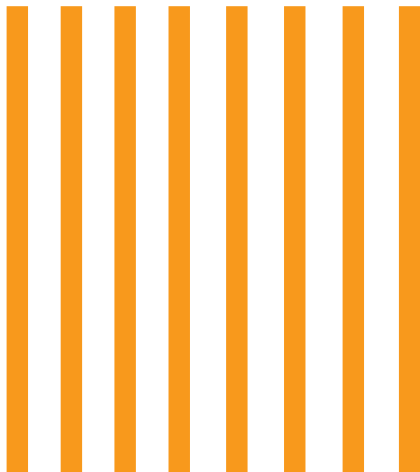


Funding for Human Services

COUNTY GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES



Fact Sheet 2008

County human services are at a crossroads. Statewide, at least 60 percent of county budgets are dedicated to human services. Last year more than two million Pennsylvanians received services from county human service programs. The demand for these services continues to increase because of their entitlement nature, the increasing needs of citizens, the increasing cost of doing business, and increases in frequencies and types of court ordered services. Federal budget cuts to human services, coupled with inadequate state funding, have forced counties to pass this obligation on to local property owners in the form of higher property taxes or to cut back on other critical county services.

Counties are at a crossroads because funding of these programs is in jeopardy. The County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania and its affiliates urge funding support for the following areas:

Children and Youth: Services to protect abused, neglected, and delinquent children are mandated by federal and state law. The federal share of funding for these services is decreasing and creating the need for state and local funding to increase. Counties are dependent on local property taxes to fund their share of the budget. Counties currently must also initially cover the full cost of the services and wait for reimbursement, which creates additional cash flow challenges. Solutions to these challenges are needed. Establishing a system that facilitates quarterly advance payments to counties for these services has to be considered as part of a long-term solution.

Drug and Alcohol: Each year the demand for drug and alcohol treatment services far exceeds the funding for these services. The impact of the impending funding crisis can be reduced by increasing the base allocation by at least \$10 million dollars and by funding the gap (currently \$6.3 million) that will exist as the Intergovernmental Transfer is phased out.

Human Services Development Fund: HSDF provides funding that is used locally in all aspects of county human services. This funding is used to provide critical services to meet the needs of individuals and their families including effective coordination of services. In FY 08-09, \$41 million in state funds are needed to restore HSDF to its 2002-03 level.

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Juvenile Detention: There were approximately 21,000 admissions to juvenile detention in 2007. Because federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families dollars are no longer available, counties will need an additional \$42.2 million from the state as of July 1, 2008 to support the same level of services provided in 2007. In order to establish a long term funding solution for juvenile detention, the Association requests an increase in the Act 148 reimbursement rate for juvenile detention from 50 percent state/50 percent county split to a 90 percent state/10 percent county split and a commensurate increase in Act 148 funding.

Mental Health: Local communities need additional federal and state funds to support persons discharged from state hospitals. Cost increases for these services have been funded from the IGT funds, which are no longer available. Pennsylvania's demographics have also continued to change over the last thirty years with the populations of some counties growing rapidly. At the same time, funding to counties has not accounted for population shifts. This has resulted in severe under funding of counties with the greatest population growth. Funding is needed to correct this imbalance.

Mental Retardation: The number of Pennsylvanians on the emergency waiting list is a discredit to good public policy. In addition, to address the needs of other people on the mental retardation critical and planning waiting lists, a multi-year plan is needed.

Nursing Homes: The IGT has been a major source of funding to reimburse the cost of nursing home care. The IGT will not be available after 2009. Nursing homes and the state need a plan to replace IGT funds. A concern for counties is the current requirement to pay ten percent of the non-federal share of the medical assistance costs for their nursing homes. Currently Pennsylvania counties have this cost covered by IGT funds. A long-term solution is needed.

Technology Infrastructure: Pennsylvania's information systems do not support management, budgeting or program policy development. CCAP supports a comprehensive review and restructuring of the Commonwealth's data collection system. CCAP supports joint state and county development of cross-systems and interdepartmental information technology initiatives, which over time will result in more efficient and effective programming. Without investment in information technology, Pennsylvania cannot maintain or manage its resources.

Cost of Doing Business: Budgets have been shrinking for the past four years placing an increasing burden on the simple cost of delivering services to people in need. Counties need a five percent increase in their base allocations across all program areas to approach the actual cost of providing human services.

How county human services emerge from this crossroad depends upon the funding commitment from its business partners. The funding of mandated and entitlement services is the shared responsibility of federal, state, and county governments. Without increased funding commitments by the federal and state governments, counties will be forced to increase local taxes to pay for these funding shortfalls, or they will be forced to eliminate other vital public services to fund human services.

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