



National Association of Counties

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2018



**Stronger Counties.
Stronger America.**

NACo WORKS TO PRESERVE LOCAL DECISION MAKING, TO PROTECT COUNTIES FROM UNFUNDED MANDATES AND LOCAL PREEMPTION AND TO STRENGTHEN THE FEDERAL-STATE-LOCAL PARTNERSHIP



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

2018

PROMOTE COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES

NACo will work with the Administration and Congress to ensure that any infrastructure package, including reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act and the Highway Trust Fund, reflects the following county priorities: allocating more funding for locally owned infrastructure, increasing local decision-making authority and prioritizing investments that increase economic development, mobility and safety.

SUPPORT THE PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES (PILT) AND SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS (SRS) PROGRAMS

NACo supports restoring full mandatory funding for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program, which compensates counties for untaxable federal land within their boundaries. NACo also supports extending the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program as a transitional funding mechanism until the federal government fully implements a sustainable long-term forest management program with adequate revenue sharing for forest counties and schools.

SUPPORT POLICIES TO PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT AND JUSTICE REFORM

NACo supports measures that enhance the ability of counties to prevent and treat mental illness and substance use disorders, both in the community and within the context of the criminal justice system. NACo also supports programs and legislation that divert non-violent individuals struggling with mental illness and/or substance use disorders from jails and into treatment programs while protecting overall public safety.

PROTECT THE FEDERAL-STATE-LOCAL PARTNERSHIP FOR MEDICAID

NACo supports protecting the federal-state-local partnership structure for financing and delivering Medicaid services while maximizing flexibility to support local systems of care. Counties are concerned about measures that would further shift Medicaid costs to counties, including proposals to institute block grants or per capita caps. These proposals would increase the amount of uncompensated care provided by counties and reduce counties' ability to provide for the health of our residents. NACo also supports targeted efforts to enhance flexibility in the program to support local systems of care, including easing Medicaid's Institute of Mental Diseases (IMD) and inmate exclusions.

COUNTIES OWN **46 PERCENT OF ALL PUBLIC ROAD MILES**

COUNTIES OWN **38 PERCENT OF THE NATIONAL BRIDGE INVENTORY**

COUNTIES ARE INVOLVED IN **78 PERCENT OF THE NATION'S PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS AND A THIRD OF PUBLIC AIRPORTS**

61.6 PERCENT OF COUNTIES HAVE **FEDERAL LAND WITHIN THEIR BOUNDARIES**

PILT AND SRS SUPPORT CRITICAL SERVICES IN COUNTIES, INCLUDING EMERGENCY SERVICES, SEARCH AND RESCUE, FIRE PROTECTION, FOREST MAINTENANCE, EDUCATION AND TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

APPROXIMATELY **7.9 MILLION ADULTS** HAVE BOTH A **MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER**

11.4 MILLION INDIVIDUALS CYCLE IN AND OUT OF MORE THAN **3,000 LOCAL JAILS** EACH YEAR

64 PERCENT OF JAIL INMATES HAVE A MENTAL ILLNESS

COUNTIES SPEND **\$83 BILLION ANNUALLY ON COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HOSPITAL SERVICES**

COUNTIES OWN AND SUPPORT **907 HOSPITALS** AND **838 NURSING HOMES, 750 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AUTHORITIES** AND OPERATE **1,943 LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS** ACROSS THE COUNTRY

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS CONTRIBUTED **\$28 BILLION TO THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF MEDICAID** IN 2012

WORK TOWARDS A MORE EFFECTIVE DEFINITION OF WATERS OF THE U.S.

NACo believes that local streets, gutters and human-made ditches should be excluded from the definition of “Waters of the U.S.” (WOTUS) under the federal Clean Water Act. NACo calls on Congress to require the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to withdraw the new WOTUS rule and to rewrite it in consultation and collaboration with state and local governments.

SUPPORT COUNTY AUTHORITY TO COLLECT EXISTING SALES TAX

NACo supports legislation to permit the collection of existing sales and use taxes from remote sellers. The issue of collecting remote sales taxes has taken on greater significance in recent years due to the Internet’s growth as a retail marketplace. As a result, state and local governments have lost billions in uncollected sales taxes and Main Street businesses find themselves at a significant competitive disadvantage to online merchants. This disadvantage is amplified because online merchants and their customers use and benefit from local infrastructure and services without contributing to their provision.

SUPPORT PROGRAMS THAT ASSIST COUNTIES TO PREVENT AND REDUCE POVERTY

NACo supports federal investments and strategies that focus on serving those most in need and the root causes of poverty. Because counties are responsible to maintain the local social safety net and are typically mandated to provide indigent care, NACo supports fully funding programs that assist our nation’s most vulnerable populations and maintain the maximum amount of flexibility possible at the local level. Key federal programs that assist counties in tackling poverty include the Social Services Block Grant and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.

SUPPORT A COMPREHENSIVE LONG-TERM FARM BILL REAUTHORIZATION

NACo supports a long-term reauthorization of the farm bill to help counties provide critical investments in our nation’s most underserved communities. In addition to a long-term reauthorization, NACo also supports full funding for all farm bill titles, which help strengthen our nation’s rural infrastructure including broadband and water and wastewater systems, protect our nation’s food supply, increase access to healthy food to low-income populations through the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), and promote environmental stewardship and conservation.

MORE THAN 70 PERCENT OF COUNTIES INVEST IN STORM SEWER SYSTEMS, SEWAGE DISPOSAL, SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AND WATER UTILITIES

COUNTIES INVEST \$23.9 BILLION IN SANITARY, STORM SEWER SYSTEMS AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL/TREATMENT AND WATER SUPPLY SYSTEMS

\$26.1 BILLION OF EXISTING SALES TAX REVENUE IS CURRENTLY NOT COLLECTED— THIS REVENUE COULD PROVIDE FUNDING FOR ESSENTIAL LOCAL SERVICES LIKE INFRASTRUCTURE, PUBLIC SAFETY, EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

COUNTIES INVEST OVER \$58 BILLION IN HUMAN SERVICES EACH YEAR

TWO-THIRDS OF COUNTIES HAVE POVERTY RATES ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE

BETWEEN 2009 AND 2016, THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE’S RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM LEVERAGED OVER \$187 BILLION IN LOANS AND GRANTS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

IN 2016, ALMOST 45 MILLION INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED SERVICES SUPPORTED BY SNAP

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ABOUT NACo

The National Association of Counties (NACo) unites America's 3,069 county governments. Founded in 1935, NACo brings county officials together to advocate with a collective voice on national policy, exchange ideas and build new leadership skills, pursue transformational county solutions, enrich the public's understanding of county government, and exercise exemplary leadership in public service.

Each year, NACo's Board of Directors adopts the association's federal policy priorities, which help shape NACo's advocacy efforts on behalf of America's counties.



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