

Senate GOP introduces coronavirus relief bill

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

Negotiations over the fifth coronavirus relief package began July 27 with U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's (R-Ky.) introduction of the \$1 trillion Health, Economic Assistance, Liability and Schools (HEALS) Act.

The package of bills does not contain any additional funding for local governments, nor does it include direct funding for the 95 percent of counties with fewer than 500,000 residents. The HEALS Act does however include \$300 billion in supplemental appropriations to programs of interest to counties.

The bill also allows counties with populations greater than 500,000 to use existing CARES Act funding to replace lost revenues, but only if they have distributed at least 25 percent of the funding to other governments within their jurisdictions, adding up to a potential \$4.7 billion loss for those counties.

NACo analysis has found the COVID-19 pandemic's effects will add up to a \$202 bil-

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Boone County, Ky. Judge/Executive Gary Moore, with wife Linda by his side, is sworn in as NACo president by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.). The ceremony was part of NACo's Annual Business Meeting, held online July 20. Photo by Timothy Epner

by **Rachel Looker**
staff writer

Boone County, Ky. Judge/Executive Gary Moore, with his wife Linda standing by his side, took the oath of office and began his NACo presidency July 20 during NACo's first-ever virtual Annual Business Meeting. This was the first time in the association's 85-year history that the meeting was held online, with more than 1,000 county officials and others participating, due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The NACo officers — Immediate Past President Mary Ann Borgeson, Douglas County, Neb. commissioner; First Vice President Larry Johnson, DeKalb County, Ga. commissioner and Second Vice Pres-

ident Denise Winfrey, Will County, Ill. interim county executive — were elected by acclamation.

NACo members recorded their votes on bylaws amendments and other association business remotely.

U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) administered the oath of office to Moore.

"I couldn't be more excited to see you become the top guy at NACo," McConnell said.

"Years ago, I was in county government, so this is very exciting, it's my honor to swear you in."

McConnell was a county judge, representing Jefferson County, Ky., from 1977 to 1984.

Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer (incoming president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors), Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear and McConnell all offered their congratulations to Moore in videos played

during the meeting.

"Wow, those were some surprises I didn't know about," Moore said.

Moore, who is serving in his sixth term as judge executive, announced his presidential priority in his inaugural address to members: The LEAD (leadership, education, action and development) Initiative.

Throughout his years of public service, Moore said

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Q&A: Gary Moore, NACo's new president, shares his views

by **Rachel Looker**
staff writer

Boone County, Ky. Judge/Executive Gary Moore began his NACo presidency July 20 during NACo's first-ever virtual annual business meeting. *County News* asked Moore about his background in county government and the challenges the coronavirus pandemic raises for counties.

How did you become interested in local government?

While he [my father] was sheriff (in Pendleton County, Ky.), my mom passed away. I would ride the school bus to the county courthouse at the end of each day. We'd get home, his office hours would be over and he would get that call that someone needed his services. He never once complained. It just was

instilled in me in a very special way of serving others and being a great community servant.

Who influenced you to make you the leader you are today?

My father would be first. There is a gentleman that owned a business who was my business mentor. His nickname was "Biz"

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NACo President Gary Moore: 'I want our residents to know what counties do'

From MOORE page 1

he has noticed that many individuals do not fully understand county government and how county officials impact their lives.

"I want our residents to know what counties do," he said. "I want to work with you so you can help your residents better understand how your county touches their everyday lives."

Moore discussed plans to equip county leaders with leadership skills to address unprecedented challenges using resources such as the NACo High Performance Leadership Academy, the Cybersecurity Leadership Academy and the County Leadership Institute.

"Now is a critical time in our nation and in our counties," he said. "Now is not the time to be passive or idle. Now is the time to act."

Moore is now the second Kentuckian to ever serve as NACo president following Kenton County Judge-Executive Bob Aldemeyer who served in 1985.

Moore was first elected in 1998 as judge executive for Boone County, the fourth-largest county and one of the fastest growing counties in Kentucky. He also serves as president of the Kentucky Association of Counties.

Moore has been active in NACo since 2012, previously serving as chair for the Finance Committee, the Transportation Steering Committee and the Environment, Energy and Land Use Committee.

He also served as co-chair of the National City-County Task Force on the opioid epidemic and as a member of the Audit Committee.

Following in his father's footsteps, Moore described how his interest in becoming

a public servant stemmed from his father, who served as a deputy sheriff and sheriff in Pendleton County, Ky.

"He was a true public servant who loved helping others," Moore said of his father. "From those early years, I began to look for ways to serve my community."

Moore addressed NACo members from the Kentucky Association of Counties headquarters surrounded by his wife and colleagues.

He described how July 20 now marks two special occasions in his life— his father's birthday and the beginning of his NACo presidency.

"Just as my dad inspired me, I encourage you to be that spark that motivates someone in your community to pursue county service," he said.

Winfrey elected second vice president

Moore provided the oath of office for Will County, Ill. Interim County Executive Denise Winfrey who was elected to serve as NACo's second vice president by acclamation.

President of the Cook County, Ill. Board of Commissioners Toni Preckwinkle; DuPage County, Ill. Commissioner Jim Healy; and Wayne County, Mich. Commission Chair Alisha Bell provided the nominating and seconding speeches for Winfrey.

Winfrey started her career as a member of the Joliet, Ill. Township Board. She has served on the Will County, Ill. Board since 2009 and served as speaker of the board before assuming her current role in June 2020 of interim county executive.

Winfrey served as chair of NACo's Community Economic and Workforce Development Policy Steering Committee

and as a member of NACo's Large Urban County Caucus, Women of NACo, the National Organization of Black County

Officials, NACo's Membership Committee and the Board of

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ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING LOOKS BACK AT NACo'S YEAR

County officials celebrated NACo's accomplishments during the association's first-ever virtual Annual Business Meeting July 20. Immediate Past President Mary Ann Borgeson recapped achievements from the last year, which are also highlighted in NACo's Annual Business Report.

Read about some of the highlights from NACo's last year:

COVID-19

- Secured the passage of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act
- Worked with federal partners on the passage of the CARES Act
- Helped secure bipartisan support of the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act, known as the COVID-19 3.5 relief package
- Produced resources for counties including maps and analyses, a tool to compare how counties are using Coronavirus Relief Fund allocations, issue briefs and over 60 *County News* articles
- Launched the "We Are Counties" campaign to express gratitude to county officials working on the frontlines during the COVID-19 outbreak
- Advocated on Capitol Hill to help shape bipartisan legislation for federal coronavirus relief packages

Member engagement

- Reached an all-time membership high with more than 2,410 member counties or 78 percent of the nation's counties, parishes and boroughs
- 1,546 county officials served on NACo committees

- Attained 99 percent member retention
- Enrolled 1,600 county officials from nearly 900 counties and state associations in NACo's High Performance Leadership Academy
- Over 520 counties participated in the Stepping Up Initiative to reduce the number of individuals with mental illnesses and substance use disorders in jail

Policy Advancement

- Updated definition of the EPA's Waters of the United States (WOTUS) Rule
- Secured a two-year reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools program
- Secured full funding for Payments in Lieu of Taxes
- Utilized NACo's TestIT App, which has tripled in downloads in the last year, to aid in the passage of the Broadband DATA Act
- Secured a \$2.8 billion increase in Census funding
- Helped achieve a full repeal of the 40-percent "Cadillac Tax" on employer-sponsored health plans
- Helped enact the Family First Transition Act

SNAP/STATS



UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY INDUSTRY

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Leisure/hospitality | 28.9 percent |
| Mining/oil and gas | 17.8 percent |
| Other services..... | 14.5 percent |
| Transportation | 12.9 percent |
| Information..... | 12 percent |

Source: Statista

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Will County, Ill. Interim Executive Denise Winfrey was elected as NACo's second vice president during the first-ever virtual Annual Business Meeting on July 20.

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Directors. She is a graduate of the NACo High Performance Leadership Academy.

Douglas County, Neb. Commissioner Borgeson concludes year as president

Before passing the torch to the new NACo president, Douglas County, Neb. Commissioner Mary Ann Borgeson announced the winner of the the David Davenport Memorial Scholarship.

Each year, the NACo president selects a graduating high school student to receive the scholarship which is awarded to future leaders. David Davenport, the founder of the firm PEBSCO, known today as Nationwide Retirement, first presented the scholarship 30 years ago.

Borgeson announced that Douglas County student George Abalekpor will receive the David Davenport Memorial Scholarship. Abalekpor is a

‘It’s a critical time, but it’s our time. It’s time for America’s county officials to lead.’

- NACo President
Gary Moore

graduate of Millard South High School, where he earned a 4.3 grade average while taking advanced placement courses. He plans on attending Georgetown University in the fall.

Borgeson will host a scholarship presentation ceremony in Douglas County, Neb. later this year.

In her closing remarks, Borgeson noted that serving as NACo president “has been the honor of a lifetime.

“My presidency has been quite unusual to say the least. From personal family issues to a public health pandemic to the fight for racial equality and justice, I can honestly say

this year has been challenging, exciting and sad ... and yet, I remain optimistic for the future,” she said.

A video of tributes, thanks and congratulations by NACo members, highlighting Borgeson’s year as president, played during the meeting.

Moore begins presidency

In his first business as NACo president, Moore introduced committee chairs and swore in NACo’s new officer team.

“It is a critical time, but it’s our time,” Moore said. “It’s time for America’s county officials to lead.”

NACo members watched a short video showcasing Travis County (Austin), Texas, the location of next year’s Annual Conference.

Moore said he hopes to see NACo members in Boone County, Ky. in December for NACo’s Board meeting and a joint Large Urban County Caucus/Rural Action Caucus symposium. **CN**

Q&A: Moore looks ahead



NACo President Gary Moore, judge/executive, Boone County, Ky.

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and he was the second phase of my personal growth. The final was my longtime pastor of my church, who really helped me develop my moral compass in life.

In your years serving as a county official, what has been your biggest challenge?

I’m one who likes to please everyone. When you serve the public as an elected official, you quickly learn that you’re going to make decisions that displease or disappoint some people.

What do you enjoy most about being a county official?

When I drive through my community and move around the county witnessing those things that we have done to make our community better — whether it’s a park, a new street that is relieving congestion or improving safety and making peoples’ lives better.

You selected the Leadership, Education, Action and Development (LEAD) initiative as your presidential priority. Can you tell us more about that?

I’m still amazed with the fact that many people don’t know what county government is and how we impact their lives. I want to help our county officials across the country educate their community as to how they impact the everyday lives of our residents. I’ve been talking a lot with the team about how we can help that education process fit any county. I’m talking about every group — elderly to youth. I do want to take the opportunity to educate and I’m talking a lot about the leadership develop-

ment side. If we can continue to help develop our elected officials and staffs, that’s also part of the advancement of counties.

In what ways do you hope to help county officials respond to the COVID-19 pandemic?

The best part of NACo is always the sharing of best practices and learning from failures. I think now more than ever we will need to be sharing what is working and what is not with all counties.

What are additional challenges you see counties facing in the upcoming year?

Infrastructure funding, because one of the impacts of the COVID stay-at-home orders is that gas tax receipts are plummeting and that’s the lifeblood of funding for highway projects across our country. I see growing communities needing to expand and add to their transportation system. This is a year where the federal transportation bill will expire, and we need a re-authorization or a new authorization to be able to deal with that.

What do you hope to accomplish as NACo president?

There’s some concern that because we’re not meeting in person and not networking that NACo might lose its relevance or some might not see the value of NACo. I want to flip that coin. When counties are facing their greatest challenges, NACo is more important, more essential than it’s ever been. Sharing best practices, sharing failures where others can learn from those mistakes, being an advocate in our nation’s capital — all of those things demonstrate why NACo is so important. **CN**



Immediate Past President and Douglas County, Neb. Commissioner Mary Ann Borgeson (right) watches highlights of her career and year as president during the virtual Annual Business Meeting.

NACo officers sworn in at Annual Business Meeting



New NACo officers for 2020-2021 are:

During NACo's Annual Business Meeting, held July 20, NACo President Gary Moore, judge-executive, Boone County, Ky. (large photo) swears in new NACo officers, First Vice President Larry Johnson, commissioner, DeKalb County, Ga. (middle photo); Second Vice President Denise Winfrey, interim county executive, Will County, Ill. (bottom photo) and Immediate Past President Mary Ann Borgeson, Douglas County, Neb. (top photo).

NACo Regional Representatives add two new members

NACo's regional representatives (l-r) will have two new faces: Audrain County, Mo. Commissioner Tracy Graham will represent the Central Region and Erie County, N.Y. Executive Mark Poloncarz will represent the Northeast Region. Other regional representatives are Cascade County, Mont. Commissioner Joe Briggs, who represents the West Region and Person County, N.C. Commissioner Ray Jeffers, who represents the South Region.



finally!



NACo swag is now available online!

naco.org/store



County budgets to see \$202 billion COVID-19 impact

by Jonathan Harris

A new report released by NACo estimates that by the end of FY2021, counties will experience a \$202 billion budgetary impact. This estimate includes \$30 billion in additional unbudgeted COVID-19 response costs, \$114 billion in lost county-generated revenue and an estimated \$58 billion decrease in funding from states.

This decrease in local government spending could cost the U.S. economy up to \$344 billion in decreased GDP and 4.9 million jobs. These losses are based on two different Harvard analyses of the impact of state and local government spending on economic output and on the workforce, one which estimates that every dollar cut in local government spending would reduce overall economic output by \$1.70 or more, and another which estimates that every \$35,000 spent by state governments generates one additional job.

By the end of FY2021, NACo estimates that counties will be impacted by \$144 billion in additional expenditures and lost county-generated revenue. In

addition to this \$144 billion impact, counties may lose \$58 billion of funding from state governments. This anticipated loss is based on research from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), which estimates that states will lose 10 percent of their revenue in FY2020 and 25 percent in FY2021. Already, counties in 22 states have been notified by the state that funding will likely decrease.

The impact of COVID-19 on counties has been uneven and varied, yet widespread across the nation. Counties vary greatly in terms of population, geography, government structure, funding streams and economic drivers. Depending on these factors and many others, some counties have been largely shielded from the impacts of COVID-19. Notwithstanding these few exceptions, most counties have felt the devastating impacts of the pandemic on budgets, workforces, economies and residents, albeit in unique ways.

In fact, NACo’s survey found that COVID-19 impacted 88 percent of responding counties’ budgets. 60 percent of

counties have indicated an increase in local expenditures and 72 percent of counties have reported revenue loss during the current budget cycle.

Residents rely on counties’ financial wellbeing for essential services, yet half (50 percent) of counties are reporting a COVID-19 related deficit. Unlike the federal government, local governments are not permitted to run deficits. Unbudgeted fiscal impacts, therefore, must translate to service cuts, project delay, furloughs and layoffs if a county’s reserves are insufficient to balance the budget.

In response to the unprecedented budget impacts of the pandemic, some counties have had to turn to reserves: 52 percent of counties have drawn or have plans to draw from reserve funds due to COVID-19. Others have been forced to turn to cuts in capital projects or services, with 55 percent of counties reporting cuts to capital expenditures and 56 percent reporting cuts or delays in infrastructure projects, including maintenance or new projects. Still other counties have turned to furloughs and layoffs. 63

percent of counties underwent workforce changes, either furloughing or laying off workers, or requesting they take early retirement. NACo has tracked the furloughs and layoff of 165 counties, which have impacted over 20,000 county workers.

County governments are key employers of the U.S. workforce, employing more than two of every 100 U.S. workers. And local government spending is an important portion of the nation’s economic output, comprising more than 15 percent of U.S. GDP in the first quarter of 2020.

Downturns in the local government sector inevitably impact the national economy, and the local government sector does not recover quickly from economic shocks.

A study from the Federal Reserve found that decreased state and local government spending slowed down economic growth for 23 out of 26 quarters between 2008 and mid-2014, resulting in 3.5 percent less economic growth by 2015.

Major declines in local government employment following the Great Recession took

nearly a decade to rebuild. These slow gains were lost in just two months of 2020 where 1.3 million local government jobs were lost — far more than during the recession.

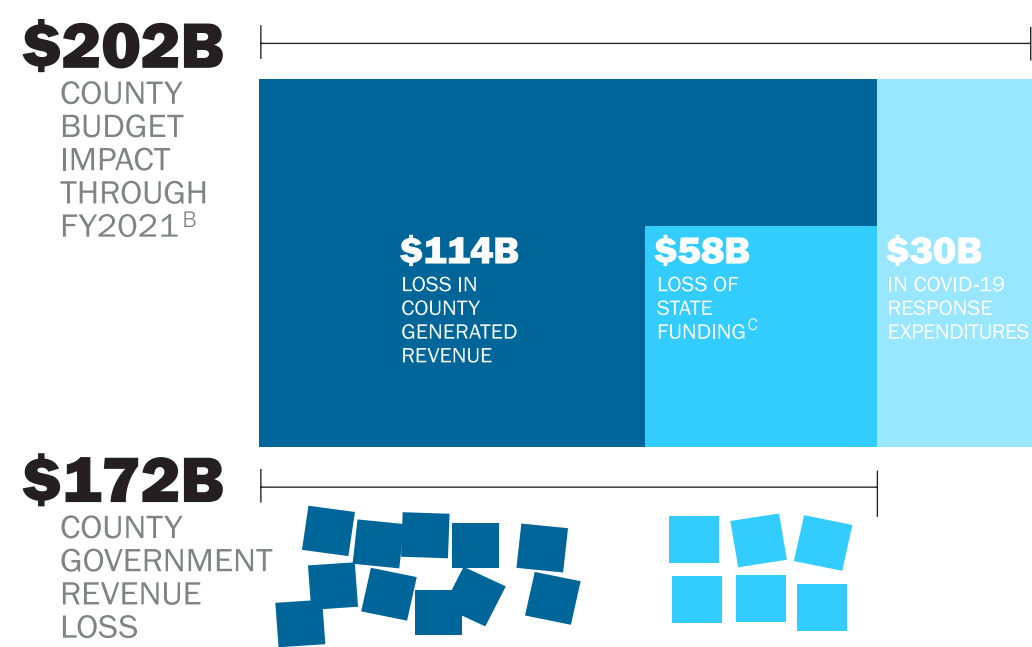
Without large amounts of federal aid to counties, cities and states, a study from Governing estimated that the national GDP would not return to its 2019 level for at least five years.

Local governments, and the national economy as a whole, face a long road to recovery. Without help from states and the federal government, local government spending will inevitably decrease and remain weak even after health risks subside, causing widespread economic impacts and deepening the recession the nation has already begun.

Check out NACo’s full report, “Comprehensive Analysis of COVID-19’s Impact on County Finances and What It Means for the Nation’s Economy” at: www.naco.org/covid19/budgets. **CN**

Jonathan Harris is associate research director in NACo’s County Innovations Lab.

COUNTIES ANTICIPATE \$202 BILLION IMPACT TO BUDGETS THROUGH FY2021, WITH WIDESPREAD ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES

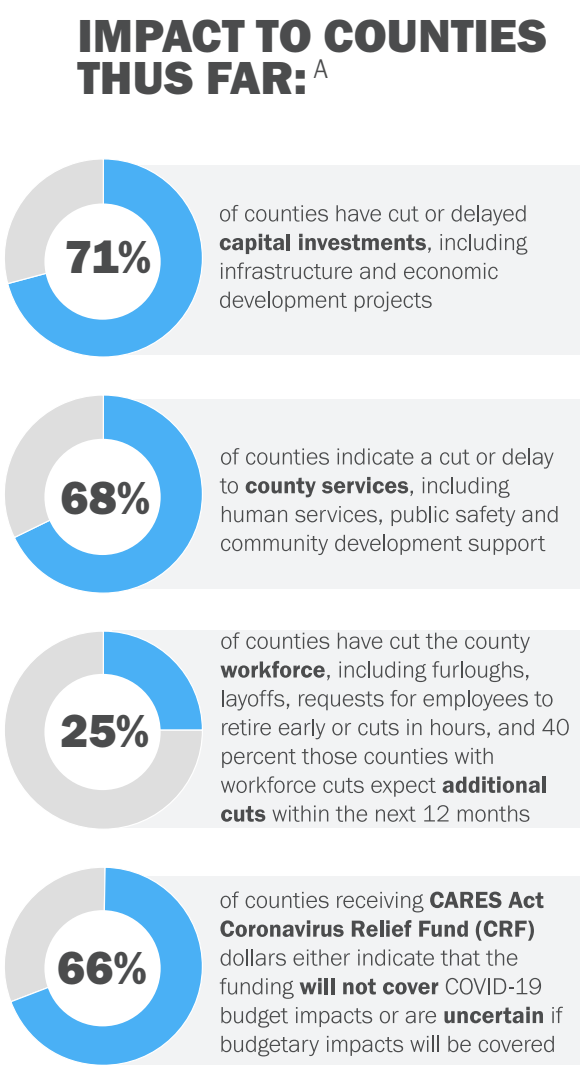


\$1 CUT IN COUNTY SPENDING ≈
\$2 LOST IN GDP
per Chodorow-Reich model, Harvard University¹

\$35K CUT IN COUNTY SPENDING ≈
1 LESS JOB CREATED
per Shoang model, Harvard University²

\$344B LOST IN GDP
IMPACT TO THE NATIONAL ECONOMY

4.9M LESS JOBS



Responding to COVID-19 in the county workforce

by **Rachel Looker**
staff writer

With the United States reaching over 4 million confirmed cases of COVID-19, county departments are facing impacts when their own employees test positive.

In Alameda County, Calif., around 50 employees within the sheriff's office have confirmed cases of the virus as of July 22, according to Public Information Officer Sergeant Ray Kelly.

The Alameda County Sheriff's Office has 1,600 employees with around 1,000 badge personnel and 600 professional staff.

"We're in the midst of basically our second surge of COVID in the last few weeks," he said, adding that the office is seeing many asymptomatic cases.

Kelly said he is expecting that number to rise after massive amounts of testing and antibody testing for employees.

"I think that's where we're seeing some of the increase," he said. "We know the more you test, the more you're going to see, and I think that's probably why we're seeing more asymptomatic-style type cases."

Back in June, deputies and personnel were deployed to protests and civil unrest following the death of George Floyd, Kelly said.

At the end of the month, the office began to see a surge in the number of employees who tested positive with around 35 reported cases. Before the summer, the agency had two employees test positive for the virus.

Prior to July, there were no fatalities among county employees because of the virus, but on July 23, Deputy Sheriff Oscar Rocha, a 25-year veteran of the sheriff's office, passed away from COVID-19 complications.

"He represents what's great about county employees and law enforcement county officers that serve their county," Kelly said.

The sheriff's office is encouraging employees to get tested, Kelly said. Office policy

dictates that employees stay at home for two weeks if they come in close contact with someone with the virus.

At some points, 60 to 70 employees were off work because of possible COVID-19 exposure, he said.

"That obviously presents challenges as well in backfilling those hours and those positions during a time when the supply of personnel dries up and the demand is high," Kelly said.

He explained how all county employees received 180 hours of COVID leave that can be used for any pandemic-related situation.

"There is no risk-free area and we need everybody to take the precautions to help stop the spread in our community."

-Kelly Moore

In Horry County, S.C., 33 employees have currently tested positive for COVID-19 as of July 17, Director of Public Information Kelly Moore said.

As of the same date, 46 employees were working remotely or utilizing medical leave because of possible exposure or for a test. The county has seen 86 positive cases in total among county employees since March.

Moore said the county saw positive cases as early as March, but numbers were initially low.

If an employee has been exposed to a positive case, the county's protocol requires the employee to either quarantine for 14 days or receive a COVID-19 test.

"The guidance has changed somewhat since the spring, so we're continuing to be in touch with both our state health agencies and of course CDC guidance is updated to determine what those appropriate amounts of time are and following the guidance of those medical professionals," Moore said.



The hand of Deputy Sheriff Oscar Rocha who was in critical condition in the ICU before he passed away on July 23 from complications due to COVID-19. Photo courtesy of the Alameda County Sheriff's Office

Employees throughout different county departments have tested positive. The county's offices are open to the public with precautions implemented such as wearing face coverings and gloves. County residents are encouraged to do business online or make appointments for meeting in person.

Similar to Alameda County, Horry County implemented two weeks of COVID leave beyond an employee's vacation and sick time. The 80 hours can be used for time off related to the coronavirus.

Moore said the county wanted to be transparent with employees and started sending weekly update emails that outline the number of employees who are currently out of work to be tested, the number of em-

ployees who have tested positive and not reporting to work and the number who have tested positive and recovered. The information is broken down by department.

"We send the [numbers] to the media after we send them internally to our employees so that folks understand that there is no risk-free area and we really need everybody to take the precautions to help stop the spread in our community," she said.

To help boost employee morale at the Alameda County Sheriff's Office, Kelly said the sheriff has been creating weekly update videos for the last 18 weeks. For the videos, the sheriff visits different locations throughout the county to interview employees.

"It makes employees feel

that the work they're doing is validated in that they're contributing so it's a great way to keep morale strong and set a good tone," Kelly said.

The videos also include statistical data with graphs and charts containing information about the virus while emphasizing the hard work of county employees.

"I think it takes a lot of courage to do law enforcement in general," Kelly added. "But I think to do law enforcement in an environment like this where you know you could go home and bring this virus back to your family or your loved ones and you take that risk every day on top of the other risks that you take, I think that really has shown us the quality and the character of the people who work for us." **CN**


NACo President Moore appoints committee chairs

NACo presidents make appointments to policy steering committees, standing committees, ad hoc committees, task forces, advisory boards and also to the Large Urban County Caucus and the Rural Action Caucus as well as at-large NACo Board directors. The following are some of the key appointments made by NACo President Gary Moore. See more at naco.org.


AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS STEERING COMMITTEE

 **Hon. Craig Pedersen**
Supervisor
Kings County, Calif.


ARTS AND CULTURE COMMISSION

 **Hon. Renee Price**
Commissioner
Orange County, N.C.


COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STEERING COMMITTEE

 **Hon. Joseph K. Wood**
County Judge
Washington County, Ark.

DEFINED CONTRIBUTION AND RETIREMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

 **Hon. Grant Veeder**
Auditor/Commissioner of Elections
Black Hawk County, Iowa


ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND LAND USE STEERING COMMITTEE

 **Hon. Melissa Cribbins**
Commissioner
Coos County, Ore.


FINANCE STANDING COMMITTEE

 **Hon. Larry L. Johnson**
Commissioner
DeKalb County, Ga.


FINANCE, PENSIONS AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS STEERING COMMITTEE

 **Hon. Kevin Boyce**
Commissioner
Franklin County, Ohio


GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS) SUBCOMMITTEE

 **Hon. Kenton C. Ward**
Surveyor
Hamilton County, Ind.


HEALTH STEERING COMMITTEE

 **Hon. Phillip Randall Serna**
Supervisor
Sacramento County, Calif.

HEALTHY COUNTIES INITIATIVE ADVISORY BOARD

 **Mr. Kenneth Norris Wilson**
County Administrator
Franklin County, Ohio


HUMAN SERVICES AND EDUCATION STEERING COMMITTEE

 **Hon. Deborah A. Lieberman**
Commissioner
Montgomery County, Ohio

IMMIGRATION REFORM TASK FORCE

 **Hon. William Truex**
Commissioner
Charlotte County, Fla.


INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STANDING COMMITTEE

 **Hon. Christopher Constance**
Commissioner
Charlotte County, Fla.


INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

 **Hon. Stephanie Wright**
Council Member
Snohomish County, Wash.


IT ADVISORY COUNCIL

 **Hon. Christopher Constance**
Commissioner
Charlotte County, Fla.


JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY STEERING COMMITTEE

 **Hon. Jerry Demings**
County Mayor
Orange County, Fla.


LUCC STEERING COMMITTEE

 **Hon. Sally A. Heyman**
Commissioner
Miami-Dade County, Fla.

MEMBERSHIP STANDING COMMITTEE

 **Hon. Jimmy Odom**
Associate Commissioner
Cass County, Mo.


PROGRAMS AND SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEE

 **Hon. James Gore**
Supervisor
Sonoma County, Calif.


PUBLIC LANDS STEERING COMMITTEE

 **Hon. Joel Bousman**
Commissioner
Sublette County, Wyo.

RAC STEERING COMMITTEE

 **Hon. Ron Berry**
Commissioner
Roane County, Tenn.


RESILIENT COUNTIES ADVISORY BOARD

 **Hon. Darryl Stacy**
Commissioner
Cleveland County, Okla.


TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY STEERING COMMITTEE

 **Hon. J.D. Clark**
County Judge
Wise County, Texas

TRANSPORTATION STEERING COMMITTEE

 **Hon. Liz Hausmann**
Commissioner
Fulton County, Ga.

VETERANS AND MILITARY SERVICES COMMITTEE

 **Hon. Heather Post**
Councilwoman
Volusia County, Fla.

PROFILES IN SERVICE

GARY MOORE

NACo President
Judge Executive
Boone County, Ky.



Number of years involved in NACo: 19

Years in public service: 21

Occupation: County judge executive

Education: High school graduate and some college

The hardest thing I've ever done: Deliver the eulogies at the funerals of my father and brother.

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: My father Victor Moore, Abraham Lincoln and Ronald Reagan.

You'd be surprised to learn: I spent my honeymoon with nine of my new in-laws in a small cabin with one bathroom on the outer coast of Norway. It was the first time I met most of them and the language barrier was interesting.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: Run for Congress in a seven-person primary in 2012. I lost; however, I am six for six in county judge executive campaigns!

My favorite way to relax is: Listen to good music while enjoying the pool.

I'm most proud of: My wonderful wife, my children and my grandchildren.

Every morning I read: Local news and too many emails.

MOORE

My favorite meal is: Thanksgiving dinner — turkey, mashed potatoes, yams and pumpkin pie.

My pet peeve is: Uninformed individuals taking a position before having all the facts.

My motto is: Making Boone County a great place to live, to work and raise your family!

The last book I read was: *It Worked for Me: In Life and Leadership* by Colin Powell

My favorite movie is: *The Godfather*

My favorite music is: I love all genres. Music soothes my soul.

My favorite U.S. president is: Abraham Lincoln

My county is a NACo member because: Being an elected official is a great responsibility and sometimes a challenge. NACo offers county officials the opportunity to share our successes and sometimes, our heartbreaking failures. Through it all, we learn from each other, create personal and working relationships and grow as public servants. The professional staff and talent along with NACo's advocacy in Washington D.C. alone covers the cost of membership, but there is no way to put a value on the collateral benefits. I can't imagine doing my job without being a part of NACo!



A dream I have is to:
Travel the world and experience other cultures.



CHESTER COUNTY, S.C.

Chester County's seal includes four images that represent historical symbols significant to the county's history. The seal incorporates an image of the county courthouse, which was built in 1852. The courthouse is listed as part of the Chester Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places.

The left side of the seal features an image of the Fishing Creek dam which was built by the Southern Power Company to provide hydroelectric power to cotton mills and industries in the area. Both the dam and the Landsford Canal are located on the Catawba River. The canal served as an important transportation route in the 1800s.

The Aaron Burr rock, which is included toward the bottom of the seal, is a historical marker located in the county seat of Chester. Burr was the country's third vice president who served during President Thomas Jefferson's first term.



If you would like your county's seal featured in "Behind the Seal," contact Rachel Looker at rlooker@naco.org.

ON THE MOVE

NACo STAFF

Staff accountant **Abel Darg** was naturalized as a U.S. citizen in June. He immigrated from Peru in 2001 and has been on the NACo staff since March 2019.



Darg



Shrawder

Kevin Shrawder has joined NACo as a data and research analyst. He previously interned with NACo and is pursuing a master's degree in Data Sciences with a concentration in Analytics at American University. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Mathematical Economics from Ball State University.

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Senate Republicans introduce the HEALS Act for coronavirus pandemic relief

From RELIEF BILL page 1

lion impact to county budgets through fiscal year 2021.

The HEALS Act will, however, extend the timeframe for spending Coronavirus Relief Fund money to 90 days after the end of a county’s fiscal year in 2021.

To Sally Heyman, chair of NACo’s Large Urban County Caucus and a Miami-Dade County commissioner, that isn’t enough.

“Since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, America’s counties have taken the lead in responding both on the public health front and in economic recovery,” she said in a call with other county leaders July 29.

“As strong allies in the federal-state-local partnership, we have called for direct and flexible federal funding to allow us to best serve our residents. The HEALS Act falls far short of giving us the resources needed to best keep our communities safe and healthy.”

Counties of all sizes are seeking direct funding from the federal government and increased flexibility for using CARES Act funding.

Los Angeles County, Calif., the nation’s largest county, saw a loss of nearly \$1 billion in the last fiscal year, and is projecting another \$1 billion loss, all a result of the pandemic.

“As welcome as the CARES Act funding is, it’s clearly not enough,” said County CEO Sa-

chi Hamai. Hamai said that the county was anticipating hundreds of potential layoffs starting Oct. 1 without additional funding, and consequential interruptions in county services.

“The public is depending on us and our workforce needs this assistance to continue the absolutely essential work they are performing each and every day.”

NACo Executive Director Matt Chase noted that the large numbers in the policy

‘We understand our needs, our challenges and how to best place federal dollars.’
- Christian Leinbach

debate could obscure what they represent.

“When we talk about budgets and dollars, what we’re really talking about are the tools to serve our people,” he said. “This pandemic is about those suffering from disease and those suffering from economic consequences.

“This isn’t just a budget exercise, this is about helping people in their communities who are truly suffering.”

The HEALS Act would prohibit states from imposing additional conditions, requirements or restrictions on local governments on how their

sub-allocated relief funds may be used beyond the U.S. Treasury’s CRF guidance, protecting counties from arduous requirements coming from state governments.

Berks County, Pa. falls under the 500,000 resident threshold and was the largest county in Pennsylvania not to receive direct CARES Act funding, instead receiving it through the state. The \$38 million the county received was a little more than half of the \$75 million it anticipated.

“That is a serious problem,” said Commissioner Christian Leinbach, who pointed out neighboring Lancaster County, with less than one-third more people, received \$95 million.

“It’s important to understand that county leaders across the United States — representing 3,069 counties — know our communities better than any other level of government,” he said.

“That’s not to criticize other levels of government, it’s simply to note that that is the nature of local government. We understand our needs, our challenges and how to best place federal dollars.”

The HEALS Act would include \$300 billion in supplemental appropriations to programs of interest to counties, including:

- \$16 billion for COVID-19 testing, key to counties’ COVID-19 tracking and response efforts

- \$25 billion for the hospital/provider fund, which would reimburse county hospital and health care providers for COVID-19-related expenses and losses
- \$15 billion for childcare, including programming increased access to county-administered child care programs
- \$2.2 billion for Tenant-Based Rental Assistance
- \$2 billion for the Mental Health Services Block Grant, which counties use to provide a range of behavioral health services for adults and children
- \$1.5 billion for the Low-In-

come Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which is administered by county governments in 13 states

- \$1 billion for Public Housing Operating Fund to assist public housing agencies, including those operated by counties, to maintain public housing programs and help contain the spread of coronavirus. [CN](#)

NACo’s Government Affairs staff contributed to this article. View a NACo analysis of the HEALS Act at www.naco.org/covid19/federal-advocacy/heals-act.

WORD SEARCH

OKLAHOMA COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
Created by: Mary Ann Barton

H S F H N N L Z X N M M G E O U E Z L K
I U C O J Z D G O T T E O D Z Q I R W Q
G O O X O N B I A R D S P W R Y Y T D I
H L W C E T T J O J V U C O W B O Y S Z
W D A W T A B A S R T O S S O F V H K G
A B V T L R D A E E W H T N I C B T I F
Y M F U I T I D L A S T E A K H O U S E
S G P K R P N B U L S R E D R O B A M N
Z O A I Z U A U E K P U O W T G H R B E
P B P J H K N C Y S A O T W F X K E H E
P A U T S W J F D S Y C C S Y X Y A B H
N C W O G V G V B K M N H I G N C U G M
H F O H E Y G O Q B O R I G H T A X T P
E K K M F P F X P S N G Z Z S C F D D S
E F C E V O R B T H O E U Z M D K T O G
N P A S N J Z Y B N C R X N I S J J C R
W G A D Y I J G H G E P N Z E E C R A B
E O A Z J H E T Y G Q R M U O K W A B U
N C U S I C Z U L W K Q W F X U Q K Z V
V W R T L D S K T B W I S E U A V P N A



- AGE:** The median age for the county is 34 years.

AREA: The county is 718 square miles.

BORDERS: The county is bordered by Logan, Lincoln, Pottawatomie, Cleveland and Canadian counties.

CAPITAL: The county seat, Oklahoma City, is the capital of the state.

COURTHOUSE: The current courthouse, an Art-Deco style, was built in 1937 for \$1.5 million.

COWBOY: The county is home to the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum.

ECONOMY: The county’s economy features agriculture, livestock, oil and manufacturing.

FOOTBALL: College football is a big deal here with the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University in the area.
- HIGHWAYS:** The county is centrally located and is served by highways 35, 40, 44, 235 and 240.

POPULATION: The county’s population is nearly 800,000 according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

ROADTRIP: Traveling cross-country? The famous Route 66 cuts through the county.

STEAKHOUSE: Next time you’re in town, stop by Cattlemen’s Steakhouse, in business since 1910.

THUNDER: The area’s professional basketball team is the Oklahoma City Thunder.

TRIBES: The state of Oklahoma is home to 39 federally recognized Native American tribes.

TWO: The county was formed in 1890, originally known as County Two, when the state was still a territory. The first seven counties in the state were given names in 1907, when Oklahoma entered statehood.

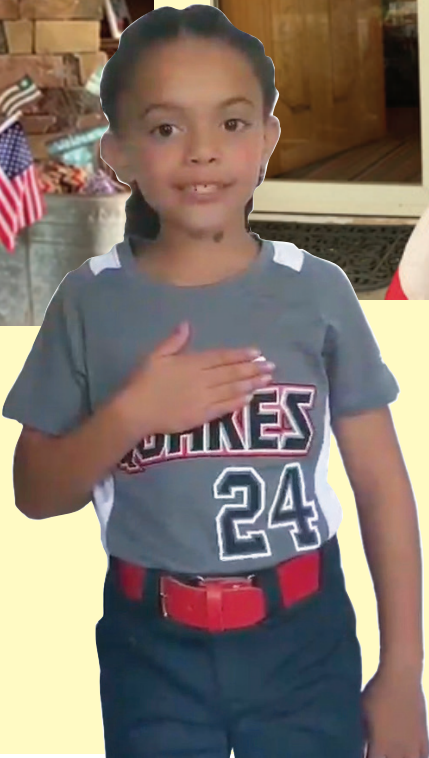


2020 ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

NACo holds virtual meeting July 20.



Singer, songwriter, producer and quarterfinalist on season six of *The Voice* Sisandra Lewis sings the national anthem to kick off the beginning of NACo’s first-ever virtual Annual Business Meeting. Lewis sang from Orange County, Fla., the original location for the 2020 Annual Conference prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.



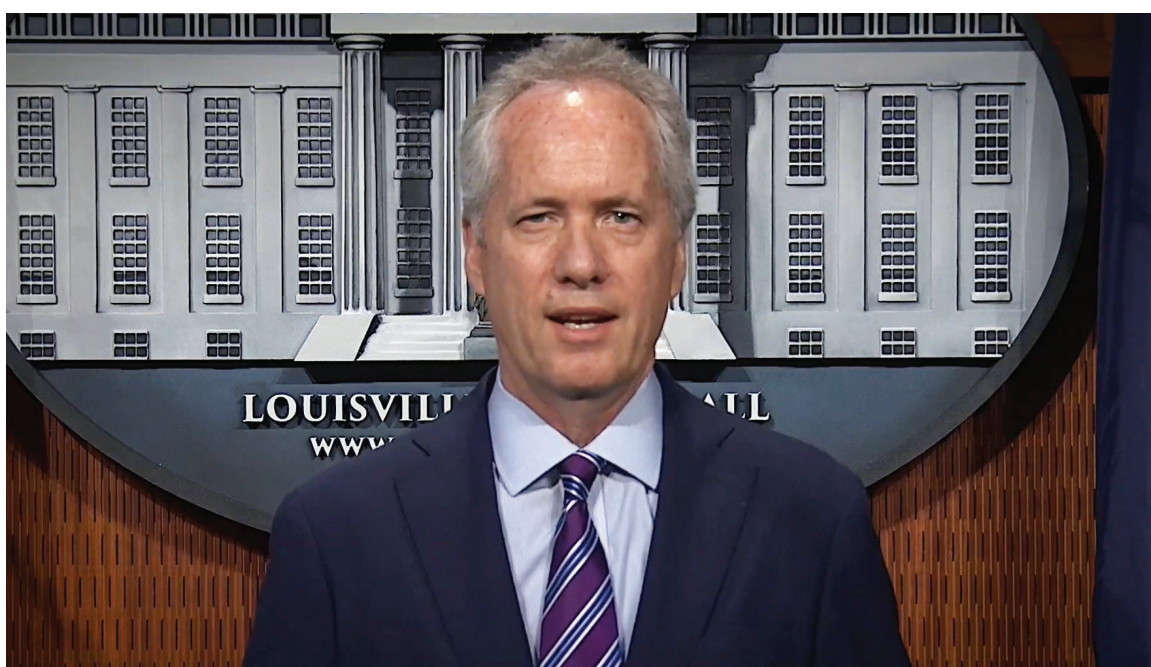
Children lead NACo members in a virtual Pledge of Allegiance to kick off NACo’s first-ever virtual Annual Business Meeting.



Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear congratulates Boone County, Ky. Judge-Executive Gary Moore on his new role as NACo president.



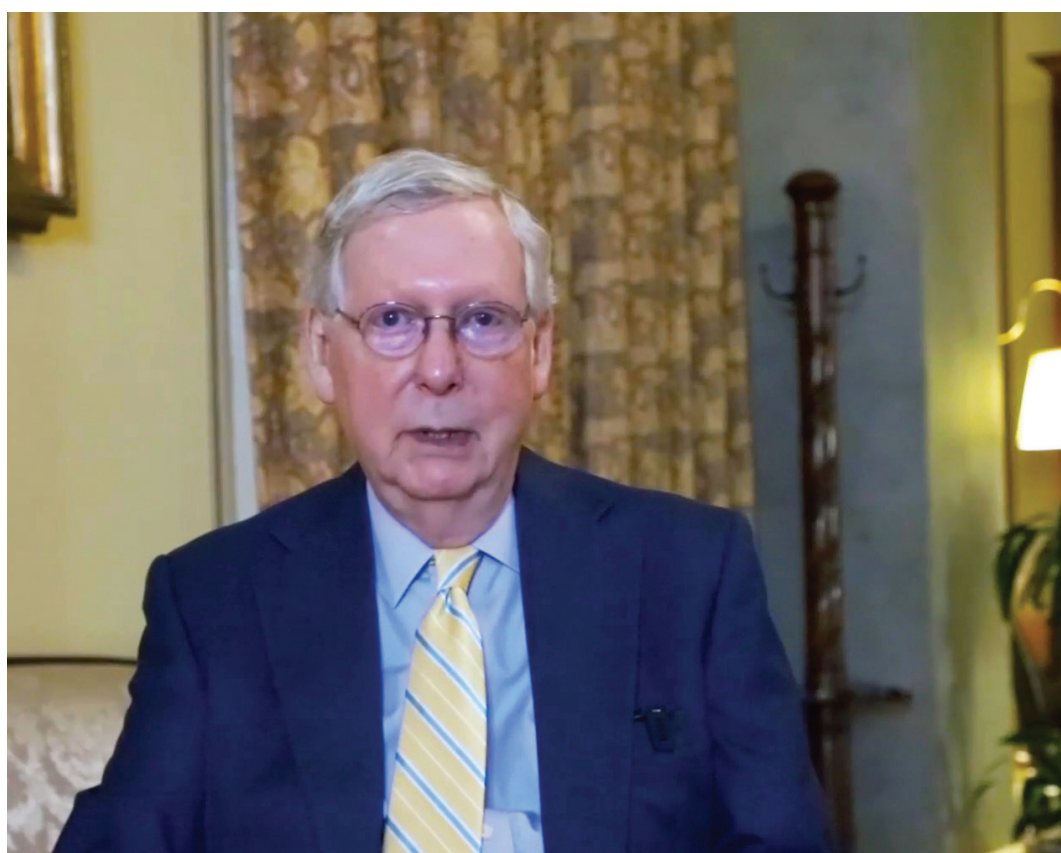
Wayne County, Mich. Commissioner Chair Alisha Bell seconds the nomination for second vice president Denise Winfrey.



Louisville, Ky. Mayor Greg Fischer, president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, congratulates Moore on his new role as NACo president.



Jim Healy, DuPage County, Ill. commissioner and county lapel pin collector seconds the nomination for second vice president Denise Winfrey.



Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) congratulates Boone County, Ky. Judge/Executive Gary Moore on his NACo presidency.

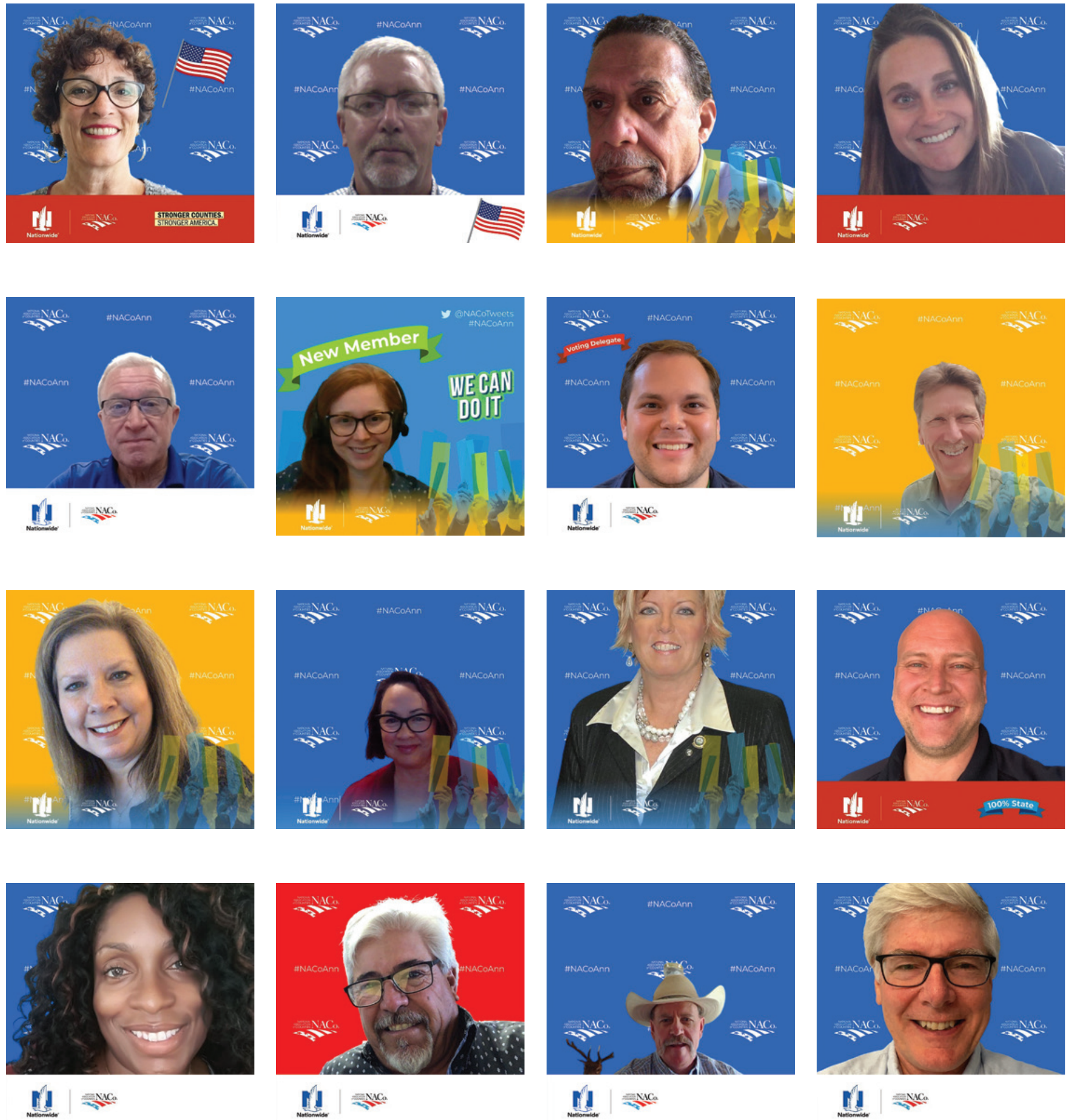


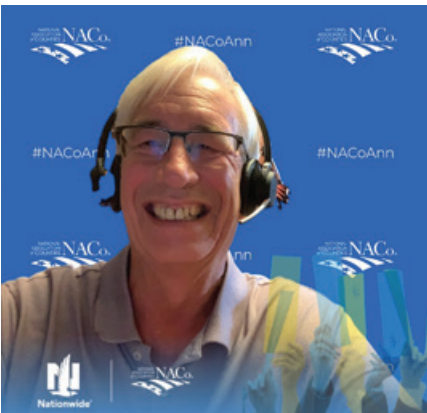
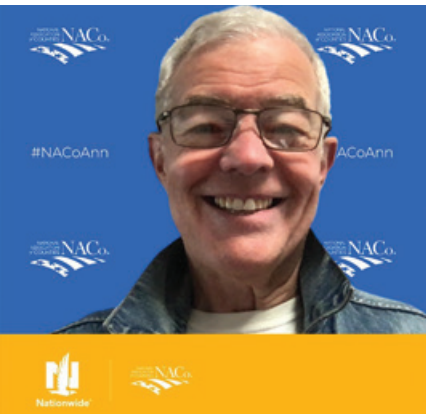
Marshall Space Flight Center Director Jody Singer speaks to county officials about partnerships with NASA to support STEM education, workforce development, research, small businesses and community outreach.



County officials share selfies during Annual Business Meeting

While COVID-19 changed NACo’s plans this year for its Annual Conference, county officials from around the country not only participated virtually for NACo’s first-ever virtual Annual Business Meeting held July 20, but they also snapped and shared selfies. Here’s a sample of some of the photos posted by NACo members and staff.





LIBRARIES STEP UP DURING PANDEMIC

by Paul Negron

The essential role of public libraries is more vital than ever as our nation's counties grapple with the devastating impact of COVID-19 and begin the difficult work to move beyond the pandemic. Libraries have adapted to the current environment in new and innovative ways, helping people gain vital access to information and necessary services. The following are just a few examples of how libraries are innovating and rapidly adapting during the COVID-19 crisis to support county relief and recovery efforts.

Los Angeles County, Calif. Library: Providing digital access to homeless

Los Angeles County Library has stepped up through a partnership with the United Way of Greater Los Angeles to bring remote library access to homeless individuals during the coronavirus outbreak. Librarians have created 7,000 online activity kits including digital library card IDs and PIN numbers, for distribution to local organizations serving homeless populations, as well as other vulnerable individuals, through the Project Roomkey initiative.

St. Louis County, Mo. Library: Prioritizing technology needs for youth

St. Louis County Library serves as the COVID-19 Regional Response Team's lead agency for remote learning and technology, partnering with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and area educational leaders and organizations. In this role, the library is equipping local residents with critical tools to provide internet access and enable digital learning. To encourage and facilitate distance learning for young children, the library has provided 221 PBS Kids Playtime Pads to two local school districts. Children can enjoy pre-loaded PBS content, including educational games and apps geared towards learning, without utilizing an internet connection.

Douglas County, Colo. libraries: Supporting strong education outcomes

This graduation season, Douglas County Libraries celebrated the Class of 2020 by dispersing a special graduate toolkit to area high


schools seniors to commemorate the important milestone. The special gift contained a toolkit graduates can use to handle minor repairs and personal projects, along with a special gift card donated by local small businesses. DCL staff worked to create these graduation gifts and distributed them to approximately 2,100 students in Douglas County.

Pima County, Ariz. Public Library: Combating food insecurity for low-income families

Starting out as a joint project with Amphitheater Public Schools and the Arizona Department of Education, Pima County Public Library is distributing food to help fill the void for children who have lost access to their school's free and reduced lunch. The library offers a contact-free service at 10 locations giving out Grab-N-Go Super Snack packets filled with non-perishable snacks for children. With the help of the Arizona Army National Guard and local Wilson Produce, staff are also able to provide free produce boxes for free to families in need.

Pierce County, Wash. Library System: Building communities of learning in the digital age

After drastically reducing in-person programming and services due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Pierce County Library System has reimagined its role within the community and expanded its digital offerings and resources. New virtual reading rooms are now being offered to patrons, who can access digital e-books and e-audiobooks selected specifically by PCLS librarians. The effort was created to model how physical spaces in libraries are laid out for ease of book selection. The Kids, Teens, Mystery and Thrillers and DIY virtual reading rooms have been specifically curated to meet the new demand for digital offerings and have led to the library gaining 5,000 new library users in a two-month period.

To learn more about how libraries across the country are innovating to lead their communities forward from the pandemic, visit urbanlibraries.org. 

Paul Negron manages communications initiatives and public relations outreach for the Urban Libraries Council.



All hands on deck for COVID consumes some county public health agencies

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

For five months, Dr. Olivia Kasirye has worked every day straight as the Sacramento County health officer as California faces the COVID-19 pandemic. But each day, she spends time focusing on how to keep her department, all running on the same fumes as she is, from coming apart in the face of unrelenting demands. Testing, contact tracing, communication with the public, enforcing county directives.

The glue, which has worked miraculously, has been two words.

“Thank you.”

She knows that’s no substitute for the vacations her staff would rather be taking or relief from the stress they’re under to hold ground against the pandemic while also trying to carry out the basic functions that are the bread and butter of a county public health agency.

Immunization, home visitation, health education, STD control and more have all taken a hit. The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) have also found vector control, regulation and inspection of food service establishments have also suffered. Well before the pandemic, between 2008-2016, local health departments lost more than 2,000 full-time positions, NACCHO found.

“We were already dealing with a thin staff and not a lot of capacity for surging,” Kasirye said.

Sacramento County has been without a field nursing unit for Kasirye’s entire career with the county — the staff that would have been crucial for the surge capacity for communicable diseases — victims of the 2009 budget cuts.

“It’s tough because you think ‘thank you’ doesn’t cut it, but whenever I can, I like to show that I appreciate their work, and to work alongside them,” she said. “I communicate with them, address concerns they have,



Sacramento County, Calif. Health Officer Dr. Olivia Kasirye. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

talk through problems with them and let them know I’m listening.”

And she’s conscious of the dozens of county health personnel who have left their jobs during the pandemic.

“I reassure them that I’m going to be with them until the end,” she said, meeting their curiosity head on. “I see how hard they are working when I get those fast responses to emails I send at odd hours.”

Those rank-and-file employees are seeing their own personal horror shows as they stretch to fulfill their mandated responsibilities while pitching in however they can with the pandemic response.

In Cook County, Ill., Dr. Rachel Rubin, senior medical officer and co-lead, said every unit of her department’s 160-person staff has seen COVID-19 response added to their responsibilities.

“Many staff are serving in emergency response roles while also juggling their everyday responsibilities,” she said. “Even in our everyday roles, we have seen dramatic impacts from COVID-19. One sanitarian received 300 messages over one weekend when there was a change in state guidance related to swimming pools.”

If the intrinsic challenge of facing a generational pandemic wasn’t taxing enough, public health staff are finding themselves the brunt of public anger if the public disagrees with their directives.

“It’s been hard, we’re not accustomed to being in the limelight and having this level of scrutiny,” Kasirye said. “There’s a sense that you’re hiding something.”

But she has been buoyed by supportive feedback from the public.

“We’ve gotten letters from people who are appreciative of what we’re doing,” she said.

Anoka County, Minn.’s Public Health and Environmental Services department has been forced to limit work on programs and projects that target long-term community health outcome improvements.

“We had invested a whole ton of resources into community health plans to look at where the disparities are in our communities, populations that need extra help and to try and reduce inequities,” said Director Jonelle Hubbard. “We still try to work through that lens — we’re trying to make sure we’re getting testing for people at high risk who really need it — but we’ve had to put things on

the back burner that we really want to do as a department.”

With schools closed since mid-March, prevention programming has been off the table. The county’s chemical health collaborative is at a standstill while the world outside goes on.

“We’re seeing an increase in chemical dependency and overdosing, jail population is going back up,” Hubbard said.

And, while practitioners are able to still see some clients via telemedicine and safe time on the road, Hubbard said the medium leaves a lot to be desired compared to in-person meetings.

“You have to listen and pay attention more closely because when you’re in person, there are a lot of nonverbal things you can’t pick up on virtually,” she said. “You lose a little connection with stuff going on, so you need to be very vigilant, listening to what the people they’re working with are truly saying.”

Anoka County, along with the others, continues to provide essential services, but on a different timeframe for some.

“Sometimes instead of being able to schedule people the way we used to and see them soon, it takes three or four days because of our staff shortage,” she said.

That’s going to get worse, soon. The National Guard, which has been assisting with mass testing, is due to leave at the end of August, and the health department will pick up the slack.

“We’re having to do a lot of contracting to fill some jobs,” she said. “That’s helping us fill nursing and office staff, but it’s harder to find people to work in a lab.”

“We need to work on a contract with an outside entity to help us through that, get more manpower in to do clinics,” Hubbard noted. “We don’t have the manpower to do mass testing, the National Guard has been doing that but they’re done at the end of August — we’ll have to pick that back up.”

Like Kasirye, Hubbard has been focusing on her staff’s well-being.

“I’m making sure my staff has the support and resources they need,” she said. “They’re getting breaks and time to decompress.”

She has contracted with a psychologist to do biweekly sessions as a team, consulting with managers and supervisors one-on-one and doing two-hour group sessions once a month with other staff members.

“This is long, drawn-out trauma,” she said.

Cook County’s Department of Public Health brought in its Trauma-Informed Taskforce to assist personnel, and Rubin said the department was creating additional resources on self-care and for managers through the group.

“This has been a challenging time for our department and our staff,” she said. “COVID-19 doesn’t just impact us at work, the pandemic has disrupted and stressed our families, friends and communities. Some staff have become sick. Some staff have lost family or loved ones to COVID-19. There is continued uncertainty about the course of the pandemic and we are still learning about this virus. We are fortunate to have our livelihoods, but COVID-19 has had a substantial impact on us both personally and professionally.”

If this wasn’t enough, Hubbard was widowed in the last year, but she feels secure thanks to the support she receives from the county, her staff, her family and the strength she draws from her faith.

“Self-care is critical, I do hot yoga, keep clear boundaries where I can about taking time off, shut my brain down,” she said.

Kasirye notices and appreciates her colleagues checking in on her.

“If someone doesn’t hear from me for a few days, they’ll write or call and ask if I’m OK,” she said. “I try to take care of getting sleep so I can function.” **CN**

Tell Your Story

TALK TO

CN

CountyNews

WRITERS...

Email us at cnews@naco.org
and we'll be in touch.

Looking forward to hearing from you, }
Mary Ann, Charlie and Rachel }

PARKS AND REC PIVOTS '180 DEGREES'

by Rachel Looker
staff writer

County parks and recreation departments celebrated Parks and Recreation Month in July, but this year's celebration was marked with increased efforts — departments face a challenging summer, with staff adjusting to new protocols and finding creative ways to provide recreational opportunities amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Santa Cruz County, Calif. Parks Director Jeff Gaffney said the department's programs are "180 degrees different than anything we've ever done before."

"We had to just start over from scratch with program-

ming," he said.

Gaffney described how the parks department partnered with the county health officer to discuss safe programming options and launched new versions of summer camp programs with precautions to keep children safe and meet state mandates.

"The most challenging thing has been trying to be lined up with whatever comes down from the governor's office or the county," he said.

The summer camp program consists of groups of 12 children consistently together for nine weeks, Gaffney said.

Camp staff regularly take temperatures, ask questions about symptoms, sanitize

equipment and have moved most of the programming outside.

"There's very little, less than 5 percent, of the programming that goes indoors," he said.

Camps maintain the same counselors and recreation leaders who stay with the same group of children.

There are currently 300 children participating in the summer camps and Gaffney said the interest in the camps has been overwhelming.

"It's very time-consuming and staff-heavy so we are now looking at how we can do even some two-week programs as we finish out the summer because we have people that are still interested," he said.

Across the country in Carteret County, N.C., Parks and Recreation Department Manager Jessica Forsberg said the department's biggest programs — summer camp, beach volleyball and a beach run series — look completely different this year.

"We didn't know until the last minute what we were going to be doing or what we were going to be able to do," she said. "We had to take all the programs and say, 'How can we change this to make it work?'

because we still need to be providing recreation."

The department still held modified tennis camps, beach volleyball and the beach run with online and touchless registration at the event as well as staggered start times.

Each year, the department offers an indoor summer camp program, but given concerns over COVID-19, staff opted to create an outdoor camp. In just two weeks of planning time, the department launched Camp Park & Play. Staff and equipment became mobile as the camp was brought to county residents at various parks in the community each day of the week.

"People, in my opinion, felt safer going to parks than they did in a building," Forsberg said. "Let's try to meet them in their location or in their neighborhood."

With North Carolina prohibiting gatherings of more than 25 people, each camp has three counselors and 22 spots for campers.

"Social distancing is definitely one of our main priorities and a lot of kids are already familiar with that," she explained.

Forsberg described the

precautions at the camp including online registration, a touch-screen check-in, mobile hand-sanitizing stations and enough equipment to be sanitized between uses.

More people have become interested in parks and recreation services and the Camp Park & Play program has a waitlist most days, according to Forsberg.

The county department has already reached more than 160 youth through the summer program.

"I think you're more creative when some of your resources are taken away," she said. "I believe during this time it just made us be more fluid and more creative about what we were planning."

Chris Minor, deputy division director of Gwinnett County, Ga. Parks and Recreation, said the department traditionally serves more than 7,500 youth in a traditional summer. This year's numbers are closer to 150 children per week.

The county reduced its summer camp offerings with only 10 kids per group and is advising all campers and staff to wear masks.

Minor described how all of the games are contactless and praised the creativity of staff who came up with ideas such as using a pool noodle as an arm to remain socially distanced while playing tag and games such as "Run and Shout" to keep children away from each.

"They have risen to the challenge, so that's been great to see how creative and how talented the staff that we have here in Gwinnett County are able to address the issues while still keeping the programming very engaging," he said.

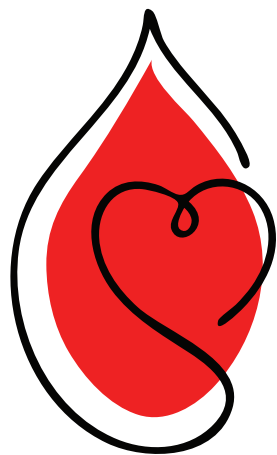
In addition to providing recreational opportunities, Minor said the parks department has stepped up to fill in gaps throughout the county such as increasing its summer meals programs, operating 33 drive-through meals sites at different locations throughout the county and performing wellness checks on elderly residents who were stuck at home.

"We did everything we could just to assist the community and we realized that parks and rec can still have a role outside of just recreation," he said. **CN**



Kids play at Camp Park & Play, an outdoor camp that replaced Carteret County, N.C.'s traditional indoor summer camp program because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Photo courtesy of the Carteret County Parks and Recreation Department

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION



CALIFORNIA

• **KERN COUNTY** supervisors approved a convalescent **plasma donation program** to encourage county residents who have recovered from COVID-19 to donate their plasma. The program will be developed by the county's public health services department, Bakersfield.com reported. Antibodies within the plasma of individuals who have recovered from COVID-19 may be useful to help those recovering from the coronavirus. Supervisor Mike Maggard said of the 4,300 people who have recovered from the virus in the county, only 37 donated plasma.

• The district attorney in **SANTA CLARA COUNTY** is **no longer pursuing the death penalty** as part of new reforms within his office. Reforms include sentencing alternatives to incarceration, refraining from fines and fees for low-income individuals, working to end cash bail in the state and

expunging records for individuals who have completed probation, the *San José Spotlight* reported. The reforms aim to strengthen trust between the public and law enforcement.

COLORADO

• Officials in **LARIMER COUNTY** submitted a COVID-19 mitigation plan to help **lower its upward trend of COVID-19 cases**. The plan includes enforcing social distancing and mask wearing, hiring staff to monitor wastewater, creating an automated registration and notification system for a community testing site and expanding contact tracing, the *Coloradoan* reported. If the county lowers its rate, it will continue to meet the state-level variance to allow higher occupancy in restaurants, breweries, places of worship and hold larger public gatherings.

• **MESA COUNTY** launched a variance protection program to **encourage businesses to follow public health orders**. The program scores businesses on how they follow federal, state and local health orders. Businesses receive a number based on a 50-point scale and will receive suggestions on how to meet health standards, *The Daily Sentinel* reported. Businesses with 40 out of 50 points that require masks will receive



FLORIDA

• **ORANGE COUNTY** held its first ever **Employee Service Awards Curbside Ceremony** to recognize employees for their service to county government. The curbside ceremony allowed participants to practice social distancing while still celebrating their career milestones. Sixteen employees were recognized and participated in the ceremony by decorating their vehicles while county officials and other employees held congratulatory signs. Photo courtesy of Orange County

a five-star rating and be listed in the newspaper. The program is in partnership with Mesa County Public Health and the Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce.

FLORIDA

• **MIAMI-DADE COUNTY** expanded a **hotel isolation program** to provide county residents with temporary ho-

tel rooms to isolate and stop the spread of the coronavirus. The program helps multi-generational households where family members may be at risk for spreading COVID-19. The county established a help line that is now available to residents with or without symptoms, WPLG-TV reported. Previously, the county provided hotel rooms for healthcare

workers, first responders and the homeless.

INDIANA

• **ST. JOSEPH COUNTY** Parks and Health Departments launched the **"Be Well!" guided walking program** to encourage wellness for county residents. The program involves a free guided walk throughout a county park that

CALIFORNIA

• **SANTA BARBARA COUNTY** officials voted to **add electric vehicle chargers and establish charging fees** in locations throughout the county. New chargers will be located in parking lots near the county administration buildings and will be used for the public and employees' personal vehicles, the *Santa Barbara Independent* reported. Supervisors also approved a fee structure for the new chargers that changes the rate to a per-kilowatt hour charge to meet a future state mandate.



INDIANA

• The **PORTER COUNTY** Sheriff's Office added **11 hybrid squad cars** to its law enforcement vehicle fleet. The Ford Police Interceptor Hybrid SUVs reduce emissions and save taxpayer dollars on fuel costs, *Next-Gen Transportation* reported. The county is one of the first law enforcement agencies in the state to adopt the new technology, Sheriff David Reynolds said. The vehicles were purchased with funds from the Indiana Rural Energy Innovation grant program as part of the Indiana Office of Energy Development.

Photo courtesy of the Porter County Sheriff's Office

includes discussions on wellness, community services and wellness apps, ABC57 reported. The county will hold different sessions for additional walks.

MARYLAND

The **MONTGOMERY COUNTY** Council approved the **Early Care and Education Initiative Recovery Fund** to provide grants to childcare programs and businesses. The \$10 million grant fund will help childcare businesses that need assistance to reopen and financially recover from the economic distress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, *Bethesda Magazine* reported. Childcare businesses must provide childcare to children from birth to 5 years old and be in good standing with the state to be eligible for the program.

NEW JERSEY

In New Jersey, **county freeholders may soon be called commissioners**. A legislative bill is on track to pass soon.

"This change itself symbolizes who we are and what we believe in as a people," Somerset County Freeholder Director Shanel Robinson, who said the term freeholder is offensive, told local radio station 101.5-FM. "We do not want to be tied to the old misogynistic and racist title," Robinson said. "It does not fit or work in this day and age."

"As our nation tears down symbols of injustice, we must also tear down words we use in New Jersey that were born from racism," the governor, Assembly speaker and Senate president said in a joint statement, according to New Jersey 101.5. "It's past time for New Jersey to phase out the term 'freeholder' from our public discourse — a term coined when only white male landowners could hold public office."

PENNSYLVANIA

- Following a spike in positive coronavirus tests, **ALLEGHENY COUNTY** is deploying a new COVID field response team to **monitor businesses** and ensure they are following public health orders. The team will visit businesses that have

MISSISSIPPI

In his **last act of service** to save his 10-year-old son, a **DESOTO COUNTY** deputy died after jumping into waters off the coast of Florida. William Nichols jumped in the water when his son, who was swimming at Fort Walton Beach, Fla., became caught in a rip current, *The Memphis Commercial Appeal* reported. He pulled his son out of the water but was dragged back into the water by the currents. Rescue personnel performed CPR, but Nichols did not survive. Nichols served as the director of the Search and Rescue Unit for the DeSoto County Sheriff's Department.

been the target of complaints and evaluate them using a checklist. The businesses must address safety precautions, including the state's masking order, occupancy restrictions and physical distancing requirements and take note of whether bars and restaurants separate tables, restrict indoor capacity to 25 percent, enforce mask orders on staff and customers, end dining services at 11 p.m. and post signs reminding customers of precautions, *The Tribune Review* reported.

Results will be posted on the county's website.



- With tens of thousands of students due to return to Penn State University in August, **CENTRE COUNTY** will become ground zero for a **research project** managed by

the university. The project will allow the university to study its student body, faculty and staff and the county at large with the hope of gathering information on public health and economics that will help inform decisions during this and future pandemics. Penn State was set to begin testing local residents for virus antibodies Aug. 1.

"Many of us spend our research careers thinking about problems away from campus," professor Matthew Ferrari told the *Centre Daily Times*. "Now is the time when we really are all uniquely focused on the needs of our neighbors and community." Nearly 2,000 full-time county residents have already volunteered to participate in future studies aimed at measuring the health, economic, educational, and social impacts of the coronavirus for at least the next two years.

- LEBANON COUNTY** sued Gov. Tom Wolf (D) over his decision to **withhold nearly \$13 million** in federal Coronavirus Relief Fund money, local media outlets there reported. The

county commissioners defied the governor by moving the county to the "yellow" phase prior to the governor's approval while the state's emergency management law was in effect. With fewer than 500,000 residents, Lebanon County's CRF money came first to the state. **LANCASTER COUNTY** also defied the order, but has more than 500,000 residents, Lancaster Online reported.

"The governor did not make a decision to withhold the funding," said Lyndsay Kensinger, Wolf's press secretary. "Lebanon County's decision to violate the law deemed the county ineligible for CARES funding."



VIRGINIA

The **LOUDOUN COUNTY** Board of Supervisors has directed county staff to study the various financial and logistical implications of **switching to a police department** from a sheriff's office. The report is due in April 2021. *The Washington Post* reported that the supervisors are seeking more transparency, accountability and oversight. The transition would also provide more security for law enforcement personnel, who, under the sheriff's office, can be fired for any reason.

UTAH

SALT LAKE COUNTY has opened new **housing for homeless young adults** ages 18-21. The Milestone Transitional Living Program added a four-bedroom house that was remodeled in partnership with Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. The newly added home required several months of renovation and \$70,000 in costs, with time and supplies donated by volunteers, *The Deseret News* reported, noting that "the houses look like those of any college students, with bright, trendy decor — except perhaps cleaner."

Residents are referred by Workforce Services, the Division of Child and Family Services, the Youth Resource Center or the county's juvenile receiving center and crisis residential treatment facility and can stay up to a year and a half, with the average stay ranging between nine and 10 months. During that time, Milestone offers therapy and other resources. The program runs with county and federal funding.

WASHINGTON

- Since 2013, counties have had the authority to regulate **ATV use on county roads** where speed limits are 35 mph or less. **CLARK COUNTY** is considering allowing them. Language for a draft ordinance to that effect has been based on similar regulations in **COWLITZ, LEWIS and THURSTON counties**, *The Colum-*

See NEWS FROM page 20

NEW YORK

The **WESTCHESTER COUNTY** Legislature has approved the use of a \$4.5 million bond to buy a fleet of **electric buses**. Two of the buses will be entirely electric, while 118 buses will run on a combination of electricity and diesel fuel. The clean diesel electric buses and the full electric buses have been credited with saving the county over 1 million gallons of fuel and preventing 18,400 tons of greenhouse gas emissions, the *Hudson Independent* reported.



GET TO
KNOW...

Perry County, Ind.

Welcome,
Perry County, Ind.

Located in southern Indiana, Perry County, Ind. was organized in 1814 as the last county before the Territory of Indiana applied to Congress for statehood. The county, with a population around 20,000, is named after Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, a commander who defeated a British squadron in the Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812.

Perry County is the hilliest and most forested in the state with over 60,000 acres of the Hoosier National Forest. The county borders the Ohio River and the Ohio River Scenic Byway runs along Highway 66 in the southern portion of the county.

In 1991, the Perry County Board of Commissioners decided to create the Perry County Port Authority

after the Norfolk Southern Railway terminated service to the county. The county's Port Authority purchased the abandoned rail line to preserve rail transportation that would attract industries. The 22-mile county-owned short line is named the Hoosier Southern Railroad and connects the Perry County River Port with the

Norfolk Southern Railway. The Port Authority is located in the county seat of Tell City, "where the river meets the rail."

NEWS
FROM
ACROSS
THE NATION

From NEWS FROM page 19

bian reported. The county's ordinance would require ATV riders to have driver's licenses to legally operate on the roads and could also ban ATV use on specific roads, even if those roads have speed limits of less than 35 mph.

- The Metropolitan **KING COUNTY** Council voted to significantly **scale back the autonomy of the county sheriff**, moving the measure to county voters on the November ballot. The position would be appointed, rather than elected. It would also give the County Council the ability to reduce the scope of the sheriff's office and make the county executive the county's representative in negotiations with the sheriff's deputies union.

All were changes recommended by a yearlong review commission.

Currently, the duties of the Sheriff's Office are established

by state law. They include arresting people who break the law, executing warrants and court orders and suppressing "riots, unlawful assemblies and insurrections."

Councilmember Girmay Zahiray told *The Seattle Times* that the move would give the council the power to define the sheriff's duties.

"That kind of big, bold fundamental change I don't think we can rely on just a sheriff's department that's independently elected that we can't truly oversee," he said.

If voters approve the change in November, Sheriff Mitzi Johanknecht, elected in 2017, would serve the remainder of her four-year term and would then be eligible to be appointed as sheriff.

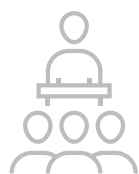
News From Across the Nation is compiled by Charlie Ban and Rachel Looker. Does your county have news we should know about? Reach us at cbn@naco.org and rlooker@naco.org.

HIGH PERFORMANCE
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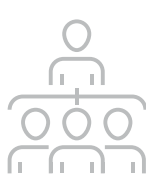
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BRIGHT IDEAS | LOUDOUN COUNTY, Va.

Volunteer-Run Enrichment Program Helps Shelter Animals

PROBLEM:

Dogs experience stress in kennel environments that often lead to behavioral and health problems.

SOLUTION:

Create a volunteer-driven program to improve the mental health of animals in shelters.

by **Rachel Looker**
staff writer

The transition to kennels for many dogs is not easy.

When staff at Loudoun County, Va. Animal Services saw shelter dogs experiencing behavioral and health challenges, they knew they needed to intervene to reduce the rates of contagious disease, stress and euthanasia.

Loudoun County Animal Services (LCAS) launched Busy Buddies, an enrichment program that is volunteer-operated and aims to reduce kennel stress, poor coping behaviors and disease risks.

Loudoun County Animal Services Director Nina Stively said for years, LCAS has been providing informal enrichment to animals, but never through a structured program.

"We knew that with limited staff, we only had so many hours in the day, so we tried to figure out a way to engage our volunteers and keep them," she said.

Dogs experiencing frustration from being confined to kennels often face behavioral deterioration that is displayed as barking, jumping up or grabbing people's clothes, all of which make it harder for dogs to find homes, she said.

These animals often face medical challenges such as kennel cough, suppressed immune systems and GI problems.

"No matter how hard we try, an animal shelter is an inher-

ently stressful place," Stively said. "Trying to figure out ways that we can address those issues with the least amount of stressful intervention possible was our goal."

The county is required to take in stray, unwanted, lost, homeless, seized or abandoned dogs belonging to any Loudoun County resident.

LCAS receives over 2,400 animals per year with 60 percent

of the homeless pets needing medical or behavioral intervention.

Through the Busy Buddies program, LCAS recruited volunteers by highlighting that not all volunteers have to physically interact with animals at the shelter, Stively explained.

"We have a fair number of high schoolers or people looking for some sort of community service type opportunity that

they can do at home on their own schedule," she said.

Volunteers may help create "Busy Boxes" by donating empty cereal boxes and newspaper and stuffing the boxes with the crumpled paper and treats to provide dogs with a safe shredding activity that can be done in their kennels.

At the shelter, volunteers often smear peanut butter on the walls to distract dogs when it's time to clean their kennels.

"The volunteers really focused on this program to help soothe the animals and help them destress while they were here," she said.

Other volunteers participate in K9 Storytimes, field trips, doggy DIY time and olfactory and auditory stimulation which involves introducing essential oils and food spices to a dog's kennel. This helps calm down dogs experiencing high levels of stress.

Volunteers also help stuff KONGs, which are rubber dog toys, with canned dog food to provide a fun activity for each dog. The toys are provided to dogs as part of the enrichment building program.

"The volunteers have really done an amazing job making sure that this program is something that works for any animal in the shelter but can also be customized for those who have more specific

needs," Stively said.

The program has seen positive results with the euthanasia rate dropping 21 percent in the last four years, disease outbreaks dropping 60 percent and the length of stay at the shelter dropping by nine days.

"People cannot help you if they don't know where you need the help," Stively said. "The shelter is just a stopping point; the community is really where the solution has to happen."

Busy Buddies has operated at almost no expense to the county.

LCAS, which already had a volunteer coordinator, launched the program and created an Amazon wish list that frequently receives donations

"Once you get the word out there, it is a very easy program to sustain and the rewards are just endless," Stively said.

She added the importance of LCAS being transparent with the community and explained how staff often post pictures on social media and use it as a tool for recruitment opportunities.

The Busy Buddies program has been expanded to all species and now includes guinea pigs, rabbits, cats and pigs.

"We are very committed to making sure that people understand that an animal shelter is a place for second chances," Stively said.

"We want to make sure that the community understands that we are here as a resource. We are here as a support agency to humans and their pets."

For more information about the Busy Buddies Program, contact Loudoun County Animal Services Director Nina Stively at Nina.Stively@loudoun.gov. **CN**

Loudoun County's Busy Buddies Program is the recipient of a best in category 2020 NACo Achievement Award in the Volunteers category.

A volunteer from the Busy Buddies program stuffs food into rubber toys to provide dogs a fun activity to do in their kennels at the Loudoun County, Va. Animal Services shelter. Photo courtesy of Loudoun County Animal Services



A volunteer reads to a dog during K9 Storytime as part of the Busy Buddies Program at the Loudoun County, Va. Animal Services shelter. Photo courtesy of Loudoun County Animal Services



RESOLUTIONS

Given the unprecedented situation, the NACo Board of Directors facilitated an expedited policy process. On May 14, the Board adopted a motion to extend all 161 resolutions approved at the 2019 Annual Conference and the interim policy resolutions approved at the 2020 Legislative Conference until the 2021 NACo Annual Conference. In consultation with the Policy Coordinating Committee, comprised of the NACo Executive Committee and the 10 policy steering committee chairs, the Board on July 15 approved nine emergency policy resolutions submitted by NACo member counties.

COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Additional Workforce Funding

ISSUE: Support emergency funding for workforce development programs to provide short-term and long-term supports to the U.S. workforce negatively impacted by COVID-19.

ADOPTED POLICY: NACo urges Congress to provide a fast infusion of workforce development funding at the local level to get America's job seekers back to work as soon as possible to assist in the overall economic recovery, due to COVID-19 and record-breaking unemployment rates. These additional funds should bolster programs such as WIOA – Title I, Wagner Peyser-Employment Services and youth-related initiatives.

in GOMESA funds to the Gulf producing states that are essential in producing these revenues.

ADOPTED POLICY: NACo objects strenuously to the allocation of federal mineral revenue to federal programs unless the allocation also increases the GOMESA revenue that is shared with four Gulf Coast states (Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama), which is a critical recurring source of revenue to address critical coastal protection and restoration needs.

Oppose Material Preference Legislation

ISSUE: There is a national effort to eliminate local control of water, wastewater and stormwater (water) infrastructure systems, and it would deny engineers, utilities, local governments and public entities the ability to design water systems in the manner that best serves the needs of their community.

ADOPTED POLICY: NACo supports local control of decisions related to water infrastructure and thus opposes Material Preference Legislation, or so-called “open competition” or “innovative materials” legislation. Local communities are in the best position to determine the type of water infrastructure investments that are best for their community. State and federal governments should not pass laws or regulations that restrict or limit local governments' ability to invest in the types of water infrastructure that best suit their needs. NACo is neutral as to which materials communities



select for water infrastructure projects, but NACo recognizes that communities have unique needs regarding water infrastructure and their autonomy to address those needs should not be restricted or limited in this manner.

FINANCE, PENSIONS AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Support Urgent Congressional Action to Provide State and Local Fiscal Relief

ISSUE: The COVID-19 public health emergency has triggered an economic crisis which has drastically reduced county revenues, threatening the ability of counties to provide basic services.

ADOPTED POLICY: NACo urges Congress to immediately enact additional emergency fiscal relief for states and local governments. The relief for counties and municipalities should be divided equally. Counties of all sizes should receive their funding directly from the federal government. We strongly support the continued efforts of Congress to approve much-needed emergency relief for revenue loss-

es being experienced by state and local governments due to COVID-19. This would be a tremendous boon to strained municipal budgets across the country and help preserve vital public health and public safety services. Understanding additional relief is still being considered and debated at this moment, we implore Congress to amend the Coronavirus Relief Fund established in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) to permit those funds, including those already allocated, either directly or through state distributions to counties and municipalities, to be used to offset lost reve-

ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND LAND USE

Support Increased Allocations of GOMESA Revenues to Gulf Producing States

ISSUE: Legislation is currently being considered through the Great American Outdoors Act (S.3422) to divert a greater share of Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) revenues to support national park improvements and maintenance and fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund, while providing no increase

nue due to the public health emergency and resulting economic slowdown. Permissible uses of the fund should be flexible and include offsetting revenues lost due to the public health emergency and resulting economic slowdown.

HEALTH

Declare Racism a National Public Health Crisis

ISSUE: Communities of color are disproportionately impacted by a multitude of socioeconomic and public health challenges facing counties across the country, and this disproportionality is rooted in individual, systemic and institutional racism.

ADOPTED POLICY: NACo urges the Federal Government to: (1) Assert that racism is a public health crisis affecting our entire country (2) leverage a racial equity lens in evaluating federal policy (3) Develop relevant policies aimed at improving health and economic opportunity in communities of color and (4) support local, state and federal initiatives that advance social justice.

Support Urgent Congressional Action For COVID-19 Response and Protecting Local Public Health Funding

ISSUE: The World Health Organization has declared the outbreak of the 2019 novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV2), to be a pandemic and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has declared a public health emergency for the entire United States. Counties are the front line of response to the outbreak.

PROPOSED POLICY: NACo urges Congress to enact additional emergency supplemental appropriations and annual appropriations sufficient to expand and strengthen global, federal, state, territorial, tribal and local capacity and coordination to adequately respond to this disease on a sustained basis over time.

County public health and health care systems require robust federal funding and

‘NACo urges Congress to provide a fast infusion of workforce development funding at the local level to get America’s job seekers back to work as soon as possible to assist in the overall economic recovery, due to COVID-19...’

equitable coordination for the following services and materials, including, but not limited to: personal protective equipment (PPE), reliable and valid testing, lab capacity, contact tracing, room and board for isolation and quarantine, expanded and/or temporary COVID-19 treatment beds, medical countermeasures (e.g. ventilators and remdesivir), telehealth technology, behavioral health supports and vaccines. When proven effective, robust funding will be essential to adequately source, promote, coordinate and distribute vaccines to the public at-large in an equitable and timely fashion.

Funds from the Provider Relief Fund should be directed to public health care and hospital systems that serve a disproportionate share of low income, uninsured and Medicaid patients.

Congress should also take action to stabilize the federal-state-local partnership for financing and administering the Medicaid program for the duration of both the public health and the state and local fiscal crisis. These stabilization measures should include, but are not limited to: repealing or delaying the scheduled statutory reductions to the Medicaid disproportionate (DSH) hospital payments, placing a moratorium on finalization of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) proposed Medicaid Fiscal Accountability Regulation (MFAR), permitting states with Medicaid 1115 waivers expiring in 2020 or 2021 to extend them by at least twelve months and lifting the Medicaid institutions for mental disease (IMD) payment exclusion.

NACo will work to ensure that all coronavirus relief funding not be offset by reducing or eliminating other public health programs and to re-

store funding for existing programs or grants from which funds may have been diverted or transferred in the near-term response. Additionally, coronavirus relief funds should be available to reimburse for county expenses as well as to offset lost revenues.

Enhance Federal Resources for Veterans’ Mental and Behavioral Health Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic

ISSUE: The COVID-19 pandemic is straining counties’ ability to provide critical health resources— including key mental and behavioral health services— to veterans.

ADOPTED POLICY: NACo supports legislation that would provide additional federal resources to develop mental and behavioral health services for veterans as communities respond to increased local needs stemming from COVID-19. NACo specifically urges Congress and the administration to supplement existing mental and behavioral health services for veterans through the development of pilot programs and innovative solutions around the following key areas for veterans: depression, anxiety, suicide prevention, substance use disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

HUMAN SERVICES AND EDUCATION

Urge Congress and the Administration to Maintain County Child Welfare Flexibility and Funding

ISSUE: In February 2018, Congress passed and Presi-

dent Trump signed into law the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). The law provides new federal entitlement funding for optional foster care prevention services meeting stringent best practice benchmarks and creates new federal requirements relating to congregate (group home) care that would reduce federal IV-E reimbursement and shift costs to states and counties. The FFPSA did not extend federal IV-E waivers which expired Sept. 30, 2019 but were extended for two years in a subsequent law, the Family First Transition Act.

Given the coronavirus pandemic, protecting children and families has become even more challenging, shifting resources and attention to the immediate public health emergency which has slowed FFPSA implementation planning in many states and counties. Furthermore, in December 2019, Congress appropriated \$500 million under the Family First Transition Act to assist states in planning for FFPSA implementation, but those funds have yet to be distributed to states. All states must fully implement the FFP- SA by Oct. 1, 2021.

ADOPTED POLICY: NACo urges the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to provide administrative flexibility in the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) to minimize the anticipated cost-shifts to states and counties that will occur by denying FFPSA Title IV-E eligibility to children who would remain eligible for state or county-funded foster care and adoption assistance. Congress should also provide states and counties with sufficient flexibility to serve and protect abused and neglected children as done currently under some state laws. NACo further urges that Congress amend and/or mitigate the

law’s proscriptive provisions intended to reduce the use of congregate care so that states and counties already proceeding with similar efforts may continue to do so. Due to the impact of COVID-19, NACo urges Congress to extend the FFPSA implementation deadline at least one additional year to enable state and county child welfare agencies to continue to focus on the immediate need to respond to families and children during COIVD-19. Additionally, Congress should extend federal IV-E waiver authority through Sept. 30, 2024 unless comprehensive child welfare finance reform that reflects NACo’s priorities is passed and implemented before waivers expire.

PUBLIC LANDS

Oppose Use of the Land and Water Conservation Fund to Acquire Private Lands for Federal Estate in States with Greater Than 50% Federal Land Ownership

ISSUE: Congress is considering permanent funding of approximately \$900 million for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, 40 percent of which would be granted to federal agencies to acquire additional land for the Federal estate, thereby exempting acquired lands from local property taxation.

ADOPTED POLICY: NACo urges Congress to prohibit the use of the Land and Water Conservation Fund to acquire private lands for the Federal estate in any state where more than 50 percent of the land area is already under Federal ownership. These states include: Nevada (approx. 85 percent), Utah (approx. 65 percent), Idaho (approx. 62 percent), Alaska (approx. 61 percent), and Oregon (approx. 53 percent). If additional federal land acquisitions in any of the states listed above are deemed necessary by the impacted state and county, such land acquisitions should be offset with a relinquishment by trade or sale of public land to private ownership within the same county.

the HR DOCTOR

with Philpot
& Winkeler

Recruiting Remote Workers, All Across the United States



As organizations revise job postings to allow for remote work, some counties are considering revising certain positions to be 100 percent virtual, meaning these positions may be able to be filled by individuals who reside outside of the county with no intent to ever return to a formal workspace. Certainly, this possibility expands recruitment options and the pool of potential highly qualified candidates.

Applicants may consider such positions more attractive as remote work from their out-of-county residence relieves them of the need to relocate, find new schools for their children or find work for a trailing spouse.

This may also allow them to start work early, rather than taking months to relocate. Such an option could assist rural counties which may struggle to find qualified applicants within their community or areas where the cost of living is high.

Of course, while there may be many benefits, there are also many things for employers to consider when evaluating how much work can and should be done remotely.

As existing employees may have worked — or may still be working, remotely for several months — the variety of positions that can function with independence may be much wider than previously thought.

How sustainable is that amount of independence? Is it dependent on the individual currently performing that work or is it innate in the position?

Consider whether the county is ready to commit to maintaining this position as entirely remote, even after the need for restrictions arising out of the pandemic ends.

There also may be lim-

itations to this in state law, possibly requiring in-county residency to hold certain positions.

Here are some additional things to consider regarding 100 percent virtual employees.

First, how will you connect the virtual employees to your technology? Will the employees be able to use their own computer? Will they need to be issued a county-issued laptop or other device? Will they be permitted to access your network?

Second, who will complete their I-9 verification? Traditionally, the I-9 verification is done on an employee's first day at the workplace or at new employee orientation, where Human Resources staff can personally view their identification documents, such as a driver's license.

What can employers do if the employee is hired to perform their work at great distance from the workplace? U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services states:

Employers may designate an authorized representative to fill out Forms I-9 on behalf of their company, including personnel officers, foremen, agents or notary public. The Department of Homeland

Security does not require the authorized representative to have specific agreements or other documentation for Form I-9 purposes. If an authorized representative fills out Form I-9 on behalf of the employer, the employer is still liable for any violations in connection with the form or the verification process.

When completing Form I-9, the employer or authorized representative must physically examine, with the employee being physically present, each document presented to determine if it reasonably appears to be genuine and relates to the employee presenting it. Reviewing or examining documents via webcam is not permissible.

If the authorized representative refuses to complete Form I-9 (including providing a signature) another authorized representative may be selected.

If the employer hires a notary public, the notary public is acting as an authorized representative of the employer, not as a notary.

The notary public must perform the same required actions as an authorized representative. When acting as an authorized representative, the notary public should not

provide a notary seal on Form I-9.

With this in mind, you may need to use a notary service and, in the present environment of virtual offices, finding a notary may require the new, virtual employee to go to a bank, a contract station of the U.S. Postal Service or go to a UPS Store. Not all UPS stores offer notary services and FedEx does not offer notary services.

Also, these options will have notary fees. Is the organization paying the notary fee? Is the time spent getting the I-9 completed paid orientation time?

Third, who will verify the applicable state and local laws in the other states? Employees who work virtually out of state will require your finance department to get a tax ID in those different states and file taxes in those states.

Unemployment and worker's compensation laws and processes vary by state, as do laws regarding employment and specifically break periods.

You will also need to ensure you are meeting the minimum wage in not only that state, but that city. Notify your risk manager, payroll staff and work with your attorney.

Fourth, what does your state retirement system need regarding these employees? Are there different rules for out-of-state employees?

Fifth, will the remote workers have flexibility of hours or will they work the same hours as the rest of your in-person workforce? What if they reside in a different time zone?

Sixth, speak with your legal counsel about the difference between hiring these individuals as employees or engaging them as independent contractors. Which is the more appropriate designation?

It will depend on how much the county directs the work, who owns the tools used by the individual and other considerations.

It is also important to discuss whether the individual will be performing the same kinds of work as employees who work in person.

Seventh, right now, with COVID-19 and wildfire season, you may need employees to be able to rotate to emergency operations centers, call centers and other assignments.

Will this position need to have that kind of flexibility? And can that be done through the remote employee's devices?

The bottom line is that being able to engage remote workers may seem more feasible compared to a year ago. It's important to thoroughly review any policies you have or regulations you may be subject to regarding remote work, the practicalities of such work and whether it's in the best interest of your county.

Great challenges bring about great opportunities and technology is allowing us to redefine our workplace and our teams like never before. **CN**

Erika Philpot is the human resources director and Rose Winkeler is the deputy county attorney for Coconino County, Ariz.