

Adult Probation Funding

State funding for county adult probation services has been stagnant for many years, even while the expectations of the county probation system are increasing, limiting how effectively counties can use these programs as part of a comprehensive criminal justice system.

Nearly all of Pennsylvania's counties provide adult probation services, which support community supervision options for non-violent offenders. These services assist counties in making smart decisions about the use of jail and reducing recidivism through the use of evidence-based interventions that promote positive behavioral changes.

State funding provides adult probation grant-in-aid, helping to offset county costs to train personnel and maintain, improve and expand personnel and program services. However, like many of the services counties provide, while a shift in focus to pre-trial supervision is stressing the system, state allocations for adult probation have failed to keep pace—in fact, just the opposite, as state funding decreased 16% from FY 2007-2008 to FY 2012-2013, and has remained stagnant ever since.

Counties will also benefit from funding support that is part of the second phase of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI 2), which will redistribute savings achieved by other legislation to assist in improving these programs. In addition, JRI 2 will create an advisory committee to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency on funding, standards and training for county adult probation and parole departments. This is a critical first step in reexamining how the state and counties approach the judicial system and invest in our communities through rehabilitation rather than punishment.

At the same time, counties seek to explore options for improved coordination of funds from supervision fees at the local level. Counties submit 50% of collections of these fees to the state Board of Probation and Parole, which are then redistributed back to the counties, while the remaining 50% are to be placed in a separate account and used by the local court to improve the county adult probation offices. Better cooperation among commissioners and judges is needed to assure these funds are being directed to appropriate services.

Without the less expensive and more effective option for community-based supervision, more non-violent offenders are likely to be diverted to more costly jail sentences. Increased and improved coordination of funding will allow the appropriate use of limited resources for increased public safety options.



COUNTIES SUPPORT:

- Increased state funding support for county adult probation services that correspond with growing need.
- Implementation of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative 2.
- Options for improved coordination of funds for supervision fees at the local level.

For more information on **adult probation funding**, contact **Brinda Penyak** at (717) 736-4737 or bpenyak@pacounties.org.



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