11:00am – 3:00pm at the Exchange Conference Room (4010 Executive Park Dr., Sharonville, OH 45241) Please [RSVP to Ziah Huett](#) by 4:00pm on February 13, 2026.

**Save the Date: Newly Elected Local Officials Training, March 14, 2026**, 9:00am - 1:00pm at ArtsConnect in Springfield Township (9158 Winton Road, Cincinnati, OH 45231). More details and registration to come soon.