

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA
THE VOICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

IN THIS EDITION:

- **Appropriations Hearings Begin, Counties Look for Discussions on Priorities**
- **NACo Special Series Tracks Key Federal Developments Impacting Counties**
- **Recommended Closures for Correctional Facilities in Counties**
- **Counties Play A Key Role in Housing Action Plan Outreach**
- **CCAP Spring Conference & Voting Matters**

APPROPRIATIONS HEARINGS BEGIN, COUNTIES LOOK FOR DISCUSSIONS ON PRIORITIES

With the release of Governor Shapiro's FY 2025-26 Executive Budget proposal a little over two weeks ago, the General Assembly is moving to the next phase in this important process – Appropriations Hearings. Both the House and Senate began hearings on Tuesday, February 17 and will continue through the first week of March. This process gives members the opportunity to ask questions directly to agencies regarding their budget and programs as outlined in the Executive Budget.

Of particular interest for the legislative priorities for counties in 2025, the Department of Human Services (DHS) is scheduled to testify to the House on March 4 and the Senate on March 5. In his budget, the Governor proposed to increase the County Mental Health Base Funding line in DHS's budget by \$20 million, which, if enacted, would amount to a three-year total increase of \$60 million since FY 2023-24. This increase will support important mental health services, but it still falls short of addressing critical gaps and fully restoring the county mental health system.

Over the last two fiscal years, much of the increased funding for the County Mental Health Base Funding went towards addressing workforce concerns and service backlogs rather than equipping all counties to be able to stand-up new and needed programs for its residents. Counties continue to stress the importance of a meaningful investment of \$100 million in FY 2025-26, which would allow counties to:

- Implement more programs for justice-involved services

- Increase preventive and support services for adolescents
- Rebuild the infrastructure of community services and programs, such as mental health crisis walk-in centers and certified peer specialist programs
- Expand supportive housing efforts
- Build out enhanced crisis and emergency support services
- Address staff recruitment and retention concerns

In addition, the Department of State is scheduled to testify in the Senate on February 20 and in the House on February 25. The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) will testify in the House on February 21 and in the Senate on March 4. Counties are eager to hear testimony from these agencies and will closely monitor these hearings with vote-by-mail reforms and 911 surcharge reauthorization among CCAP's 2025 legislative priorities.

As the General Assembly continues this next step in the process of developing the FY 2025-26 state budget, counties remain committed to partnering with the legislature to secure essential funding and statutory changes to ensure that county governments can continue to efficiently and effectively serve residents across the Commonwealth. To stay up to date on budget news for counties, visit [CCAP Budget News](#).

NACO SPECIAL SERIES TRACKS KEY FEDERAL DEVELOPMENTS IMPACTING COUNTIES

The National Association of Counties (NACo) has launched a special membership series to provide timely updates and in-depth analysis on critical policy developments during the first 100 days of the Trump Administration. This series features weekly webinars with experts providing ongoing updates on critical issues that directly affect counties, including federal funding, regulatory changes, and intergovernmental partnerships.

A recent session provided an in-depth look at the federal budget reconciliation process. On February 12, the U.S. House of Representatives introduced its **draft budget**, while the Senate released its **version** on February 10. The House proposal includes tax cuts, immigration policies, and defense investments, along with significant long-term spending reductions that could impact programs such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP), Social Services Block Grants, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and clean energy tax credits from the Inflation Reduction Act. Similarly, the Senate's plan extends key tax provisions, prioritizes immigration and defense spending, and suggests potential Medicaid reductions and other health-related funding cuts.

In the coming weeks, both chambers will debate and vote on their respective budget resolutions. Upon passage, congressional committees will be tasked with drafting legislation in alignment with reconciliation instructions.

For more information or to register for NACo's free webinar series, visit the [NACO website](#).

RECOMMENDED CLOSURES FOR CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES, PUBLIC HEARINGS TO COME

On February 10, the Department of Corrections (DOC) **announced** that it accepted a report recommending the closure of two state correctional facilities – SCI Rockview in Centre County and Quehanna Boot Camp in Clearfield County. These recommendations were a part of a data-driven initiative designed to ensure the DOC's resources are aligned to achieve the department's mission and ensure that the department is spending taxpayer dollars effectively and efficiently. Because these facilities are subject to Act 133 of 2018, accepting these recommendations triggers a minimum three-month period for community members and stakeholders to provide feedback before a final decision on closures is made.

In addition, the report recommended the closure of two community corrections centers

(CCCs) – often referred to as half-way houses – which serve as residential-style facilities for inmates transitioning back into public life. Wernersville CCC in Berks County and Progress CCC in Greene County were subject to these closures. Because CCCs are not subject to Act 133, these facilities are expected to close in the next three months without a public comment period.

The DOC has pledged to relocate the staff affected by these closures. Inmates of these facilities will similarly be relocated to other state facilities. In addition, the department will hold public hearings on the two state correctional facility closures in the affected counties, though times and locations have not yet been announced. More information can be found on the [DOC's website](#).

COUNTIES PLAY A KEY ROLE IN HOUSING ACTION PLAN OUTREACH

On September 12, 2024, Governor Shapiro signed [Executive Order 2024-03](#), directing the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), in partnership with other state agencies and key stakeholders, to develop a Housing Action Plan. This initiative aims to assess Pennsylvania's housing supply, strengthen preservation efforts, and provide a strategic framework to address housing challenges across the commonwealth.

A draft of the Housing Action Plan will be presented to the Governor on September 12, 2025, marking one year of research, collaboration, and analysis. The plan's key objectives include:

- Conducting a statewide and regional assessment of housing needs
- Evaluating the effectiveness of existing state housing programs and resources
- Developing recommendations for housing investment, policy initiatives, and best practices to improve housing outcomes
- Outlining strategic planning initiatives to guide housing policy over the next five years

As part of the planning process, DCED has hosted roundtable discussions across the state to gather input from local governments, residents, agencies, and organizations directly impacted by the housing crisis. CCAP and its affiliate, the Pennsylvania Association of County Human Services Administrators (PACHSA), have actively participated in these discussions, including two sessions in Dauphin County. Additionally, CCAP members from across the state have engaged in 16 roundtable conversations to help shape the plan.

Counties play a critical role in addressing homelessness through the administration of the Homeless Assistance Program (HAP), a county-led initiative providing essential services aimed at preventing homelessness. HAP helps individuals access support, secure shelter, and work towards self-sufficiency. As housing remains a top priority for counties, they are committed to working alongside the state to strengthen these efforts and enhance community stability across Pennsylvania.

To further inform the Housing Action Plan, DCED has developed a [public survey](#) to gather additional input. For more information and to participate, please visit the [DCED website](#).

CCAP SPRING CONFERENCE & VOTING MATTERS

Save the date for the [CCAP Spring Conference](#), March 16-18, at the Hilton Harrisburg. The conference will kick off with CCAP policy committee meetings on Sunday afternoon, March 16th, from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM. All CCAP members are welcome to attend, but only committee members may vote. On Monday, during the Opening General Session, members will have the opportunity to participate in the election of the two CCAP representatives to the NACo Board of Directors.

This year's conference features an exciting new experience to the [conference agenda](#)-a Hill Day! On the final day of the conference, Tuesday, March 18, members are encouraged to participate in a special advocacy-focused event at the Pennsylvania Capitol. This day

provides a unique opportunity for members to engage directly with local legislators and share counties' legislative priorities for the 2025 legislative year. **Conference registration** is now open through Monday, March 3.

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