



911 Surcharge Reauthorization & Statutory Updates

ISSUE BRIEF

September 2025

Counties are proud to provide one of the key functions in public safety—the operation of the 911 call-taking and dispatch system. As technologies continue to evolve and funding streams no longer align with current realities, counties need to be able to rely on consistent and sustainable funding to maintain their responsibility as the first line of emergency response.

THE ASKS

Counties' 911 Surcharge Reauthorization and Statute Updates priority consists of two pieces:

- Counties are calling on state leaders to pass a 911 surcharge reauthorization ahead of the January 2026 sunset date with an **increase in the current rate of \$1.95 to \$2.20** through the next reauthorization.
- Counties and our 911 partners are seeking additional updates to Chapter 53 to ensure the 911 statute is current and encompasses the Next Generation 911 (NG 911) environment.

THE 911 FUNDING ENVIRONMENT – FALL 2025

- **Current funding needs continue to outpace available revenues.**
- The 911 surcharge is the only dedicated source of statewide funding for 911 – **there are no state funds dedicated to 911.**
- Since 1990, when the 911 statute was created, the surcharge has only been increased twice, once in 2015 to account for laying the foundation for NG 911 and again in 2023 as NG 911 transition was well underway.
- The 911 surcharge was most recently increased by Act 34 of 2023, increasing the rate from \$1.65 to \$1.95 with a sunset date of January 31, 2026.
- 911 funding is distributed via a funding formula outlined in Chapter 53. Part of the needed increase in 2023 was to address county allocation reliance on "Interconnectivity funds", so they could be used for their intended purpose - to establish, enhance, operate, or maintain statewide interconnectivity of 911 systems.
- Despite a 14% increase in 2024, the 911 surcharge generated only \$375 million—falling short of the \$455 million needed to fully fund the statewide 911 system, leaving a \$80 million gap covered by county taxpayers.
- Even with an increase in revenue, county taxpayers still contribute an average of \$100 million annually for 911.
- Compared nationally, Pennsylvania has a relatively average fee that covers a significant majority of 911 operational costs, including staffing.

KEY TALKING POINTS FOR COUNTIES

- **Counties Call for a Modest Increase to \$2.20.** Counties are calling for an increase in the 911 surcharge from the current \$1.95 to \$2.20 to ensure reliable funding for this essential service.
- **Counties Deliver 911 Services.** Counties are the backbone of Pennsylvania's 911 system, ensuring public safety for all residents and visitors.
- **PA's 911 System is a National Best.** Under county leadership, Pennsylvania's 911 system is among the most efficient and technologically advanced in the country.
- **The 911 Surcharge is Primary Source of Funding.** The \$1.95 surcharge is the primary funding source for 911 operations, supporting staff, equipment, and future upgrades like NG911. **Costs not covered by 911 revenue disbursements are paid out of county general funds, which ultimately come as increased costs to taxpayers.**
- **The Current Surcharge Expires Soon.** Act 34's surcharge provisions expire January 31, 2026—just four months away. Action is needed now.
- **Act Now to Avoid Shifting Burden to Local Taxpayers.** Action is needed well ahead of the January 2026 sunset without simply kicking the can down the road. With county budget discussions beginning in the late Summer, prompt action without delay is essential.
- **Act 34 Was Just a Start.** The 2023 increase was a downpayment toward NG911. Full implementation and system advancement requires further investment.
- **Counties are Doing Their Part.** Counties continue to work closely with PEMA and stakeholders to contain costs and improve system efficiency, including system consolidations and regionalization of services.
- **Timely Action is Essential.** Waiting for another report delays critical funding. Existing data justifies an increase now.
- **A Strong State-County Partnership.** Counties appreciate the state's continued partnership and urge swift passage of legislation to secure and modernize 911 funding.
- **Commitment to Public Safety.** Counties remain committed to delivering effective, efficient 911 services and safeguarding the public in their moments of need.