

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA
THE VOICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

2026 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

IN THIS EDITION

- 911 Funding and Statute Updates
- Adequate County Mental Health Funding
- Assist Counties to Conduct Timely Reassessments

County leaders from throughout Pennsylvania have selected their key county government priorities for 2026, which showcase some of the most essential services counties provide on behalf of the Commonwealth. These priorities emphasize the critical need to reinvigorate and better communicate the state-county partnership in service delivery.

This special edition newsletter provides information on the three legislative priorities for counties in 2026. View the [2026 County Government Priorities](#) brochure for detailed information on each priority.

911 FUNDING AND STATUTE UPDATES

Counties are proud to deliver one of the most essential public safety services in Pennsylvania: the operation of the Commonwealth's 911 call-taking and emergency dispatch system. Each year, Pennsylvania's county-based 911 centers handle **millions of emergency calls**, serving as the public's first point of contact in moments of crisis. As emergency communications technology rapidly evolves—and as legacy funding structures fail to keep pace with modern demands—counties must be able to rely on **stable, sustainable funding** to continue fulfilling this critical role as the front line of emergency response.

Counties work in close partnership with the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), legislative committees, emergency management professionals, the communications industry, and other stakeholders to strengthen and modernize the 911 system. Central to

this effort is continued investment in public safety and our 911 system across the commonwealth. NG911 enables the transition from legacy voice-only systems to a secure, IP-based network capable of supporting text, data, images, and video, while improving call routing, interoperability, and resiliency. Key components of this modernization include planning for current and emerging modes of emergency communication; improving efficiency through shared infrastructure and interconnected networks among public safety answering points statewide; ensuring accurate and continuously updated GIS data; and enhancing regional systems to improve availability, redundancy, and reliability. A strong, integrated 911 system is essential not only for day-to-day emergency response, but also for maintaining service continuity during large-scale or mass emergency events.

The statewide 911 surcharge—originally set in 2023 at **\$1.95 per device** and extended through 2028 under **Act 45 of 2025**—remains the cornerstone of 911 system funding. However, the costs associated with NG911 implementation, cybersecurity, system maintenance, and staffing continue to rise. Counties therefore support increasing the surcharge to **\$2.20**, a modest adjustment that would better align revenues with current and anticipated operational realities while preserving accountability and transparency in the use of funds. Counties also support targeted statutory updates to ensure Pennsylvania’s 911 system remains compliant with evolving federal and state requirements.

Advancing this [priority](#) will help ensure that every Pennsylvanian—regardless of location, device, or method of communication—has fast, reliable access to 911 services when they are needed most, so that emergencies receive an immediate and effective response.



ADEQUATE COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH FUNDING

Counties play a central role in administering direct services that support local mental health systems. The flexibility of the county mental health community-based funding provided by the Commonwealth has allowed counties to continue serving residents; however, that

funding has not kept pace with growing demand and rising costs. As a result, counties are stretching increasingly limited state resources to maintain essential services.

Additional investment in the county mental health community-based funding would **allow counties to address critical and growing needs in more meaningful and effective ways**, including child and older adult mental health services, crisis intervention and response capacity, peer supports, and diversion programs. Without a commitment to long-term, sustainable funding, residents will continue to face longer wait times and greater difficulty accessing care. Chronic underfunding also shifts costs to more expensive systems, including hospitals, law enforcement, and the corrections system.

Counties are requesting a **\$40 million** increase to the state's community-based mental health system to help **maintain and rebuild the existing safety net of services** before layering on additional programs needed by communities. Sustained increasing state investment is necessary to strengthen community crisis services, expand residential mental health programs, and stabilize locally delivered care—relieving pressure on hospitals and improving system-wide capacity.

Advancing this [priority](#) will expand access to timely, appropriate mental health services across the Commonwealth, ensuring care is available locally and without undue burden on individuals or families.



ASSIST COUNTIES TO CONDUCT TIMELY REASSESSMENT

Under Pennsylvania law, counties are solely responsible for valuing and assessing all real property, without state-level oversight or a supervising agency. At the same time, counties

differ widely in population trends, property types, market conditions, and administrative capacity—factors that appropriately make the decision to undertake a countywide reassessment a local one, guided by market data, statistical indicators, and operational readiness. However, **Pennsylvania remains the only state in the nation without a statutory requirement for cyclical property reassessments**, resulting in prolonged gaps between reassessments and placing the full burden of timing, funding, and implementation on counties. While reassessments are critical to ensuring fairness and uniformity in property taxation, they are costly and technically complex, particularly for counties that have not reassessed in many years—often compounding inequities over time without adequate state support.

Counties support a comprehensive, collaborative approach that includes **dedicated funding, modernization and data reforms, systemwide improvements, and strengthened state–county partnerships**. Specifically, counties support the creation of a reliable statewide grant program that would provide funding equal to the greater of: (1) twenty-five percent of the state share of realty transfer tax collections generated within a county, or (2) \$15 per parcel, for counties that achieve or maintain required measures of equity in their assessment programs. Alternatively, counties support authorization of a modest recording or deed fee to help fund reassessment activities. Counties also support the implementation of statewide best practices, targeted investments in assessment infrastructure and technology, and the establishment of a coordinated oversight framework through a designated state agency to support timely reassessments.

Advancing this [priority](#) would ensure counties have the resources and flexibility needed to conduct regular, accurate property reassessments—promoting fairness, equity, and uniform taxation across the Commonwealth.



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