

2023

COUNTY GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

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- 911 Funding and Reauthorization
- County Inmates with Mental Health Issues
- County Mental Health Base Funding Increase
- Address the Needs of Children and Youth Who Have Complex Behavioral Health Issues
- Broadband Access and Development
- Promote Election Integrity

The legislative priorities elected each fall by CCAP members are not just CCAP priorities – they are truly county priorities. And what better way to share county priorities than by having *counties* take an active role in announcing them to the public, to the media and to legislators?

Each year, counties promote and advocate on the county priorities in a variety of ways, such as adopting resolutions, posting on social media, meeting with legislators and working with local media. The need for county input and advocacy at the Capitol remains critical as we look to achieve our priorities in 2023.



THIS TOOLKIT IS A GUIDE

This toolkit serves as a guide to help think through how your county can showcase the importance of the 2023 priorities to your legislators, the media and your constituents. To aid in those efforts, your county will receive materials to use in your 2023 priorities announcement activities, including:

- Priorities Brochure
- Template press release
- Template resolution
- Localizable talking points

GET EXCITED – GET INVOLVED

The 2023 Priorities will be officially announced on January 25. From that point, every county has an opportunity to get involved and take ownership of their priorities, harnessing our collective power to achieve our common goals. This guide is full of tips and tricks on how to begin thinking through sharing the 2023 county priorities.

CCAP is encouraging all counties to take an active role in announcing the 2023 priorities using at least three of the activities in this toolkit to create a buzz about your county and what is important to you, as well as the services you provide.

But announcing the 2023 county priorities is just the first step. With all 67 counties working together, counties will continue their collective efforts to advance those priorities throughout the year, building on the interest generated across the commonwealth to add others to take action with them.

To inspire action, decision makers must hear the county story from all corners of Pennsylvania.

How Do I Get Started?

You can begin taking steps now to plan for how you will share the priorities and what they mean to your county throughout January and February.

CHOOSE YOUR AUDIENCES

With whom will you share the 2023 priorities?

- **Legislators** are key decision makers who can advance the policies that are important to counties.
- **Media** – from newsprint to television to radio – can provide a forum for you to tell your story and why the counties' priorities are *your* priorities.
- **Public** – your constituents, your clients, local businesses and organizations, county staff and other partners want to know how you are taking action to improve the county and the well-being of its citizens.

CHOOSE YOUR ACTIVITIES

How will you share the 2023 priorities? This guide contains ideas and suggestions for reaching your chosen audiences; some of the suggested activities may even serve a dual purpose in reaching multiple audiences at once. We encourage each county to choose at least **three** activities to announce your priorities.

CHOOSE YOUR TIMING

When will you share the 2023 priorities? CCAP is focusing on January and early February for a concentrated effort across the state for counties to announce their priorities, in the lead up to the Governor's FY 2023-2024 budget address in March. You can start now to pick dates for events (such as legislative meetings) and issue invitations, reach out to your local media representatives and build anticipation for your activities.

KNOW WHO YOU NEED

Who will help you craft your local story and what the 2023 priorities mean to your county? Identify the county staff who are subject matter experts that you will turn to if you need local information on a particular issue, such as human services, broadband or county budgets. Other staff may be able to assist in drafting a local media release or editorial, preparing a county resolution, posting social media messaging, or setting up a legislative roundtable. Get them involved early so you can be ready to tell your county story with data and provide examples of what these priorities mean to your county.

CONTACT CCAP FOR ASSISTANCE

Have questions or need additional information? A list of additional resources can be found in this planning guide, or you can contact Melissa Gates, CCAP Government Relations Manager, mgates@pacounties.org or John Buffone, CCAP Director of Media and Public Relations, jbuffone@pacounties.org, for further assistance.

LET CCAP KNOW WHICH ACTIVITIES YOU ARE CHOOSING AND WHEN YOU PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THEM

Let us know how you will be sharing the priorities by contacting PACountiesGR@pacounties.org.

Announcing the 2023 County Priorities

TO YOUR LEGISLATORS

Your legislative delegation can introduce and cosponsor bills that advance county priorities, and they have important votes in the House and Senate. Your education and advocacy will help legislators to be effective advocates on behalf of your county, and help to create a critical mass of legislators talking about county issues at the Capitol.

- Discuss with your legislative delegation – Pick up the phone or schedule a meeting with your legislators to discuss the priorities and what they mean to the communities in which you both serve. This is especially important with your newly elected members who may not be familiar with the role of counties or the services you provide to your joint constituencies.
- Educate your legislators on local impact – Consider inviting your legislators on a tour of county facilities to demonstrate current county processes and the services you provide.
- Localize your story – Enlist your county's subject matter experts to provide clear, succinct information, including relevant stories and statistics that are meaningful to your audience.

TO THE MEDIA

An effective media strategy can build understanding about the role and responsibilities of county government to a wide variety of audiences at once, and create positive coverage for your county and the 2023 priorities. Numerous options exist for you to tell your story.

- Send a news release to local media – If your county does not already have a list of editorial board contacts for local newspapers, begin compiling contact information.
- Send an editorial to your local news outlets – Identify key county staff who will be responsible for producing the final version of your editorial and sending to local newspapers.
- Use your local radio/tv connections – Schedule time to ask for individual meetings with key media representatives to educate them on the issues and tell your story.
- Hold a press conference – Identify speakers, customize information to showcase your county stories and invite the media to help spread the amazing work of your county.

TO THE PUBLIC

Sharing the priorities in a way that is relevant to your community will bring a better understanding of who your county is and the services you provide to your residents.

- Discuss during your commissioners' meeting – Consider upcoming agenda items to which you could tie the 2023 priorities.
- Adopt a county resolution – Select a meeting at which you would like to adopt your resolution and customize the resolution with county specific data and information.
- Use your communications and social media platforms – Identify key county staff who can incorporate information prominently on your county's website, social media accounts, emails, newsletters and other constituent communications.
- Enlist other voices – Identify partners, community stakeholders and those affected by issues surrounding the legislative priorities who may add information and a human touch as another voice to help tell your story.

General Resources

The below links are full of helpful information, tips and tricks to get your initiatives started. If you have any questions about available materials or how to set up a virtual meeting or press event, CCAP can help! Contact a member of the CCAP Government Relations team or send a note to PACountiesGR@pacounties.org.

County Priorities Webpage. The Priorities webpage serves as the one-stop-shop for priorities information and resources, including the brochure, talking points and sample materials.

Legislative Action Center. The CCAP Legislative Action Center, located at www.pacounties.org under the Advocacy menu tab, serves as a hub for different advocacy material links and resources including fact sheets, talking points, sample letters and background information. The Legislative Action Center also serves as a reference page to link you out to the General Assembly website. You can find contact information for Pennsylvania House and Senate members as well as other commonwealth employees.

Grassroots Toolkit. This toolkit holds a host of good tips and tricks, from strategies for effective communication to human services advocacy advice. It also features a crash course in the Pennsylvania legislative process.

Guidelines for Organizing Legislative Visits. This quick one-pager helps to guide the process of setting up meetings in the county. These could be a sit-down meeting in an office or a guided tour of a county facility. Organizing meetings is more than just logistics, but also careful consideration and preparation of the goal of the meeting.

Articles on Special Topics. Often articles related to tips, tricks and best practices are featured in the CCAP magazine, *County News*. For quick access, they also can be found on the Legislative Action Center. Some topics include legislative engagement, messaging and speaking skills, connecting with media, and how to explain what counties do.

Twitter (@PACountiesGR) While social media certainly is not for everyone, it is a great way to find and share information quickly and broadly. Consider following CCAP on Twitter (@PACountiesGR) to stay in the know about different county and legislative happenings in real time.

YouTube (CCAP Media) Subscribe to CCAP Media on YouTube for updates and the latest videos showcasing the role of county government across communities in Pennsylvania.

