



We Are Counties Talking Points

Below is a draft message frame and talking points for the *We Are Counties* campaign. With the goal of building on existing public support for county frontline workers and evolving it into an awareness and advocacy initiative, this is architecture that guides our messaging.

Frame

County workers are heroes on the front lines in this pandemic. The gratitude Americans are showing toward these hospital workers, first responders, public health and human services officials, and law enforcement officers is incredible. We must thank and celebrate these frontline heroes and urge federal decision-makers to support the critical services they provide to our communities.

Talking Points

- America's 3.6 million county, parish and borough employees are on the [front lines](#) of the nation's response to the [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#). Help put faces on the many frontline services counties provide by joining NACo's [We Are Counties campaign](#).
- 328,000 hospital workers, 330,000 law enforcement officers, and 93,000 first responders serve as America's frontline warriors in the battle against COVID-19.
- They are making tremendous sacrifices – putting their own lives at risk – to save lives and keep all of us healthy and safe. That's what makes them heroes.
- While people across the country are showing tremendous support and gratitude toward these workers, what most of them don't know is they are some of the 3.6 million county employees serving our communities.
- Counties provide essential health care across the country. We support nearly 1,000 hospitals including Level 1 - Trauma Centers, 800 long-term care facilities, 750 behavioral health center and over 1,900 public health departments.
- From the 911 operator, to the county EMT, to the nurse at the public hospital; from the sheriff's deputy, to the health department contact tracer and the county coroner or medical examiner: County employees are working long, dangerous hours to keep our communities safe.
- At a time when there is less money coming in the door, the costs for counties to provide services are skyrocketing.
- Public support has been incredible. We must thank and celebrate these frontline heroes and urge federal decision-makers to support the critical services they provide to our communities. A strong federal-state-local partnership is more crucial than ever.

Examples of the most relevant county functions:

We Are Counties Talking Points

- Public health officials – contact tracers, epidemiologists, restaurant/food safety inspectors, testing facilities, etc.
- Hospital and other medical personnel – nurses, doctors, EMTs etc.
- Law enforcement
- Corrections officers
- 911 operators
- Emergency operations centers
- Firefighters
- Coroners/medical examiners
- Mental and behavioral health
- Human services – unemployment assistance, child welfare and foster care, veterans benefits, nutrition programs, elderly assistance
- Elections officials
- Public works – roads, bridges, airports, public transportation, stormwater and wastewater, solid waste disposal and recycling, public facilities
- Economic development