

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA THE VOICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

COUNTY PRIORITIES SPOTLIGHT: 911 SURCHARGE INCREASE TAKES EFFECT MARCH 1

The increase in the 911 surcharge to \$1.95, enacted by [Act 34 of 2023](#), is set to take effect on March 1, and will be in place through January 31, 2026. It is estimated the new fee will generate \$370 million in annual revenue, though system costs for 2024 are estimated to be more than \$450 million. The remainder of the cost of the system is paid for by counties, or ultimately their property taxpayers.

As part of the reauthorization, the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), in consultation with the 911 Advisory Board Funding Subcommittee, developed a revised formula for distributing funds. The new formula will take effect in 2024 and will be used for processing payments in April for Q1 2024. The formula comprises the following components:

- 3% distributed equally to each county.
- The remaining funds will be distributed based on 65% of the average quarterly formula payments from 2021 and 2022, 30% on population, 2.5% on population density and 2.5% on square miles.

This formula was developed to ensure no county saw a funding decrease while permitting the 15% interconnectivity funds to again be fully used for statewide interconnectivity. PEMA will continue to emphasize proactive planning/budgeting of the 15% funds with counties in accordance with 911 system plans. Additionally, any unencumbered funds from the statewide interconnectivity funding process will be distributed to all counties by formula.

With just two years until the next reauthorization, Pennsylvania counties urge the General Assembly to begin having real conversations about proper 911 funding immediately, so this life-saving service does not become a perpetual backburner issue.

NEW COUNTY CONNECTIONS EPISODE FOCUSES ON 911 AND VOTE-BY-MAIL REFORMS

“County Connections” is a video series that showcases county government’s role in several priority issues in communities across the commonwealth. In the most recent [episode](#), Butler County Commissioner Kevin Boozel talks about Pennsylvania counties’ top legislative priority in 2024 – 911 funding and reauthorization. Union County Commissioner Jeff Reber also discusses counties’ priority for vote-by-mail reforms and what counties need as they head into a Presidential election year. Finally, CCAP President and Berks County Commissioner Michael Rivera speaks on the role of county government and how Pennsylvanians interact daily with county services.

Watch this episode on the [CCAP Media](#) YouTube channel, which houses past episodes of “County Connections” and other videos showcasing the work of county government.

SPECIAL ELECTION HELD, ONE VACANCY REMAINS

On February 13, James Prokopiak won a special election to fill the 140th House District seat in Bucks County, which was vacated in December by former State Rep. John Galloway, who took a magisterial district judge position in Bucks County.

While it was expected that Rep.-elect Prokopiak’s victory would again give House Democrats a one-seat majority, Rep. Joe Adams (R-Wayne/Pike), a former Wayne County Commissioner, announced his resignation from his 139th House District seat effectively immediately on February 9. House Speaker Joanna McClinton has called for a special election to be held concurrently with the 2024 primary election on April 23 to fill that vacancy.

The House is scheduled to return to session on March 18, when it is expected Rep.-elect Prokopiak will be sworn in. Until the 139th District vacancy is filled, House Democrats will hold a 102-100 majority.

STATE BUDGET HEARINGS BEGIN, COUNTY PRIORITY ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED

On February 20, the House and Senate Appropriations committees began hearings with state agencies to review the Governor’s proposed FY 2024-2025 commonwealth budget. In the House, hearings with the Department of Community and Economic Development and Department of Revenue focused on several of the Governor’s long-term plans, including the [statewide economic development strategy](#) and proposed revenue sources of adult-use cannabis and taxation on games of skill. During a hearing with PEMA, 911 planning, cybersecurity, funding and response were all discussed, noting the funding increase and county requests for additional funding and statutory changes ahead of 2026. In the Senate, hearings kicked off with the Independent Fiscal Office, Department of Corrections (DOC) and Pennsylvania Parole Board. During the DOC hearing, questions around mental illness in inmates were posed, noting that an increase in community-based mental health services could help alleviate the number and severity of mentally ill individuals who end up in the corrections system. This dovetails with counties’ 2024 priorities to increase funding for the county mental health base and address inmates with mental illness. Other hearings, including the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), focused on the Governor’s [proposed](#) unification of the PASSHE universities and the state’s community colleges under a new governance system to better invest and create a holistic higher education system in the commonwealth.

With budget hearings set to continue through early March, the House and Senate will hear from the Department of State on February 27 and March 6 respectively, Department of Human Services on March 5 and 6, and will conclude with the Governor’s Office of the Budget on March 7. The full schedule can be found on CCAP’s Budget News [webpage](#). Both House and Senate hearings can be viewed at [pctv.com](#) or on their respective legislative websites.

DHS RELEASES REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMPLEX YOUTH

Earlier this month, the Department of Human Services’ (DHS) Blueprint Workgroup released a [plan](#) identifying their recommendations to improve the coordination of care for children and young adults with complex needs. These complex cases—children and young adults with co-occurring mental health and developmental disabilities among other things

—are especially vulnerable to abuse, neglect, home and educational disruptions, communications challenges, trauma, and a complex diagnostic history that may lead to delayed or incorrect treatment.

The report provides recommendations to limit the barriers, delays, and risk of new trauma to children, young adults, and their caregivers, placing an emphasis on better collaboration between support systems, providers, and the needs and goals of each individual.

To reach these objectives for a trauma-informed, holistic, inclusive system of care for complex cases, the Workgroup defined metrics by which future success may be measured, including a focus on family engagement and choice; a well-qualified and support workforce; cross-system collaborations; early intervention, proactive treatments, and long-term-long service customized to the individual; integrated planning for everyday needs; and coordinated, timely delivery of services.

With several longer-term recommendations identified, Blueprint members will continue their work implementing these recommendations and identifying barriers to implementation at the state and local level. Additionally, counties have been examining the issue of addressing youth with complex needs and are working to develop supplemental recommendations to the DHS report to help provide short-term recommendations to aid the system. Stay tuned to a future issue of the Legislative Bulletin in the coming weeks for more information on the county report and recommendations.

CCAP SPRING CONFERENCE & VOTING MATTERS

CCAP members will have the opportunity to participate in the election of the two CCAP representatives to the NACo Board of Directors during Monday's opening general session of the **CCAP Spring Conference**, March 3-5 at the Hilton Harrisburg. The **conference agenda** will include remarks from Governor Josh Shapiro during the conference luncheon on Monday, a stand-alone workshop from the Academy for Excellence in County Government on Sunday, and dynamic breakout sessions with a diverse range of topics on Monday and Tuesday. Additionally, CCAP policy committee meetings will be held in person on Sunday afternoon, March 3, from 1 – 5 p.m. All CCAP members are welcome to attend and engage in any meetings and discussions, but only committee members may vote. The **last day to register** for the conference is today, Friday, February 23.

[Other CCAP Publications](#)

CCAP | PO Box 60769, Harrisburg, PA 17106-0769

[Unsubscribe cloudsub@pacounties.org](mailto:cloudsub@pacounties.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent byccap@pacounties.orgpowered by



Try email marketing for free today!