

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Working Together to Strengthen Ohio

OHIOMAYORSALLIANCE.ORG



**OHIO
MAYORS
ALLIANCE**



LOCAL INNOVATION, STATEWIDE COLLABORATION

Ohio is a diverse state with a wonderful mix of cities, suburbs, and rural communities. Preserving local control allows local elected leaders to respond to the unique needs of these communities and find innovative local solutions.

While preserving local control protects Ohio's cities, we all benefit by working together. In fact, Ohio's success depends on strong local, regional, and statewide collaboration.

**It is this combination of local innovation
and statewide collaboration that defines our
approach at the Ohio Mayors Alliance.**





Dear Fellow Ohioans:

For the mayors of Ohio's largest cities, 2024 has been a year of coming together to support each other and our cities. From our Annual Mayors & Lawmakers Luncheon to our 3rd Annual Regional Meeting in beautiful Findlay, Ohio, our members have been able to be there for each other because of the relationships we have built. The Ohio Mayors Alliance gives us the opportunity to share ideas, challenge each other, and share in each other's accomplishments and challenges.

Our mission is to bring mayors together to foster collaboration, communication, and innovation, and to reach out with one bipartisan voice to our state leaders to advocate for our cities and issues of common interest. We do this by focusing on what we agree on and getting things done together.

When one of our cities, Springfield, became the subject of a national immigration debate ahead of the presidential election in September and October, we came together to support the community and its mayor. A delegation of mayors traveled to Springfield to share experiences and learn more about the impacts of being part of the national news cycle. Following that meeting, we created the Ohio Mayors Alliance Foundation Emergency Relief Fund. As a result of our efforts, we were able to provide \$100,000 to the City of Springfield to help meet its immediate needs.

As we look ahead to 2025 and beyond, we know that our relationships with each other and with our state and federal leaders will continue to be the key to Ohio's success. We are excited to share this year's accomplishments with you, and we look forward to the work, and collaboration, ahead.

Standing together,

The Ohio Mayors Alliance Board of Directors



Mayor Justin Bibb
City of Cleveland



Mayor Andrew Ginther
City of Columbus



Mayor Mitch Rhodus
City of Fairfield



Mayor Christina Muryn
City of Findlay



Mayor Peggy Lehner
City of Kettering



Mayor Tim DeGeeter
City of Parma



Mayor Jamael Tito Brown
City of Youngstown



ABOUT US

Ohio Mayors Alliance

The mission of the Ohio Mayors Alliance is to strengthen Ohio's cities and metropolitan regions through collaboration, communication, improved advocacy, and stronger partnerships with policymakers.

We advocate for and advance policies that bring communities and leaders together, ensure a high quality of life for our citizens, and strengthen the economic vibrancy of our communities and our state.

The Ohio Mayors Alliance is structured to ensure that there is bipartisanship and consensus building amongst the cities. Board members must be from opposite parties and include representation from both larger cities and smaller ones under 80,000 in population. Adoption of any official policy position by the Ohio Mayors Alliance must be approved by a supermajority, or two-thirds, of the total membership.





Working Together to Strengthen Ohio.

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Promote bipartisan solutions and statewide collaboration

Preserve and advance local self-governance and support innovative local solutions

Protect the fiscal health of Ohio cities and support economic development

POLICY PRIORITY AREAS

- Economic Development and Fiscal Stability for Cities
- Local Self-Governance and the Right to Home Rule
- Public Safety and Effective Policing Practices
- Affordable, Accessible, and Quality Housing
- Water, Transportation, and Digital Infrastructure
- Education, Civic Learning, and Workforce Development
- Public Health and Addiction Prevention
- Sustainable and Climate Resilient Cities

WHY OUR CITIES MATTER

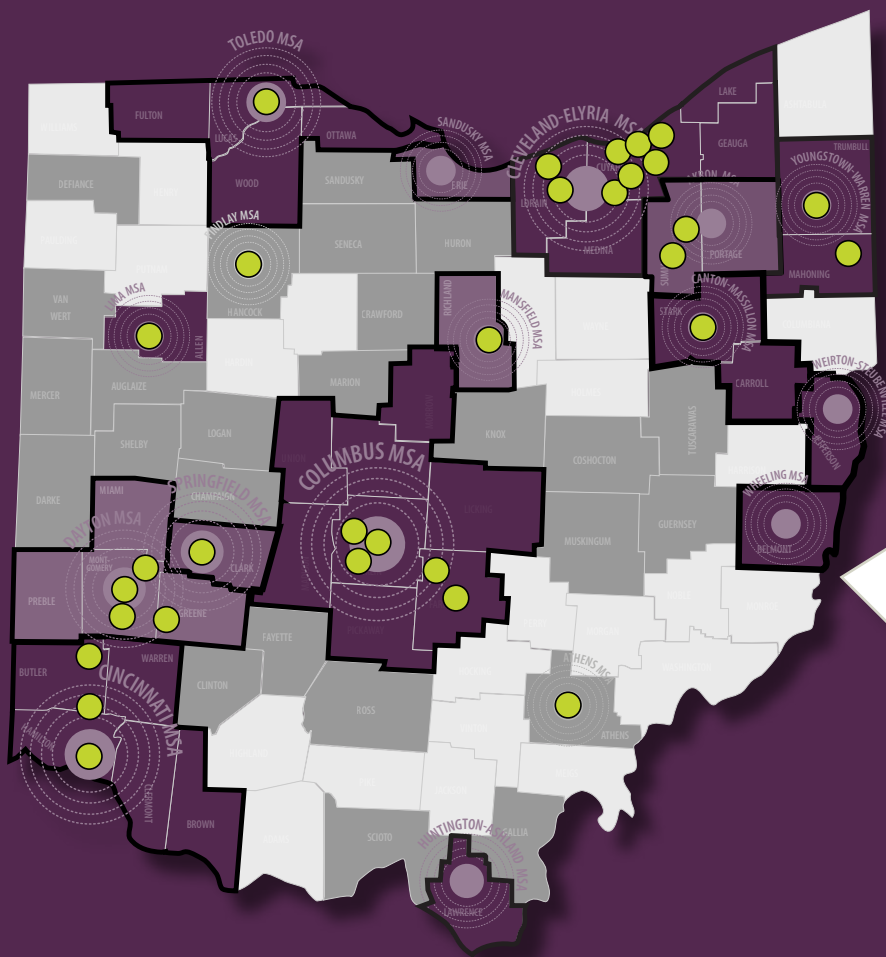
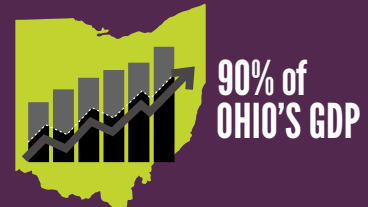




Cities are Job Centers and Engines of Opportunity

As the economic centers of our metropolitan regions, Ohio cities drive regional growth and strengthen the state economy.

Ohio has 7 of the nation's 100 largest metropolitan areas, which account for 71% of Ohio's population, 76% of the state's jobs, and nearly 90% of the state's GDP. Ohio cities serve as major job centers and are home to many of the 24 Fortune 500 companies located in the Buckeye State.

OHIO'S METROPOLITAN AREAS ACCOUNT FOR:



-  **Metropolitan Statistical Areas**
-  **Micropolitan Statistical Areas**
-  **Ohio Mayors Alliance Member City**

A **metropolitan statistical area** is a collection of counties that are economically and socially integrated around a central urban area.

Ohio's economic success depends on strong local, regional, and statewide cooperation.

Cities are Hubs for Entertainment and Innovation

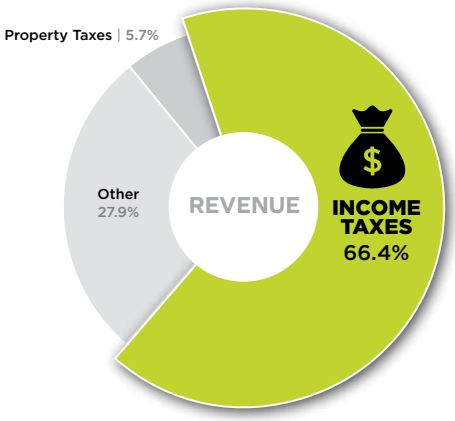
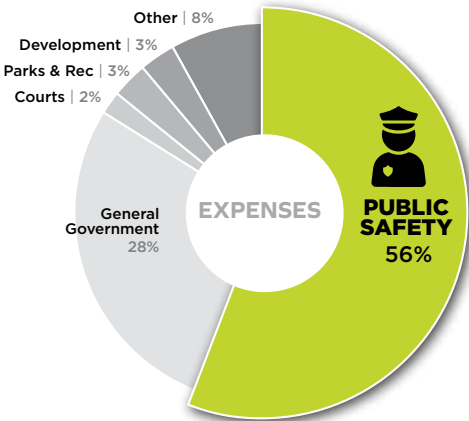
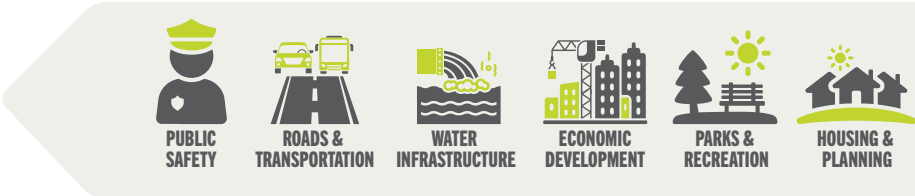
Attracting visitors from all over the world, Ohio’s cities are home to major sports teams, world-famous museums, and thriving entertainment districts. Our cities are also home to 45 different community colleges and universities, world-renowned medical institutions, and state-designated Innovation Hubs.

Cities Fund Critical Frontline Services

Our cities are responsible for funding the essential services that make our communities safe, healthy, and efficient.

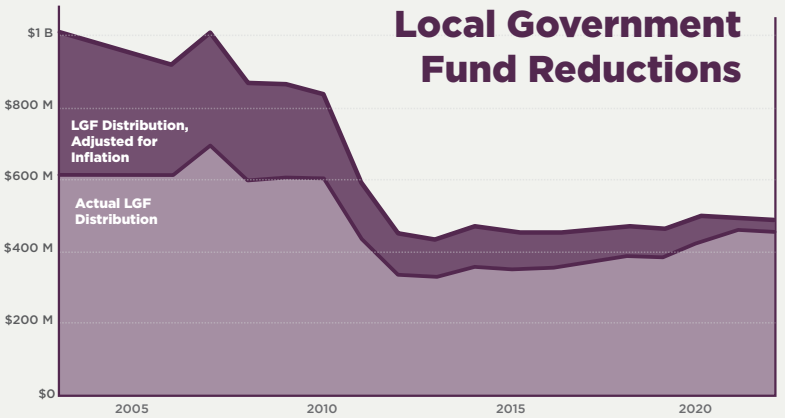
Among the various expenditures, public safety is the largest budgetary expense for all Ohio Mayors Alliance cities and most cities across the state.

Cities rely more on local revenue generation and the municipal income tax as the Local Government Fund has been cut in half.



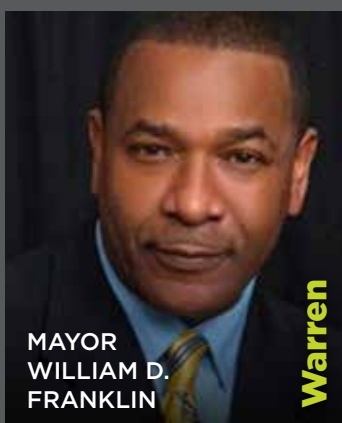
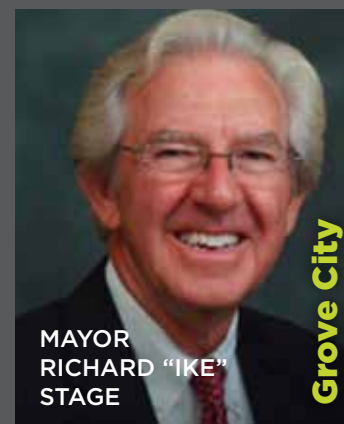
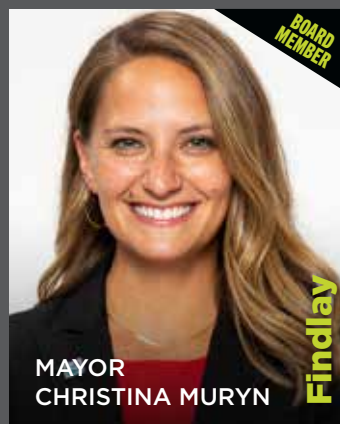
Cities Are Getting Less from the Local Government Fund

Over the past twenty years, the county undivided Local Government Fund (LGF) distribution, which is divided among all Ohio counties, cities, villages, and townships, has decreased by approximately 30 percent in real numbers. When adjusted for inflation, however, **the decrease in total state funding for local governments is 52.4 percent.**



2024 OHIO MAYORS ALLIANCE MEMBERS





*Chair of Mayors' Partnership for Progress, representing mayors and city managers from Athens, Gallia, Hocking, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry, Pike, Ross, Scioto, Vinton, and Washington counties.



THE STATE





OF OHIO'S CITIES



Every year, mayors in cities across Ohio give a State of the City update, highlighting their cities' challenges and achievements over the past year and looking ahead to developments in the coming year. Taken together, these presentations in cities across Ohio highlight communities' achievements and aspirations and paint a picture of the State of Ohio's Cities.





THE STATE OF OHIO'S CITIES

In their state of the city addresses this year, Ohio mayors addressed issues that impact our cities, their surrounding regions, and the State of Ohio. Ohio's cities are making tremendous innovative investments, but face many challenges that will require thoughtful bipartisan collaboration with local and state leaders to ensure that the bedrock of Ohio's economy—our cities—remain strong and continue to grow. Here is a snapshot of what our cities are working on to strengthen Ohio.

Economic development projects and the jobs they create.

Ohio's cities are collaborating with city leaders, businesses, the State of Ohio, JobsOhio, and other community stakeholders to bring new businesses to their cities, redevelop local properties for new uses, and create new jobs for residents.

Historic investments in public safety and strategies to prevent and reduce crime.

Public safety is integral to ensuring that jobs, housing, recreation, and infrastructure all work together to create communities people want to live in. Ohio's cities are expanding their police departments and working to recruit new police officers and better compensate and support current officers. Cities have also put in place new crime prevention and violent crime reduction programs, invested in neighborhoods and youth, and improved road and pedestrian safety infrastructure.

Infrastructure investments that strengthen neighborhoods, improve road safety, and ensure clean water for city residents and businesses.

Infrastructure makes cities run effectively. Water lines, safe streets and sidewalks, updated facilities for police officers and firefighters, effective local and regional transportation options, and green space are all important components of infrastructure that make it possible for large cities to put people, jobs, and fun things together in cohesive, strong neighborhoods.



Strategic investments in our cities are strengthening Ohio.

Here are a few highlights from some of our cities.

The **City of Akron** and local partners are combining a \$51 million federal investment and a \$42 million grant from the State of Ohio to create the Sustainable Polymers Tech Hub that will spur new jobs and economic growth in Akron.

The **City of Findlay**, under the leadership of Mayor Christina Muryn, was named the top micropolitan in the country for the tenth consecutive year in 2024.

Mayor Jodie Perry's experience running the Richland County Chamber of Commerce has helped her guide the **City of Mansfield** to leverage public and private investments to reimagine and redesign Mansfield's Main Street.

In the **City of Toledo**, the Northwest Ohio Glass Innovation Hub leverages state, local government, university, and private partners to create jobs and expand glass industry research and technology.

The **Cities of Cuyahoga Falls, Grove City, and Lancaster** were named among Ohio's Best Hometowns by Ohio Magazine.

The **City of Lima**, through a grant from the National Fitness Campaign, built an outdoor Fitness Court, an outdoor facility available to area residents of all fitness levels.

A group of people, including men and women in business attire, are standing behind a long wooden podium. One man on the right is speaking into a microphone. A sign on the podium reads "OHIO MAYORS ALLIANCE".

Coming Together to Build Stronger Communities

December 2023 | Columbus, Ohio

Annual Membership Meeting

OMA's annual membership meeting in Columbus is an opportunity for mayors to connect with each other, as well as other statewide and local leaders, to plan the year ahead and discuss the many issues of common interest we share across our communities. This year, mayors heard from Ohio Business Roundtable President and CEO Pat Tiberi and US Senator Sherrod Brown and discussed law enforcement technology and collaboration. We also hosted a luncheon celebrating several OMA mayors who retired at the end of 2023.





MAYORS & LAWMAKERS LUNCHEON

April 2024 | Columbus, Ohio

Mayors and Lawmakers Luncheon

On April 16, 2024, mayors and state legislators from across Ohio came together for our annual Mayors & Lawmakers Luncheon at the Athletic Club of Columbus. We emphasized the importance of preserving local control. We also used our time together to build stronger ties between our state and local leaders, as well as a shared understanding of the important role that cities play in driving regional growth and supporting Ohio's statewide economic success.



During the luncheon, a bipartisan panel of four mayors discussed the importance of local control in allowing cities the opportunity to implement local policies that support public safety.



Prior to the luncheon, mayors met with Lt. Governor Jon Husted to discuss local and statewide economic development issues.



August 2024 | Findlay, Ohio

Mayors Regional Meeting

Almost two dozen mayors from across the state convened in Findlay on August 15, 2024 for our third annual regional meeting. Mayor Christina Muryn and the City of Findlay hosted us at the beautiful Hancock Hotel. Mayors discussed important issues that impact all of our cities such as public safety, housing, economic development, and education. OMA communities are addressing these issues with different approaches, and regional meetings like this are ideal opportunities to learn from each other.





Columbus Mayor Andrew Ginther speaking after being sworn in as President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

Ohio Mayors in National Leadership Roles

In addition to staying connected and coming together in a bipartisan way here in Ohio, our mayors are also playing important leadership roles at the national level.

In June, **Columbus Mayor Andrew Ginther** was elected and sworn in as the 82nd President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Mayors, supporters, and friends all came together at an event on July 25, 2024 in Columbus honoring Mayor Ginther and his national leadership.



Athens Mayor Steve Patterson was elected First Vice President of the National League of Cities in November 2024 after serving as Second Vice President for most of the year. Mayor Patterson is in line to be the next President of the NLC.

NLC represents more than 2,700 cities across the nation and advocates for the interests of cities, towns and villages by influencing federal policy, strengthening local leadership and driving innovative solutions.



3C Mayors Forum

In July, the mayors of Columbus, Cleveland, and Cincinnati spoke at the Columbus Metropolitan Club in a forum entitled Ohio Mayors Addressing Challenges Together.

Hosted by WBNS 10-TV News Anchor Yolanda Harris, the conversation with Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb, Columbus Mayor Andy Ginther, and Cincinnati Mayor Aftab Pureval covered a range of topics. The discussion was both light-hearted and serious, with substantive discussion of many of the challenges and opportunities in Ohio's three largest cities.

Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb, Columbus Mayor Andrew Ginther, and Cincinnati Mayor Aftab Pureval speak at the Columbus Metropolitan Club's 3C Mayors Forum.





Supporting Each Other In Times of Crisis

In September, the City of Springfield, Ohio and its local leaders were thrust into a political firestorm they neither invited nor welcomed. False and inflammatory online rumors about local Haitian immigrants snowballed into prominence during a contentious national debate. This attention created an ongoing national narrative about Springfield and came with threats of violence and bomb scares across the community.

Mayors came together to support Springfield Mayor Rob Rue and City Manager Bryan Heck, and traveled to Springfield to discuss the challenges the city faced in keeping its citizens safe and its schools and businesses open. During the meeting, mayors across the state pledged resources and support for Springfield.



Columbus Mayor Andrew Ginther (left) speaks with Springfield Mayor Rob Rue (center) and former Ohio Governor Bob Taft (right).



Ohio Mayors Alliance members gather in Springfield to offer support.



Right to left: Athens Mayor Steve Patterson, Second Vice President of the National League of Cities, Dublin Mayor Chris Amorose Groomes, former Ohio Governor and current Ohio Mayors Alliance Foundation board member Bob Taft, Dayton Mayor Jeffrey Mims Jr., Columbus Mayor Andrew Ginther, Springfield Mayor Rob Rue, Cincinnati Mayor Aftab Pureval, Akron Mayor Shammias Malik, Toledo Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz, and former Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley.

Working Together to Solve Local and Statewide Problems



PUBLIC SAFETY 360° COALITION

PUBLIC SAFETY

New Statewide Coalition on Public Safety

This year, under the guidance and leadership of Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb, Findlay Mayor Christina Muryn, Columbus Mayor Andrew Ginther, and the co-chairs of our Mayors & Police Chiefs Committee, we began convening a bipartisan, cross sector group of organizations to address the challenges of public safety with a focus on data-driven, bipartisan solutions. The coalition includes mayors, law enforcement, business leaders, healthcare professionals, and other state and local government leaders.





A dozen Ohio mayors sign letter asking Gov. Mike DeWine to take action to reduce gun violence

WOSU 89.7 NPR News | By Renee Fox | July 19, 2024

GUN VIOLENCE

Mayors Letter to Governor DeWine Asking for Action on Gun Violence

This summer, twelve mayors wrote a letter to Governor Mike DeWine asking for action on addressing the proliferation of guns in their communities. In response, the Governor invited the mayors to lunch with senior members of his administration at the Governor's Mansion. The conversation focused on ways the administration can continue to work with cities to support public safety and reduce violent crime.



*Chris Amorose Groomes
Mayor of Dublin*



*Kirsten Holzheimer-Gail
Mayor of Euclid*

NEW THIS YEAR

Legislative Policy Committee

This year, OMA formed a bipartisan Legislative Committee. Co-chaired by Dublin Mayor Chris Amorose Groomes and Euclid Mayor Kirsten Holzheimer-Gail, the committee will review proposed and pending legislation and provide input to guide OMA's policy priorities and initiatives.



OHIO MAYORS ALLIANCE

F O U N D A T I O N

The Ohio Mayors Alliance Foundation is a 501(c)(3) that provides non-partisan policy research and education support for the Ohio Mayors Alliance. The shared mission of the two organizations is to strengthen Ohio's cities and metropolitan regions through collaboration, communication, improved advocacy, and stronger partnerships with policymakers.

The Ohio Mayors Alliance Foundation supports our mayors as they establish a common set of priorities, share best practices, and lift up their collective voices to advocate for their cities and their constituents. The Ohio Mayors Alliance Foundation serves as an important vehicle to foster this collaboration and maximize the potential impacts that mayors can have when they work together.

OHIO MAYORS ALLIANCE FOUNDATION PROJECTS

Operating Support

George Gund Foundation & Joyce Foundation

Supporting Sustainable and Resilient Cities

Energy Foundation and Power a Clean Future Ohio

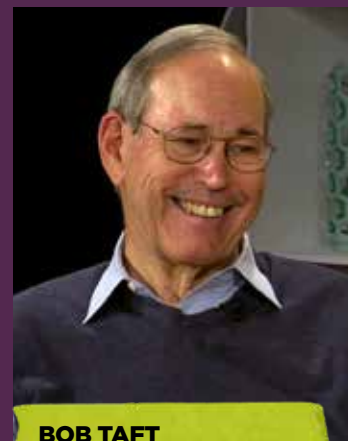
State Preemption of Local Control

Voices for Healthy Kids and the American Heart Association

BIPARTISAN LEADERSHIP

The Ohio Mayors Alliance Foundation is led by a bipartisan group of former state and local leaders. The board of directors includes former Ohio Governor Bob Taft, former Columbus Mayor Michael B. Coleman, former Cleveland Mayor Jane L. Campbell, former Lancaster Mayor David Scheffler, and Lima Mayor Sharetta Smith.

Keary McCarthy serves as the Executive Director of both the Ohio Mayors Alliance Foundation and the Ohio Mayors Alliance.



BOB TAFT
Former Ohio Governor



Former Governor and Ohio Mayors Alliance Foundation Board Member, Bob Taft, leads a discussion with Springfield leaders about what support they needed during a tumultuous time.

Supporting Our Cities

Following a gathering in Springfield in September to discuss the impacts of national attention on the Springfield community, OMAF and our mayors raised \$100,000 to help support Springfield's translation needs and coverage for security costs in light of numerous bomb threats to Springfield schools and public buildings.

SPRINGFIELD NEWS-SUN

TRUSTED SINCE 1898
News

Ohio mayors give Springfield \$100K for immigration services, bomb threat work



"We are incredibly thankful for the timely support from the Ohio Mayors Alliance Foundation during this challenging period. This grant will play a crucial role in helping us address language barriers and better serve our Haitian community. In addition, the unforeseen security challenges we've faced over the past months have placed significant strain on our resources, and this funding will help alleviate some of the financial pressures associated with implementing enhanced security measures."

Springfield Mayor Rob Rue



MICHAEL B. COLEMAN
Former Columbus Mayor



JANE CAMPBELL
Former Cleveland Mayor



DAVID SCHEFFLER
Former Lancaster Mayor



SHARETTA SMITH
Mayor of Lima



THE BLADE

Toledo area gets \$31.3M grant for Ohio's first Innovation Hub

July 1, 2024



The New York Times

9 Mayors on What Divides America, and What Will Save It

July 8, 2024



Dayton Daily News

With \$95M investment on the table, Dayton named 2nd Ohio 'Innovation Hub'

August 19, 2024



The Columbus Dispatch

Ohioans must remain united. Springfield showed us the way.

We know that the majority of Americans want to forge a better path forward.

October 31, 2024



Mayors unite in Springfield, pledging support amid false claims and threats

September 16, 2024



cleveland.com
COVERING CLEVELAND AND OHIO

Ohio Mayors Alliance urges Gov. DeWine to act on gun violence and youth access to firearms

July 17, 2024



IN THE NEWS





Tristina Allen
Operations &
Events Manager



Keary McCarthy
Executive Director



Sarah Biehl
Policy Director



Shawn Kasych
Statehouse Advocate
Principal, Kasych Group LLC

The Ohio Mayors Alliance is a bipartisan coalition of mayors of Ohio's largest cities.

Following years of state budget cuts to local governments, mayors from both parties came together in 2016 to form the Ohio Mayors Alliance. This unique, state-based, bipartisan coalition of mayors formed to leverage the mayors' collective voices and improve their advocacy efforts at the state and federal level.



OHIO MAYORS ALLIANCE
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REMEMBERING FORMER SPRINGFIELD MAYOR

Dr. Warren Copeland

(1943 - 2024)

In January of 2024, former Springfield Mayor Warren Copeland passed away after retiring in December of 2023. He had served the City of Springfield as mayor for over 25 years, and had taught religion and urban studies at Wittenberg University since 1977.

Mayor Copeland made an extraordinary impact on the community he served and the countless students he taught. I know this because I was one of those students. As an undergraduate, he first introduced me to the field of Urban Studies and sparked an interest that would lead to a career.

Mayor Copeland was not only a great teacher, he was a great example of what it means to be a compassionate leader who cares deeply for those who are too often forgotten. As City Manager Bryan Heck said, Copeland was a “true servant leader” who led with faith and passion.

Warren Copeland will be missed by so many, but we are grateful for his time on this earth, his mentorship to the many students he taught, and his many years of dedicated service and leadership to the City of Springfield.

Sincerely,



Keary McCarthy

Executive Director,
Ohio Mayor Alliance &
Ohio Mayors Alliance Foundation





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Cover image shows The Heritage Center, formerly Springfield's City Hall and Marketplace, now on the National Register of Historic Sites.

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