

OVERVIEW

911 Surcharge Reauthorization and Statute Updates



Counties are proud to provide one of the key functions in public safety—the operation of the 911 call-taking and dispatch system.

When Pennsylvanians call 911, they expect an immediate answer from a highly trained professional who can quickly coordinate the help they need. Meeting that expectation requires a stable and sustainable funding structure to support staffing, technology, and the continued buildout of Next Generation 911 across the Commonwealth. To ensure the 911 system remains reliable, responsive, and prepared for both daily emergencies and large-scale incidents, we respectfully ask the General Assembly to increase the monthly 911 surcharge to **\$2.20 through the next reauthorization**, providing counties with the resources necessary to protect public safety.

Adequate County Mental Health Funding



Counties deliver critical mental health services—such as community residential programs, family-based support, outpatient care, and crisis intervention—on behalf of the state.

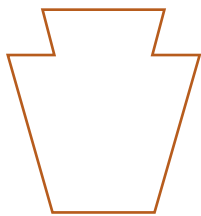
Coupled with growing caseloads and cost inflation, the community mental health system has been pushed to the point of collapse. Counties call for a \$40 million increase for community-based systems this year. Without long-term, sustainable funding for mental health services, residents will continue to suffer as it becomes harder and takes longer to find the support they need. Additionally, the impacts of underfunding trickle down to more costly systems, including hospitals, law enforcement, and corrections.

Assist Counties to Conduct Timely Reassessments



Counties take their responsibility for the fair, secure, and accurate administration of Pennsylvania’s elections very seriously and need clear rules that enable consistent implementation across the commonwealth.

Pennsylvania counties are responsible for conducting property reassessments to ensure assessed values reflect current market conditions, a process that is revenue neutral but essential for counties, municipalities, and school districts. Counties alone determine when and how reassessments occur, without state oversight, based on local market conditions, data, and available resources. Because Pennsylvania is the only state without a requirement for regular reassessments, many counties rely on outdated values, increasing costs and nonuniformity when reassessments are delayed. Counties support a stronger state–county partnership that provides dedicated funding, modern data tools, and statewide standards to promote timely, fair, and consistent property assessments across the Commonwealth.



CCAP is the recognized leader for Pennsylvania county government.

County governments are responsible for a wide variety of critical services, including provision of human services (mental health, intellectual disabilities, children and youth, long-term care, drug and alcohol services, housing) to people in need in our communities. In addition, counties are responsible for emergency management and 911 services, administration of the courts and corrections system, elections, maintenance of county bridges, and the county property assessment rolls, and also are involved in environmental and land use planning, protection of open space and community and economic development.

The County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP), a non-profit, non-partisan association, advocates as the unifying voice of all 67 Pennsylvania counties and provides leadership and support for excellence in county government. CCAP members include county commissioners, council members, county executives, administrators, chief clerks and solicitors. Founded in 1886, CCAP is an affiliate of the National Association of Counties (NACo).

For more information about any of the 2026 County Government Priorities, please visit www.pacounties.org and click on Priorities under the Advocacy tab or email PACountiesGR@pacounties.org.



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2026



County Government

PRIORITIES



911 Surcharge Reauthorization and Statute Updates



Adequate County Mental Health Funding



Assist Counties to Conduct Timely Reassessments



Committed to the core responsibilities of county government – and ultimately to the people and communities of Pennsylvania.



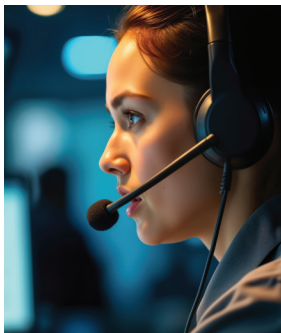
911 Surcharge Reauthorization and Statute Updates

THE FACTS

- Through the statewide Next Generation 911 (NG911) system, highly trained telecommunicators serve as first responders, providing medical triage and critical guidance while dispatching police, fire, and EMS.
- **Pennsylvania’s 911 system is funded primarily by two sources:** a flat **\$1.95 monthly surcharge** on phone bills (or prepaid devices) and **county property taxes** covering costs not paid by the surcharge.
- In 2024, **PSAPs handled 13.9 million calls**, straining operations amid staffing fluctuations and recruitment challenges.
- The \$1.95 surcharge, set in 2023 and extended through 2028 under Act 45 of 2025, generated **\$380 million in 2025**, covering about **80% of state-wide 911 costs**. Compared nationally, Pennsylvania’s surcharge is **average in amount but covers a larger share of costs**, as other states rely on higher fees, percentage-based charges, or General Fund support.
- Counties manage costs while investing in **system improvements, regionalization, consolidation, and NG911 technology**, but statutory updates are needed to align with evolving federal and state requirements.

COUNTIES SUPPORT

- Increasing the **911 surcharge to \$2.20** in the next reauthorization to better align revenues with rising NG911 costs.
- Continued **strategic planning, investment in evolving technologies, and GIS data** to support and maintain NG911.
- Promoting **system and funding consolidation**, including regional collaboration, to ensure service continuity.
- Policy discussions to ensure any surcharge increase accounts for:
 1. the growing variety of devices, applications, and services capable of contacting 911; and
 2. the ability to accurately assess and collect surcharge revenue from these evolving technologies.



THE BIG PICTURE

Achieving this priority will guarantee fast, dependable access to 911 services for residents and visitors across Pennsylvania, anywhere, anytime, ensuring emergencies receive immediate and effective response.



Adequate County Mental Health Funding

THE FACTS

- Community mental health services are under-resourced, with wait times often exceeding six months. Stabilizing existing services and addressing workforce gaps is critical. Counties estimate needing **\$1.2 Billion** to rebuild, expand, and adequately meet local needs.
- One-time funding is limited; sustainable, dependable long-term funding is essential for counties to plan and maintain programs effectively. Without it, services may remain underdeveloped and funds unspent despite high demand.
- Flexible mental health funding enables counties to address varied needs—residential programs, family support, outpatient care, and crisis intervention—tailored to their communities.
- Unmet needs increase reliance on emergency departments, law enforcement, and criminal justice systems, forcing costly and inappropriate hospitalizations or incarceration due to lack of diversion options.

COUNTIES SUPPORT

- **A \$40 million increase** in state funding to sustain and rebuild the mental health safety net before expanding programs.
- Continued investments to strengthen community crisis services, residential care, and other local programs, helping stabilize services and alleviate hospital capacity strains.
- Preserving **local flexibility and programs** like Behavioral HealthChoices to enable effective county-level service delivery.
- Ensuring counties have a voice in statewide behavioral health policy and planning efforts.



THE BIG PICTURE

Achieving this priority would expand access to timely, appropriate mental health care across the Commonwealth, ensuring services are available locally and without undue burden on individuals or families.



Assist Counties to Conduct Timely Reassessments

THE FACTS

- Counties determine reassessment timing based on sales ratios, market shifts, staff capacity, data accuracy, and time since last reassessment. Pennsylvania lacks state oversight, leaving counties to independently manage complex valuation and data processes with widely varying approaches—some fully contracted, some hybrid, some in-house.
- **Reassessments are costly**, especially for counties relying on outdated base-year values, leading to nonuniformity. **Pennsylvania is the only state without a statutory mandate for cyclical reassessments**, causing long gaps and placing full responsibility for timing, funding, and execution on counties.
- Effective reassessments require modern tools and accurate data, including verified sales, updated maps, property records, zoning, technology systems, and trained staff.

COUNTIES SUPPORT

- Sustainable, dedicated funding via a **statewide grant program** (offering 25% of the state share of realty transfer tax or \$15 per parcel) or authorized recording/deed fees to offset costs and fund improvements.
- **Modernization and data** reforms to improve efficiency through better sales verification, building permit tracking, uniform contractor certification, and advanced market analysis.
- Systemwide improvements promoting **statewide best practices and infrastructure investment** to ensure fair, transparent, and uniform assessments.
- A **coordinated state–county partnership** with a designated agency to oversee funding, set standards, manage programs, and audit valuation data.



THE BIG PICTURE

Achieving this priority would ensure counties have the resources and flexibility needed to conduct timely, accurate property reassessments that promote fairness, equity, and uniform taxation across the Commonwealth.