

# LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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

## IN THIS EDITION:

- **County Leaders Announce 2025 Priorities at the Capitol**
- **Governor Releases 2025-26 Budget: Where Do Counties Land?**
- **House Committee Advances Public Sector OSHA Bill**
- **Public Notice Modernization in House Chamber**
- **Counties Honoring National Senior Independence Month**
- **IFO Releases January Revenues**
- **CCAP Spring Conference & Voting Matters**

## COUNTY LEADERS ANNOUNCE 2025 PRIORITIES AT THE CAPITOL

On January 29, county leaders from across the commonwealth gathered in Harrisburg to announce their three legislative priorities for 2025. These priorities reflect the most pressing issues facing counties as they work to deliver essential services to their communities.



At the forefront of counties' advocacy efforts is securing a \$100 million increase in county mental health base funding in the 2025-2026 state budget. Counties serve as the backbone of Pennsylvania's community-based mental health system, yet funding has failed to keep pace with rising demand. This investment is critical to stabilizing and strengthening services, ensuring long-term, sustainable, and equitable support for some of

the state's most vulnerable residents. Without immediate action, counties will continue to face significant gaps in mental health resources, limiting access to care at a time when it is needed most.

Counties are further calling for the urgent reauthorization and modernization of the 911 surcharge, set to expire January 31, 2026. As the primary source for emergency response systems, the surcharge is essential to maintaining and upgrading 911 operations. However, rising costs and evolving technology have outpaced current funding levels. Counties are urging swift legislative action to extend this critical revenue source well ahead of the looming sunset deadline. Beyond financial stability, technical updates to the 911 statute are necessary to align with the realities of the NextGen 911 system. While Act 147 of 2024 introduced key updates to Title 35, Chapter 53, additional refinements are needed to keep pace with federal and state regulatory changes. A reliable, modernized 911 system is vital to ensuring swift emergency response and protecting public safety.

The third priority focuses on much-needed updates to Pennsylvania's Election Code, particularly to address challenges counties have faced since the enactment of Act 77 of 2019. Counties are advocating for key reforms, including allowing the pre-canvassing of mail-in ballots and adjusting impractical deadlines to enhance election administration while maintaining security and accessibility. One of the most critical changes is moving the deadline for absentee and mail-in ballot applications to 15 days before an election, ensuring sufficient time for ballots to be received and processed. Additionally, counties have seen a surge in on-demand, in person mail-in voting in the weeks leading up to Election Day, creating long lines and operational strain on election offices. Addressing these issues through legislative action is essential to streamlining election administration and reinforcing public confidence in the electoral process.

By prioritizing mental health funding, securing sustainable 911 resources, and modernizing election procedures, counties are advocating for policy changes that will directly improve the lives of Pennsylvanians. These legislative efforts are not just about efficiency – they are about ensuring that communities across the commonwealth have the resources they need to thrive.

To further highlight these priorities, **County Connections**, CCAP's 30-minute television program, recently aired an episode dedicated to educating viewers on the impact of these issues and importance of legislative action. The episode, which aired on PCN, features in-depth discussions on the challenges counties face and their advocacy efforts. This episode, along with previous County Connections segments, can be found on the **CCAP Media YouTube Channel**.

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## GOVERNOR RELEASES 2025-2026 BUDGET: WHERE DO COUNTIES LAND?

On February 4, Governor Shapiro unveiled his 2025-26 Executive Budget proposal. The budget proposes spending \$51.5 billion, representing a \$3.6 billion or 7.4% increase over the FY2024-25 enacted budget, after adjusting for upwards supplement appropriations. The budget proposes to make state investments in a variety of state program areas, including education, economic development, and transportation. Additionally, the budget proposes implementing several new policies, including the legalization of adult use cannabis, regulation of games of skill, and raising the minimum wage, all of which have been proposed in previous budgets.

The budget proposes to increase county mental health funding by a nominal \$20 million in FY2025-26, which falls in line with the enacted increases counties received in FY2023-24 and FY2024-25. However, counties continue to stress the need for a more significant funding investment to stabilize and rebuild this critical system. Despite the needed investment continuing to be \$250 million, counties are requesting a more modest \$100 million increase in FY2025-26 to fill immediate funding gaps in services.

In addition, the budget provides for nominal increases to appropriations for the Department of State that support training and resources for counties and election office staff. The Governor's budget also proposes to maintain the current funding allocation for

the Election Integrity Grant Program under Act 88 at \$45 million. This is critical funding to support county efforts in administering elections, and, as such, counties are seeking a \$5 million increase to the program.

Though not included in the budget proposal, counties will continue to stress the importance of keeping discussion on 911 surcharge reauthorization, as well as a surcharge increase, in the broader context of budget negotiations. With the surcharge expiring at the end of January 2026, it is imperative that the General Assembly enact legislation to reauthorize the surcharge well in advance of the sunset date.

Counties remain committed to partnering with the General Assembly as budget negotiations begin to ensure these important program areas and services receive adequate funding in FY2025-26 and beyond. For a more detailed analysis of how the FY2025-26 Executive Budget impacts county governments, visit [CCAP Budget News](#).

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## HOUSE COMMITTEE ADVANCES PUBLIC SECTOR OSHA BILL

On February 5, the House Labor and Industry Committee advanced **House Bill 308**, introduced by Rep. Patrick Harkins (D-Erie), moving it to first consideration on the House floor. This legislation seeks to establish the Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health Act, extending OSHA protections to public employees.

Counties continue to underscore that worker safety remains a top priority for counties, noting the extensive measures already in place to ensure safe workplaces. Counties actively implement risk management strategies, including employee training, workplace inspections, and other safety protocols designed to reduce hazards, minimize liability, and control workers' compensation costs. Moreover, local governments in Pennsylvania are already subject to a comprehensive set of workplace safety laws and regulations, making HB 308 redundant and potentially conflicting with existing requirements. While well-intended, counties caution that the bill would impose substantial costs on counties without delivering significant benefits, particularly since many OSHA standards are not applicable to the roles and environments within local government.

CCAP will continue to monitor this legislation as it receives further consideration in the House this session.

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## PUBLIC NOTICE MODERNIZATION IN HOUSE CHAMBER

The House Local Government Committee passed House **Bill 424**, introduced by Representative Brett Miller (R-Lancaster), moving to it first consideration on the House floor. This legislation seeks to modernize public notice requirements by allowing political subdivisions and municipal authorities to publish legally required advertisements on their publicly accessible websites in addition to traditional newspaper publications.

Under current law, municipalities and local governments must rely solely on newspaper advertisements to fulfill public notice obligations. House bill 424 aims to ensure that critical public information remains accessible even if print publications experience delays or disruptions. Counties have worked with our local government partners over the last several sessions to address the continuing concerns with outdated public notice requirements. Counties hope to see further consideration of proposals to allow for more options for local governments to modernize advertising requirements and provide savings to local governments, while increasing options for notice availability to our communities.

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## COUNTIES HONORING NATIONAL SENIOR INDEPENDENCE MONTH

February is National Senior Independence Month, which is an opportunity to show support to older adults in communities across the Commonwealth to ensure they can live dignified and full lives. In honor of this occasion, the Indiana County Board of Commissioners, which includes 2025 CCAP President Sherene Hess, adopted a proclamation recognizing February as National Senior Independence Month. CCAP encourages county leaders to take action to honor older Pennsylvanians this month by adopting similar **proclamations** in their counties.

On Monday, February 3, the Pennsylvania Association of Area Agencies on Aging (P4A) testified before the House Aging and Older Adult Services Committee about the services AAAs provide to help older adults live independently. As most AAAs are county-based, many counties offer significant support to their local AAA. P4A emphasized the need for adequate funding, noting that current levels are insufficient to keep up with the growing population of older people in Pennsylvania. To address this, they are requesting a \$105 million increase in the 2025-26 state budget, with annual increases of \$12-\$15 million through 2030.

The important services that AAAs provide often work in tandem with other county services and programs. As such, counties support P4A's budget request for 2025-26, as it will ensure that both the AAAs and county government can best support aging adults across the Commonwealth.

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## IFO RELEASES JANUARY REVENUES

The Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) released the monthly revenue **update** for January 2025, showing that General Fund collections for the month totaled \$3.92 billion, which were \$13 million (-0.3%) less than the IFO's official estimate. Monthly collections from licenses and fees were \$24 million above estimate due to delayed deposits from December, as noted in a previous Legislative Bulletin edition. January 2025 collections were \$16 million (0.4%) higher than during the same month of the previous year.

Year-to-date state revenues for FY 2024-2025 through the end of January continue to outperform the IFO's official estimate by \$70 million (0.3%) for a total of \$24.1 billion. Higher-than-expected receipts from the corporate net income tax continue to be the driving factor for year-to-date collections exceeding the IFO's estimate. Additionally, year-to-date collections are \$346 million (1.5%) higher compared to this time last year.

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## 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 16<sup>th</sup>, 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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