**PLACE COUNTY LOGO HERE (Optional)**

**NEWS RELEASE**

**DATE**

**CONTACT**:

County Contact

Phone number and email address

**[Your County] joins counties statewide**

**in push for 2024 legislative priorities**

United at the Pennsylvania Capitol Building, county leaders across the state unveiled [eight key legislative properties](https://www.pacounties.org/advocacy/priorities) for 2024, led by a call for adequate, sustainable funding for the 911 system across the commonwealth.

A strong, connected 911 system is critical to ensuring services can be provided efficiently in situations of mass emergency and can keep up with the pace of ever-changing technological advances to maximize emergency services delivery.

**[QUOTE ABOUT LOCAL 911 SYSTEM OR NEED FOR FUNDING/REAUTHORIZATION]**

In addition to 911 funding and reauthorization, counties have also prioritized:

* County Mental Health Base Funding Increase
* Addressing Inmates with Mental Health Issues
* Increasing the Prevailing Wage Threshold
* Right-to-Know Law Reforms
* Vote-by-Mail Reforms
* Broadband Access and Development
* Juvenile Detention Capacity Crisis

The 2024 priorities were selected by county commissioners, council members and chief clerks across Pennsylvania as the issues with the greatest significance and the most potential for positive impact to counties in the coming year.

**[QUOTE ABOUT YOUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT’S COMMITMENT TO ENHANCING THE LIVES OF ALL RESIDENTS, FROM THEIR MENTAL HEALTH TO THEIR TECHNOLOGICAL CAPABILITIES]**

NOTE: The following capsules can be used as they are, altered to be more localized or deleted entirely.

More on Pennsylvania Counties’ 2024 Priorities:

**On County Mental Health Base Funding Increase**

Counties are asking for substantial investment of state dollars to rebuild and strengthen community crisis services, residential mental health programs, and other locally provided care that will stabilize mental health services and assist hospitals with capacity concerns. Sustainable, annual investments in the state’s mental health community-based system will help counties maintain and rebuild the existing safety net of services.

**On Addressing Inmates with Mental Health Issues**

Unmet community behavioral health needs continue to drive the population of county jails. Both the number of individuals with mental health needs and the severity of those needs have consistently increased year by year. County jails struggle to locate and retain qualified mental health professionals sufficient to meet these increasing needs. Counties must be able to work closely with all branches of government to build community behavioral health and crisis capacity.

**On Juvenile Detention Capacity Crisis**

Pennsylvania counties are working to ensure that justice-involved youth receive timely community-based services when appropriate and are cared for and protected in detention settings when necessary for their own safety and that of the community. Removing barriers that inhibit adequate staffing of detention facilities can help move that process along.

**On Vote-by-Mail Reform**

Counties are calling for a resolution for the ambiguities and gaps in the Election Code that need clarity and uniformity, including provisions related to the law on counties’ authority to use drop boxes for mail-in ballots as well as clear and concise guidelines for curing ballot defects and third parties sending in mail-in ballot applications.

**On Broadband Access and Development**

Counties support prioritizing efforts to connect rural and hard-to-reach areas while aligning focus to digital equity, literacy, and access initiatives. Every Pennsylvanian should have the ability to access the internet adequately, safely and affordably, regardless of income, geography, or individual circumstance.

**On Right-to-Know Law Reform**

Under the current RTKL, counties are required to spend staff time and resources to comply with requests for records from commercial entities and individuals seeking copious amounts of records with the intent to burden and bog down the records request process. Counties support addressing loopholes in the current request process without hindering transparency.

**On Increasing the Prevailing Wage Threshold**

Counties favor increasing the prevailing wage threshold to meet the changes in inflation since the 1960s and to apply an index that will ensure the threshold keeps pace with inflation going forward.

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