

GRASSROOTS

Clippings

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE OHIO TOWNSHIP ASSOCIATION



ohiotownships.org



APPLICATIONS ARE NOW BEING ACCEPTED FOR NEW ODOT TOWNSHIP GRANT PROGRAM

As reported last month, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) has announced a new grant opportunity for townships. The Township Stimulus Program is a one-time program providing funding to townships for sidewalk, roadway, and culvert projects located within township limits. The total funding available for this program is \$8 million; a funding limit of \$250,000 per project has been established.

To be eligible for the Township Stimulus Program, the project must:

- be within township limits;
- require no or minimal environmental or right-of-way work; and
- be a sidewalk, roadway (including pavement marking and guardrail), or culvert (less than 10 ft. span).

Further information and application link may be found in the September/October issue of the *Ohio Township News* magazine or at <https://www.transportation.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odot/programs/local-funding-opportunities/resources/township-stimulus-program>.

For questions about the program or assistance with the application process, please contact Program Administrator Nichole Lawhorn at Nichole.Lawhorn@dot.ohio.gov.

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DID YOU KNOW?

"Deputy Fiscal Officer vs. Fiscal Assistant"

ETHICS COMMISSION NEWS YOU CAN USE

The Ohio Ethics Commission is reminding public officials to review previously issued Advisory Opinion 2009-06 regarding the Ohio's Ethics Law governance over federal stimulus funds, including the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

The opinion concluded that public officials cannot profit from federally funded contracts or participate when family members or business associates might benefit from them. It outlines prohibitions against public officials misusing their public positions to secure stimulus funds or participating in any actions involving the funds, where family members or business associates of the public official may otherwise lawfully have some direct benefit from the contract.

Additionally, the Ethics Commission released an Advisory Opinion (2021-01) earlier this year concerning a city official serving as executive director of an organization (such as a local chamber of commerce, regional planning commission, municipal league, state library council, municipal clerk's association, state government finance officers' association, etc.) if the city pays membership dues to the organization. The Ohio Ethics Commission opined that yes, a city official could provided that the official can meet the applicable requirements and exceptions to the public contract law and withdraw from matters before the city that definitely and directly affect the membership organization. This opinion would also apply to township officials.

Finally, the third quarter edition of *The Voice of Ethics* is available at https://www.ethics.ohio.gov/education/newsletters/VOE_21Q3.pdf.

("Did You Know?" continued from page 4.)

board may also contract with a private accountant to correct the township books with the concurrence of the township fiscal officer, should it be necessary.

As stated, there are many reasons these positions may be appropriate on a temporary or ongoing basis. However, the positions of deputy and assistant fiscal officer are distinct, and townships should consider what is most appropriate in their given situation.

For more information about deputy fiscal officers and fiscal assistants, please refer to the Auditor of State's *Township Handbook* or speak with your legal counsel.

"Did You Know?" is informational only and is not intended to serve as legal advice.

DON'T FORGET:

This newsletter and the OTA's magazine are great resources for OTA members to stay updated on big topics and to get helpful information.

Don't forget to like and follow the OTA's social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter) and check out the OTA website's newsroom (<https://www.ohiotownships.org/news/newsroom>) for legislative updates, news that affects townships, grant updates and more between each magazine and newsletter.

HometownHeroes

SPOTLIGHTING PUBLIC SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Annual National Award Honors Small Town Civic Volunteers

The Small Town America Civic Volunteer Award

The Small Town America Civic Volunteer Award is a national program that will honor 100 extraordinary local government volunteers in smaller cities, townships and counties under 25,000 in population. The program, which launched July 15 online at www.civic-volunteer.com and runs through October 15, is being sponsored by CivicPlus®.

parks and recreation and other important services.

\$20,000, \$10,000 and \$5,000 Cash Awards, and 100 Free Volunteer Management Modules

The subdivisions and counties represented by the top 100 nominees will each qualify for a free volunteer management module that can be integrated with their website to help engage,



recruit, track, and retain community volunteers. They will also receive 12 months of free support services for the module from CivicPlus.

The Barton Russell Group (www.BartonRussell.com) will administer the program and judging process.

SPONSORED BY



**Nominations began
July 15th @
www.civic-volunteer.com**

STACVA is intended to help spotlight the growing challenge small cities face in retaining and recruiting people to fill vital public safety roles as e.g., firefighters and emergency medical technicians, on municipal boards/councils and on local government committees that support planning, library,

SEEKING WORKSHOP TOPICS FOR 2022 WINTER CONFERENCE

The 2022 Winter Conference is quickly approaching; it will take place Jan. 26-28. In past years, there have been over 90 workshops at the conference, which deal with various issues related to cemeteries, economic development, zoning, roads, and much more. Many of these topics came from suggestions by members just like you.

If you have a topic that you are interested in learning more about at the 2022 OTA Winter Conference, please contact Marisa Myers at myers@ohiotownships.org or 614-863-0045.

OTA BOARD PROPOSES CHANGES TO CONSTITUTION

As detailed in the July/August *Ohio Township News* magazine, the OTA Board of Directors has voted to recommend several amendments to the OTA Constitution. These amendments will be presented to the membership for a vote at the 2022 Winter Conference and will be voted on as one "yes or no" issue.

Per the OTA Constitution, all active members (trustees and fiscal officers) in attendance at the conference's General Session will have an opportunity to vote on this matter. To view the current OTA Constitution and the mock-up of proposed changes, please visit www.ohiotownships.org.

Our Co-Sponsors



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ASSOCIATION
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POINTS
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National Association of Towns and Townships



MAIN STREET
AMERICA



NVFC
NATIONAL VOLUNTEER FIRE COUNCIL
FIRE • EMS • RESCUE

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

SAVE THE DATE:

Ohio Ethics Commission Training Opportunities

To register for available trainings, please visit <https://ethics.ohio.gov/education/webinars.html>. **Both webinars below have been approved by the Auditor of State for continuing education.**

Webinar Option #1:

The Ohio Ethics Law: Building a Culture of Integrity

Friday, Sept. 24 - 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 13 - 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 16 - 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Webinar Option #2:

The Ohio Ethics Law: A Deeper Study

Wednesday, Oct. 6 - 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 20 - 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

OTA Training Opportunities

In addition to the OTA's Zoning Inspectors Group, Law Directors Group, OTAN and OTALA trainings, the OTA has created trainings for fiscal officers, trustees and safety services, as well as for the general township track! These trainings can be found on the OTA's website under the Education menu, or check the website calendar.

Trustees, "Bringing Broadband into Your Community"

Tuesday, Sept. 21 - 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. | \$20 Members, \$30 Non-Members

Safety Services, "Qualified Immunity Issues"

Wednesday, Sept. 22 - 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. | \$20 Members, \$30 Non-Members

General Township, "ODOT Grant Program"

Thursday, Sept. 23 - 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. | \$20 Members, \$30 Non-Members

Fiscal Officers, "Building a Relationship with Your County Auditor"

Friday, Sept. 24 - 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. | \$20 Members, \$30 Non-Members

LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD BOARD MEMBERS

Elections for OTA officers and directors will take place at the 2022 OTA Winter Conference Jan. 26-28. Officers will be elected by Active OTA members in attendance at the Thursday General Session and nine of the 16 director positions will be voted on by county executive committee persons Thursday afternoon. Officers serve two-year terms and eight of the director seats will serve four-year terms and one will serve out the remaining two years on a current term.

Persons interested in serving as an officer or director of the OTA **shall** submit a resume and cover letter to the OTA office by 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 9 and **shall** interview before the respective nominating committee on Friday, Nov. 12 in Columbus. If you have ever considered serving as an OTA officer or director, consider submitting your resume today!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

County Township Association (CTA)
meeting dates included in this newsletter are not comprehensive, and are subject to change. If you do not see your CTA's dates here, please contact **Michael at** zaky@ohiotownships.org.

September 2
Auglaize County

September 9
Stark County

September 14
Greene County

September 16
Ashtabula County
Mahoning County
Morrow County
Seneca County

September 23
Washington County

September 29
Putnam County

September 30
Champaign County

2021 GOLF OUTING RAISES MONEY FOR SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Ohio Township Association's (OTA) Annual Golf Outing started in 2010 with a goal to raise money for the OTA Scholarship Fund. Like many other things, the 2020 golf outing was canceled due to COVID-19 but on Aug. 6, the 10th Annual OTA Golf Outing was held at Royal American Links in Galena, Ohio. The beautiful weather made for great golf conditions for the 17 teams that participated. The winning team - Team GPG - took top prize by shooting a 57.

Without the assistance of the great staff at Royal American Links and the many volunteers that assisted throughout the day, the event would not have been so successful or so fun! The generosity of our sponsors, golf teams and donors to our first-ever silent auction helped the OTA raise over \$6,000 the day of the outing. That total, coupled with over \$4,000 donated by county township associations through the OTA Membership Drive, the OTA secured over \$10,000 for future scholarships.

Information about the 2022 Scholarship Program may be found on the OTA's website. Townships are encouraged to share the information with local high schools.

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS

GOLD

Burnham & Flower
Sedgwick TPA

SILVER

Asphalt Materials, Inc.
Governmental Policy Group, Inc.
KLA Risk Consulting
NOPEC
PENGWYN
Sedgwick Pooling
Southeastern Equipment
Trebel LLC

TEE

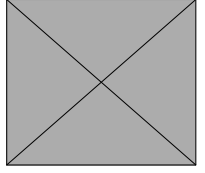
Apple Farm Service
Choice One Engineering
Excel Decorators, Inc.
Fabian Family
Ice Miller LLP
Joyce Martin
PERSO
VFIS of Ohio

CONTACT OHIO811 BEFORE YOU DIG

The ongoing recovery from the COVID pandemic, although encouraging, is creating challenges across the industry related to attracting and retaining employees in a competitive marketplace. While OHIO811 is working diligently to maintain their workforce and process a historically high volume of locate requests from the excavating community, these pressures are making this effort increasingly difficult.

With that in mind, OHIO811 is asking for your help by encouraging your use of the i-dig online locate request tool. Given the potential for extended hold times, i-dig provides a faster, more convenient and easy-to-use alternative for submitting your non-emergency locate requests 24/7/365. In addition to being absolutely free and accessible on any computer or tablet, i-dig's full suite of tools allow you to create the most accurate locate request for your planned excavations.

For more information about i-dig, please visit www.OHIO811.org/idig, call the i-dig team at 800-240-7190 or reach out to your liaison, whose contact information can be found at www.OHIO811.org/liaisons.



DID YOU KNOW?

DEPUTY FISCAL OFFICER VS. FISCAL ASSISTANT

From time to time, a fiscal officer may need assistance fulfilling the duties of their office; this may be necessary for several reasons. Depending on the size of your township, you may see fit to hire permanent staff in the fiscal office. Townships may have both a deputy fiscal officer and an assistant fiscal officer(s). But what's the difference in these roles?

A deputy fiscal officer is appointed when the elected fiscal officer cannot fulfill their duties for very specific reasons. These include military service, a court-ordered suspension under R.C. §507.13, or because the fiscal officer is otherwise incapacitated, such as illness, or is disqualified (R.C. §507.02). Under these circumstances, the board of trustees may appoint a deputy fiscal officer. Mere absence from the township alone, such as an extended vacation, would not meet the requirements in R.C. §507.02 to make an appointment. However, if an official is absent from the township for more than 90 days consecutively, the seat would be considered vacant and could be filled under R.C. §503.24.

A deputy fiscal officer may exercise the full duties of the office and, therefore, must meet the qualifications of an elector (1966 Op. Att'y Gen. No. 1966-243). A deputy fiscal officer must give a bond for the faithful discharge of official duties, as required under R.C. §507.03 or be covered under the township's employee dishonesty and faithful performance of coverage policy under R.C. §3.061. The board of trustees may set, by resolution, the pay of the deputy fiscal officer, but the total compensation of the fiscal officer and any deputy fiscal officer must not exceed the sums set by statute in R.C. §507.09.

If the fiscal officer needs ongoing assistance to fulfill their duties, the township may hire one or more assistant fiscal officers (R.C. §507.021). Assistant fiscal officers serve at the pleasure of the fiscal officer or, in their absence, the deputy fiscal officer. The fiscal officer may delegate any duties they are otherwise required to perform with certain exceptions, such as signing checks or signing purchase orders. Please note, the appointment of an assistant fiscal officer does not relieve the fiscal officer of discharging the duties of the office, rather the appointment aids in the performance of those duties.

The board of trustees sets the budget for the fiscal office, but the fiscal officer may set and adjust the pay of their assistants, so long as it falls within the previously approved budget (R.C. §507.021). An assistant fiscal officer must also give a bond before they are assigned any duties, as required under R.C. §507.03 or be covered under the township's employee dishonesty and faithful performance of coverage policy under R.C. §3.061.

Outside of these positions, townships generally have authority to hire staff, including positions that may be of use in the fiscal office, such as administrative assistant. The

"Did You Know?" continued on page 2.

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