

# LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

## COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA THE VOICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

### COUNTY PRIORITIES SPOTLIGHT: END OF YEAR REPORT

In January, CCAP members announced six county legislative priorities for 2023, including 911 funding and reauthorization, county inmates with mental health issues, county mental health base funding increase, addressing the needs of children and youth who have complex behavioral health issues, broadband access and development and promoting election integrity. An end of year update on counties' progress on these priorities can be found [here](#).

Watch for more information on county priorities for 2024 in the coming weeks.

### CCAP PRESIDENT ABRAMOVIC REFLECTS ON 2023 FOR COUNTIES

As my term as CCAP President ends, I'd like to highlight the impactful policy work achieved by counties in 2023. Counties actively engaged with more than 20 pieces of legislation across 12 committees in both the House and Senate, providing crucial insights on how these bills would impact counties. CCAP members, staff and affiliates testified or submitted written comments for nine legislative hearings covering policy issues such as 911 services, mental health, public worker safety, e-waste, disabled veterans' property tax exemptions, cybersecurity, general county government, and more. Additionally, we advocated for county priorities through more than 15 letters to the General Assembly, Governor, and Administration, addressing crucial issues like 911 services, mental health funding, broadband access, development and elections.



Counties saw incremental movement on our top two priority issues for 2023 – 911 funding and reauthorization along with mental health funding. Counties received a minor increase in the 911 surcharge, a step towards counties' funding and reauthorization goal. Although the statute did not lapse and the slight increase will help in funding 911 services, counties and taxpayers will continue to shoulder 25 to 30% of the cost to ensure reliable 911 services are available for Pennsylvanians in their moment of greatest need. For mental health, a \$20 million boost, although small against the \$1.2 billion need, marks the first increase in community services in more than 15 years, a step toward rebuilding the underfunded system.

Counties also mitigated several unfunded mandates and provided guidance on timeliness of legislative action. For instance, counties were able to effectively advocate this fall that it was too late to shift thousands of polling locations and poll workers for the 2024 presidential primary, and that such a move would be confusing to candidates and voters in the process.

Further, counties were able to gain traction and be recognized partners on key issues impacting our communities, including addressing complex cases in youth and broadband. A CCAP work group was formed to develop a report and recommendations addressing the needs of children and youth who have complex behavioral health issues. The work group examined how this critical work is being approached locally, in Pennsylvania, and in other states and is expected to release a report in early 2024 on the topic along with proposed strategies for advocacy and implementation. Related to broadband access and development, the CCAP Broadband Task Force served as a sounding board and feedback loop to the state broadband authority and other partners on broadband program guidelines and implementation.

Counties continued to use local outreach and media to help inform, educate and engage legislators, stakeholders and our communities on critical issues. Between op-eds and discussions during commissioners' meetings, counties prioritized localizing impacts, some of which were demonstrated in "County Connections," a show produced with CCAP and Pennsylvania Cable Network (PCN). Check out the CCAP Media YouTube channel for archived episodes as well as quick snippets on other county priorities like what counties could be doing with more mental health funding.

With one year of a new legislative session, Administration and General Assembly under our belts, counties look forward to continuing our partnership to advance county policies and priorities to best serve our communities and residents.

Have a happy and safe holiday season and wonderful new year!

Sincerely,  
Albert "Chip" Abramovic, Venango County Commissioner, 2023 CCAP President

## STATE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COUNCIL HOLDS FIRST MEETING

On December 19, the **Behavioral Health Council**, created by Governor Shapiro via Executive Order in October, held its first meeting. The Council, **comprised** of state leaders, county governments and community providers, is charged with developing specific recommendations to decrease wait times for services, as well as to streamline mental health treatments and addiction care. County representatives on the council include Tina Clymer, County Mental Health Office representing (Carbon, Monroe, and Pike Counties); Dr. Tamra Williams, County Mental Health Office (Montgomery County); Ryan Hogan, Single County Authority (Luzerne County); Kristin Varner, Single County Authority (Dauphin County); Laurie Greco, Area Agency on Aging (Northampton County); and Dr. Shannah Gillam, Area Agency on Aging (Allegheny County).

The Council will be supported by an Advisory Committee, with 25 members appointed by the Governor, that will be responsible for sharing industry knowledge, expertise, data and feedback, with representation from county government with broad human services knowledge, including behavioral health, child welfare services and drug and alcohol serviced as well as county commissioners. Appointees to the Advisory Committee are expected to be named in the coming weeks.

More information on the Council, including meeting dates, agenda and minutes, will be posted on the Council's [website](#).

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## ACTS AFFECTING COUNTY GOVERNMENT

With a new legislative session beginning in 2023, the General Assembly and Governor Shapiro have signed many bills into law over the past year. A complete list of **2023 acts affecting county government**, including the bill number, the date the bill was signed and a brief summary can be found on the CCAP [Legislative Action Center](#).

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## BID LIMITATIONS THRESHOLD UPDATE

The 2024 annual adjustments to the bid limit thresholds and telephonic quote thresholds under the County Code and Second Class County Code were published in the December 23, 2023, issue of the [Pennsylvania Bulletin](#).

Act 86 of 2011 increased bid limit thresholds and telephonic quote thresholds under the County Code to \$18,500 and \$10,000, respectively, with an annual adjustment for inflation thereafter; the thresholds were increased to the same levels in the Second Class County Code under Act 89 of 2011. The state Department of Labor and Industry has advised that the consumer price index percentage change for the 12-month period ending September 30, 2023, is 3.7% and thus the bid limit thresholds and telephone quote thresholds that take effect January 1, 2024, will be \$23,200 and \$12,600, respectively.

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## NACo ACCEPTING INTERIM POLICY RESOLUTIONS

The National Association of Counties (NACo) 2024 Legislative Conference will be held in person in Washington, D.C., from February 10-13. During the conference, NACo's ten policy steering committees will meet to consider adoption of interim policy resolutions that will guide NACo advocacy until the Annual Conference in July. NACo invites submissions for interim policy resolutions, which must be submitted via email to [resolutions@naco.org](mailto:resolutions@naco.org) by January 10.

Additional details regarding the upcoming conference and interim policy resolutions are available on the NACo Legislative Conference [webpage](#).

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