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LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA
THE VOICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

COUNTY PRIORITIES SPOTLIGHT: GOVERNOR SIGNS FY 2023-2024 STATE BUDGET

On August 3, the Senate convened in session to allow Lt. Governor Austin Davis to sign [HB 611](#), the FY 2023-2024 state appropriations bill. This was the last procedural step needed in the legislative process to send the bill to the Governor's desk. Governor Shapiro subsequently signed the state budget into law, with the exception of a line-item veto of \$100 million allocated for PASS scholarships (otherwise known as school vouchers) as expected.

However, the General Assembly and Governor have not completed work on what are known as the Code bills, those pieces of legislation that provide authorizing language for how certain funding in the budget is to be used. Budget Secretary Uri Monson issued a memo which indicated that absent that legislative language, he will not be releasing funding for certain programs, including the \$100 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars that was repurposed from adult mental health to school mental health, as well as the \$7.5 million in new funding for indigent defense. It is expected those funds will be released once the Code bills are completed, likely not until this fall.

Additional details regarding the funding allocated in HB 611 can be found in CCAP's [County Budget Analysis](#) on the Budget News [webpage](#).

CCAP ANNUAL RESOLUTIONS AND PLATFORM REVISION

This week, CCAP closed out its 137th Annual Conference and Trade Show at the Erie Bayfront Convention Center from August 6 through August 9. During the conference's business meeting on August 8, CCAP members had the opportunity to lend their voice to the Association's policy-setting process, voting on and approving 17 [resolutions](#) amending the *Pennsylvania County Platform*, the Association's cumulative policy statement. CCAP members also went through the four-year review to assure policy positions stay up to date. This is the final phase of CCAP's annual [policy-setting process](#), the culmination of the work of the ten policy committees comprising more than 175 CCAP members that reviewed the platform and proposed and reviewed resolutions throughout the Spring and early Summer.

The adopted resolutions amend the *Pennsylvania County Platform*, the Association's cumulative policy statement. The resolutions and the updated *Platform* are available on the [Policy](#) page of the CCAP website.

Policy committees will meet throughout the fall to develop their work plans and propose priorities for the coming year, and members will vote on CCAP's 2024 priorities at their Fall Conference in November.

PBDA BOARD APPROVES STATE FIVE-YEAR PLAN

On August 10, the Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority (PBDA) Board convened to review and approve the commonwealth's [five-year action plan](#) toward bridging the digital divide in Pennsylvania. The plan, which was unanimously approved, outlines goals, strategies, and actions to meet Pennsylvania's broadband needs and will serve as a roadmap as the commonwealth leverages significant funding resources like the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program and the Digital Equity Act (DEA). While the plan outlines the mission and vision for broadband deployment and access, it also provides key steps to achieve those items, including ensuring universal availability of high-speed and scalable broadband networks, increasing widespread internet adoption and meaningful usage, deploy next-generation networks statewide and

increasing program stewardship.

Additionally, PBDA executive director Brandon Carson provided an update on the State Digital Equity Plan and Capital Projects fund Broadband Infrastructure Program (BIP), noting the Authority has received more than 200 applications totaling more than \$900 million for the \$200 million available through BIP. Carson then noted the application review timeframe, which includes a challenge and local government feedback process. The PBDA plans to hold a webinar for local governments on August 16 and more details on the feedback process and webinar will be forthcoming.

GOV. SHAPIRO SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER FOR WORKFORCE PROGRAM

On July 31, Governor Josh Shapiro signed an executive order creating the Commonwealth Workforce Transformation Program (CWTP), a job training program that provides workforce development grants to ensure a skilled workforce is available to undertake federally funded infrastructure projects. The program allows organizations doing infrastructure work funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) or the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) to receive up to \$40,000 for each new worker they train.

Under the program, the Commonwealth will reserve at least 3% of all funding it receives from the IIJA and IRA to fund workforce development and on-the-job training, meaning that as much as \$400 million could be used for workforce training in Pennsylvania over the next five years. Organizations doing infrastructure work, including those contracted or subcontracted to work on county and other municipal government-sponsored projects funded by the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act or Inflation Reduction Act, like road and bridge repair, expanding high-speed internet access, and replacing lead pipes, will be eligible for the new program.

For more information about the CWTP, click [here](#).

NACo RELEASES HOUSING AFFORDABILITY REPORT AND TOOLKIT

The National Association of Counties (NACo) recently released a report on local housing affordability, following a year-long task force studying the issue. As the cost of housing rises, families are spending a greater percentage of their income on mortgages and rent; in some cases, these rising costs have put permanent housing out of reach altogether. As individuals and families are priced out of their localities, there is a negative effect on workforces, education and the opportunity to contribute as stakeholders in their community.

In 2022, NACo launched its task force with two goals: to identify county-led policies and practices to address the housing crisis and to examine housing solutions between government officials, private entities, and community organizations. The Task Force's [final report](#) highlights the complicated issue, noting the primary barriers to housing are affordability, supply and quality, and offers considerations for counties to play a role in affordable housing effort.

[Advancing Local Housing Affordability: Best Practice and Policy Recommendations for County Leaders](#) is available on the NACo [website](#).

CCAP COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS OPEN

CCAP members who want a voice in shaping Association policy are encouraged to submit their name to be considered for appointment to a policy committee. The committees, which cover a broad range of issues related to county government, give members an opportunity to offer input on policy matters at the state and federal levels. For more information and to complete the form to seek a CCAP committee appointment, CCAP members can submit a [CCAP Committee Interest Form](#) on the CCAP website.

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