



PILT Fly-In participants pause Sept. 15 for a “class photo” in the conference center at NACo headquarters. (Front row, l-r): Owen Hart; Jonathan Shuffield; Seth Grigg; Jeff Hough; Sherry Maupin; Keith Caddy; Dwayne McFall; Skip Brandt; Jeff Hadfield; Joel Bousman; Greg Chilcott and Todd Devlin. (Back row, l-r): Rich Sve; Dennis Blackburn; Jerry Taylor; Tammy Tincher; Wayne Butts; John Espy; Len Humphries; Bob Stevenson; Shelley Brennan; Wes McCart; Heidi Hall; Jeff Scott; Joe Briggs; Cassie Hall; Jake Garfield; Zeke Lee and Tye Hoffman. Photo by Hugh Clarke

County officials visit Capitol Hill to stress importance of PILT, SRS

by **Meredith Moran**
staff writer

County officials traveled from across the country to advocate on Capitol Hill Sept. 15 for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools (SRS) programs during NACo’s annual PILT fly-in.

Because counties are not able to charge property taxes on federal lands, the PILT program helps local governments fund services including road and bridge maintenance, law enforcement, search and res-

cue operations, fire protection, solid waste disposal and environmental compliance.

Congress has fully funded the program since 2008 and it’s relied on by 1,900 counties, the majority of which are rural counties in the West. PILT received just shy of \$550 million for the 2022 fiscal year.

Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), U.S. Rep. Derek Kilmer of Washington state (D-6th), Lake County, Minn. Commission Chairman Rich Sve and Sublette County, Wyo. Commission Chairman Joel Bousman all dis-

cussed PILT and SRS at a briefing with visiting county officials in the Senate Russell Building on Capitol Hill.

“I think it’s worth acknowledging PILT payments aren’t earmarks — they’re not hand-outs,” Kilmer said. “They’re simply the federal government pay-

ing its fair share to communities that might otherwise struggle to generate revenue, because their communities are made up of a bunch of federal land.”

Merkley thanked the county officials for their dedication and

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Counties take public health approach to prevent violence

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

Pots are boiling over across the United States and while police and prosecutors work to clean up the spillover of gun violence (more than 75 percent of murders in 2020 were committed with a firearm, according to the Brennan Center), hoping those examples will serve as a

deterrent, counties are trying to lower the temperature in their communities.

That tactic involves treating violent crime as a public health hazard. Mecklenburg County, N.C. houses its Office of Violence Prevention, the first in the state, in its public health department. That effort is celebrating

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CA counties collaborate on juvenile justice

by **Meredith Moran**
staff writer

In response to California’s shift to a county-run juvenile justice system, 56 of the state’s 58 counties have created the Consortium, a 501(c)(3) organization that promotes collaboration among counties to best serve youth in the system based on specialized needs.

In 2020, California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed Senate Bill 823, which realigned the state’s juvenile justice system to county governments and began the process of closing the state’s Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), which will be completed by the end of June 2023.

At its peak, the DJJ, formerly

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Counties target roots that lead to violence, collaborate with community groups

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the run-up to its second anniversary with the release of its community violence strategic plan.

The plan followed a steady increase in homicide death rates between 2014 (5 deaths per 100,000 population) and 2019, which saw a preliminary death rate of 10.1 deaths per 100,000. Studies found four durable hotspots of violent criminal incidences accounting for 8 percent of violent crime in an area comprising 0.3 percent of the county.

“We have a lot of communities across Mecklenburg County and across this country that have been disinvested in over a long period of time,” said Tracie Campbell, senior health manager in charge of Mecklenburg County’s violence prevention efforts. “Because of that, we got to the place that we are. There are a lot of inequities in health outcomes, there are a lot of inequities in education, in transportation, in housing, in food security — all of those things are things

we’re working on. All those things are violence prevention.”

Mecklenburg County’s findings track with what the Brookings Institution has seen nationwide — not a dramatic increase in crime across the board, but spikes of gun violence in underinvested areas, which accounted for a 30 percent rise in the national murder rate between 2019-2020. In July, the Council on Criminal Justice found that homicides had decreased slightly in 23 major cities in the second half of 2021.

Some of Mecklenburg County’s strategies include increasing community engagement, developing a community infrastructure development pilot project, deploying an emergency department intervention program, reducing recidivism through a jail

re-entry program and trying to head off violent incidents.

Much of the overall county effort encourages collaboration among disparate human service agencies and nonprofit organizations working on the root causes of poverty and inequity, tied together strategically. The county-led Carolina Violence Prevention Collaborative systematically coordinates the efforts of almost 200 community-based organizations working to address those insecurities and looks for the gaps in those services.

“A lot of those community-based organizations were not necessarily working together,” Campbell said.

That’s not to say there’s nothing new happening in Mecklenburg County — the county and the city of Charlotte are each contributing \$250,000 to fund a violence interruption program, an adaptation of the “cure violence” tactic, which embeds social service providers in high-risk

communities, who then work to earn the trust of residents in need of help. From there, the “violence interrupters” can be a liaison between the community and human service providers on a regular basis. They also jump to action on demand: When a community member is wounded in a violent incident, the violence interrupter visits them and their family and friends to discourage retaliation.

But the comprehensive approach is what Campbell says will make a difference.

“Folks who are just planning to do one thing are not going to see the outcome that they’d like to see,” she said. “Not only does our violence intervention work — that’s happening on the street level — not only does our hospital-based violence intervention program work for us, but it’s all of these things collectively.

“This work is long and hard, and you don’t see the difference really quickly,” she noted. “It takes a while for you to actually see something happening, but you’re going to have greater outcomes when you collectively apply more than one of these strategies and work together.

“That’s what we’ve seen across the country, that people are

having great success or greater ... because they’re doing more than one thing. You can’t be a one-trick pony.”

Cook County, Ill. is also targeting the roots that lead to violence, investing \$85 million over three years in grants to neighborhoods and municipalities seeing the highest rates of gun violence.

“It’s no coincidence that our neighborhoods with the highest rates of gun violence, neighborhoods where people who do not feel safe, are Black and brown communities that have experienced the history of racism, police brutality and disinvestment and traumas,” County Board President Toni Preckwinkle told NACo’s Health Policy Steering Committee at the 2022 Annual Conference in Adams County, Colo.

“In a single weekend in Chicago, it’s tragically common to see a number of individuals injured or killed that would qualify for a description as a mass shooting.”

Nicole Hendrickson, who chairs the Gwinnett County, Ga. Board of Commissioners, agreed with Preckwinkle that closing the resource gap in troubled com-

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SNAP/STATS



TOP COUNTIES BY ACREAGE DEDICATED TO APPLE ORCHARDS

COUNTY	ACREAGE
YAKIMA COUNTY, WASH.	58,670
GRANT COUNTY, WASH.	51,093
WAYNE COUNTY, N.Y.	23,685
OKANOGAN COUNTY, WASH.	15,856
ADAMS COUNTY, PA.	13,160

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture 2017



Kathleen Hoke, director of the Network for Public Health Law’s Eastern Region office, speaks to the Health Policy Steering Committee at NACo’s 2022 Annual Conference in Colorado. Photo by Hugh Clarke

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County officials pause for a photo on Capitol Hill (l-r): Jeff Hadfield; Jeff Scott; Dennis Blackburn; Shelley Brennan; Jake Garfield; Zeke Lee; Tye Hoffman; Jerry Taylor and Mark Whitney. Photo by Hugh Clarke

Sen. Jeff Merkley: ‘We have to pull another genie out of the hat’

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urged them to make the most of their time in D.C.

“As I like to ponder it, everything easy is already done, so when you’re in public service, you’re still wrestling with one difficult challenge after another,” he said. “Thank you for taking that on for the strength of your community, your state and your country.

“...I just want to say to all

of you, as you go about your meetings now that you’ve come here to stress the PILT program, please make sure you connect with special attention to those from your home state of course, because we need those members of Congress lobbying to the members of the Interior subcommittees of the Appropriations Committees in both houses [of Congress].”

In his address to his fellow county officials, Bousman not-

ed the costs of rescuing visitors from public lands, such as the Bridger-Teton National Forest located in Sublette County.

“We’ve rescued an individual who went over a waterfall and was stranded in the middle of a creek in high water using our helicopter, and we have rescued multiple wounded horseback riders that would probably not have received timely medical attention otherwise,” he said. “SRS provides local government

with the resources to protect and save lives in these dangerous situations.”

SRS payments help rural counties and school districts affected by the decline in revenue from timber harvests on federal land fund services such as infrastructure, education, conservation projects and wildfire prevention programs.

“We have fiscal year ‘21, ‘22 [funded], but what happens at the end of that?” Merkley said.

“We have to pull another genie out of the hat and make sure we get a vote on the floor of the Senate, the vote of the House.”

For the 2021 fiscal year, SRS provided \$250 million to about 700 national forest counties across 41 states. The funding secured a three-year reauthorization with last year’s infrastructure package, but NACo wants a long-term funding solution for national forest counties, said Jonathan Shuffield, NACo’s legislative director, public lands.

“Not just a funding solution that provides revenue, but we also want this to be something that will really make our forests work again,” Shuffield said. “We want to make sure that our solutions are creating jobs and local communities but also creating revenue for the government and making our forests healthier.”

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COUNTY OFFICIALS HEAR FROM FOREST SERVICE, INTERIOR REPRESENTATIVES

by Meredith Moran
staff writer

County officials visiting the nation’s capital for the annual PILT Fly-In also heard from officials from the U.S. Forest Service and Interior Department.

Forest Service Chief Randy Moore and Department of Interior (DOI) Senior Advisor and Infrastructure Coordinator Winnie Stachelberg stopped by Sept. 16 to discuss intergovernmental partnerships and investing funds, as part of the “Overcoming Challenges and Seizing Opportunities: Implementing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” series hosted by NACo, the National League of Cities and the Bipartisan Policy Center.

Stachelberg referenced some of the current projects the DOI is contributing to, including a dam removal fish passage project in Maine, designing the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore Trail in Wisconsin and restoring watersheds in Zion National Park in Utah.

“There was a really interesting technology of how to water crops

where there was no evaporation, where you just put the hose down right next to the tree roots so there is no waste for the water,” she said.

“We’ve talked to water districts about desalinization, we’ve talked to them about how to reuse and recycle water — not recycled bottles that had water — but actually recycle the water, and all of that comes from partnerships and conversations with people on the ground who are trying innovative technologies to ensure that the critical investment is spent wisely,” she noted.

Moore also emphasized the importance of establishing partnerships at the county level.

“As we look at trying to improve what we do out on the ground, we have to engage with people that are at those locations,” Moore said.

“... There’s a lot of different ways to get the job done, and it shouldn’t be done the same way across the country — there’s just too much variation and diversity.”

The DOI is looking to identify projects that don’t just restore

ecosystems and conserve land, but also make it more accessible to hunters and ranchers to ensure that public lands are for everyone, Stachelberg said.

“To me, it’s about breaking down silos, and it’s about partnerships and collaboration,” Stachelberg said to the crowd of county officials.

“I’m certainly not here to say that we at the Department of Interior have it right, but I’m hopeful that with the historic

investment from not just the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, but the other statutes as well, that with those dollars, we can work on leveraging the partnerships that we have with people like you, with your communities, to ensure that there’s the greatest impact for the American people.”

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law invested \$28.1 billion in programs, bureaus and offices at the DOI, \$1.5 billion of which has been dedicated to the Office

of Wildland Fire to work with the U.S. Forest Service and other organizations on wildfire prevention, fuel management, mitigation and revegetation.

Other significant investments include \$11.3 billion toward the Abandoned Mine Lands program, nearly \$1 billion to the National Park Service to hire more staff and prepare for the effects of climate change and \$720 million in climate resilience and energy funding sent directly to tribes. **CN**



Forest Service Chief Randy Moore makes a point as Department of Interior Senior Advisor Winnie Stachelberg looks on. The two took part in a panel discussion with county officials Sept. 16 in Washington, D.C. Photo by Hugh Clarke

County officials talk PILT with congressional representatives



Clackamas County, Ore. Commissioner Martha Schrader greets Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.). Photo by Hugh Clarke

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Over nine million schoolchildren rely on SRS to keep teachers in their classrooms.

“We want to make sure that young people can grow up in a community and stay in that community and have opportunities,” Kilmer said. “That’s really the direction here of these programs that you’re advocating for -- making sure that the futures in Port Angeles, Washington or Forks, Washington or any of your communities can be just as bright as people who live in New York or Silicon Valley.”

SRS title III county funding goes toward the Firewise Communities program, which educates homeowners on steps to reduce vulnerability to wildfires, including landscaping, community planning and home structure and design. Sve spoke to how much the program has benefitted Lake County, particularly during the 2021 Greenwood Fire.

“Some of the structures that had taken advantage of Firewise survived the fire when their neighboring properties did not,” Sve said.

“I had the fortune, or misfortune however you want to look at it, in viewing some of those properties personally, and it’s really outstanding when you walk up to a Firewise property and the grass is still green and it’s nothing but a smoldering ruin right next door.”

Kilmer joked that he represents more trees than people and spoke to his personal investment in PILT and SRS fund-

ing.

“I grew up in Port Angeles, Washington,” he said. “Both of my folks were schoolteachers, and when I was in high school was right around the time the timber industry took it on the chin. And so, a bunch of my friends’ parents lost their jobs, a bunch of my neighbors lost their jobs and it had a big impact on me. It’s actually what led me into public service when I was in college. My senior thesis was how to help timber towns in Washington state.”

While the House passed an interior bill that includes full PILT funding, it’s important to keep the pressure on members of Congress, so that funding stays in any final bill, Kilmer said.

“Counties in my neck of the woods need those funds so that kids can have access to great teachers, so that businesses can have access to the infrastructure that they need to be successful, so that families can feel safe, so that there’s actually law enforcement funding in their communities,” Kilmer said.

“...You shouldn’t have to choose between paying police officers or teachers or buying textbooks or fixing roads, between funding for the fire department or investing in basic infrastructure.”

Other speakers included Gila County, Ariz. Supervisor Woody Cline, Idaho County, Idaho Commissioner Skip Brandt and Prairie County, Mont. Commissioner Todd Devlin, who chairs the NACo Public Lands Steering Committee. **EN**

Counties invest in solutions to violence

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munities was an opportunity to reduce the economic pressures that drive people to commit crimes, crediting the American Rescue Plan’s (ARPA) \$65.1 billion allocation to counties.

“Fortunately, federal funding that has been allocated to local governments to address pandemic-related issues has given us unprecedented opportunities to invest in those solutions for our residents who have so many different backgrounds, so many different experiences and circumstances and they have different needs,” she said.

Gwinnett County has allocated \$62.1 million of its nearly \$182 million ARPA allocation to equity-focused service provisions, allowing the county to expand its Health and Human Services model to enhance community resource support in targeted underserved areas. The county also invested \$29 million to address the economic inequities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

By directing their ARPA funding to struggling areas, counties are hoping to make a difference in the lives of their residents, pierce the clouds of community disengagement and ultimately improve outcomes and reduce distrust of government. That was one of Campbell’s goals while Mecklenburg County developed its community violence strategic plan. The county held a variety of listening sessions and focus groups with residents not only to glean information, but to reach out to residents.

“People don’t think government listens, and when something is a problem and we don’t think we’re being heard, we become disgruntled,” she said. “We were really listening to people and being upfront about why the plan was important. My hope is that community will see themselves in the plan and know that their input meant something. And that’s how we’ll make a difference.”

Multi-vector approaches

• Harris County, Texas is trying to better allocate personnel

to emergency calls through its Holistic Assistance Response Teams program. By assigning trained health professionals to respond to 911 calls related to homelessness, behavioral health, substance use or non-emergency health or social welfare issues, the county hopes to reduce the workload for law enforcement by an estimated 21-38 percent of calls.

• Multnomah County, Ore. is funding a behavioral health gun violence response team. The seven-person team will include a combination of mental health clinicians and peers with gang experience and will coordinate with the Department of Community Justice’s Juvenile Services Division to use therapeutic interventions to address underlying needs.

• In 2020, Anne Arundel County, Md. launched a Gun Violence Intervention Team managed by a full-time health planner. The team meets monthly to discuss the work of subcommittees focused on three priority areas: data, public awareness and crisis response.

• Counties nationwide are funding gun buyback programs and collecting record numbers of firearms. King County, Wash. created a permanent voluntary safe firearm and ammunition return program within the sheriff’s office. While the gift cards those buybacks offer may not deter criminals, the efforts reduce the number of guns in circulation and in households.

Counties get the handcuffs on gun regulation

While some counties are bringing in historic numbers of firearms in gun-buyback programs, particularly after the May school shooting in Uvalde County, Texas, counties have seen their ability to restrict firearms use curtailed by the U.S. Supreme Court this year.

“Before the Supreme Court’s term this year there seems to be a bit more wiggle room but certainly after the decision this term, we’re left with a much narrower window, but there still is opportunity to address the violence associated with firearms from a public health perspective,” said Kathleen Hoke, director of the

Network for Public Health Law’s Eastern Region office.

New York State Rifle and Pistol Association v. Bruen still allows a sensitive places regulation, allowing governments to set regulations for their buildings and property, but the decision criticized the landmark *District of Columbia v. Heller* decision for giving governmental entities too much power by having an interest balancing test in setting local gun control regulations. The ruling puts the burden on governments when setting limitations.

“The government must now affirmatively prove that its firearm regulation is part of the historical tradition to set boundaries on guns,” Hoke said.

Increased federal funding to combat community violence

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, passed in June, contains several provisions and opportunities for funding for counties. It includes:

- More than \$2 billion for school climate and school-based mental health services and \$300 million in school security.
- Increased ability for the National Instant Criminal Background Check System to access juvenile records, mental health records and contact local law enforcement about an individual’s history.
- Fines and prison time for individuals who purchase a weapon for someone else.
- \$750 million over five years through the Byrne-JAG program for states to develop and implement extreme risk protection order programs or as they are more commonly referred, red flag laws.
- \$150 million for the implementation of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (988).
- \$250 million for the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant and \$240 million for Project AWARE, increasing awareness of mental health issues among school-aged youth, provide training for school personnel and other adults who interact with school-aged youth to detect and respond to mental health issues and connect youth to care.

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Introducing the Housing Solutions Matchmaker: A diagnostic tool that helps county officials

by Kevin Shrawder

County leaders understand the local housing conditions and challenges of the communities where they live and work.

The Housing Solutions Matchmaker can help local leaders as they face complex decisions on how to invest scarce resources. The matchmaker provides local governments with a concise, accessible snapshot of housing conditions, focusing on a handful of key metrics, and places the locality in context relative to neighboring communities. The tool also provides resources on specific policy solutions that counties may be able to implement to support a healthy housing market.

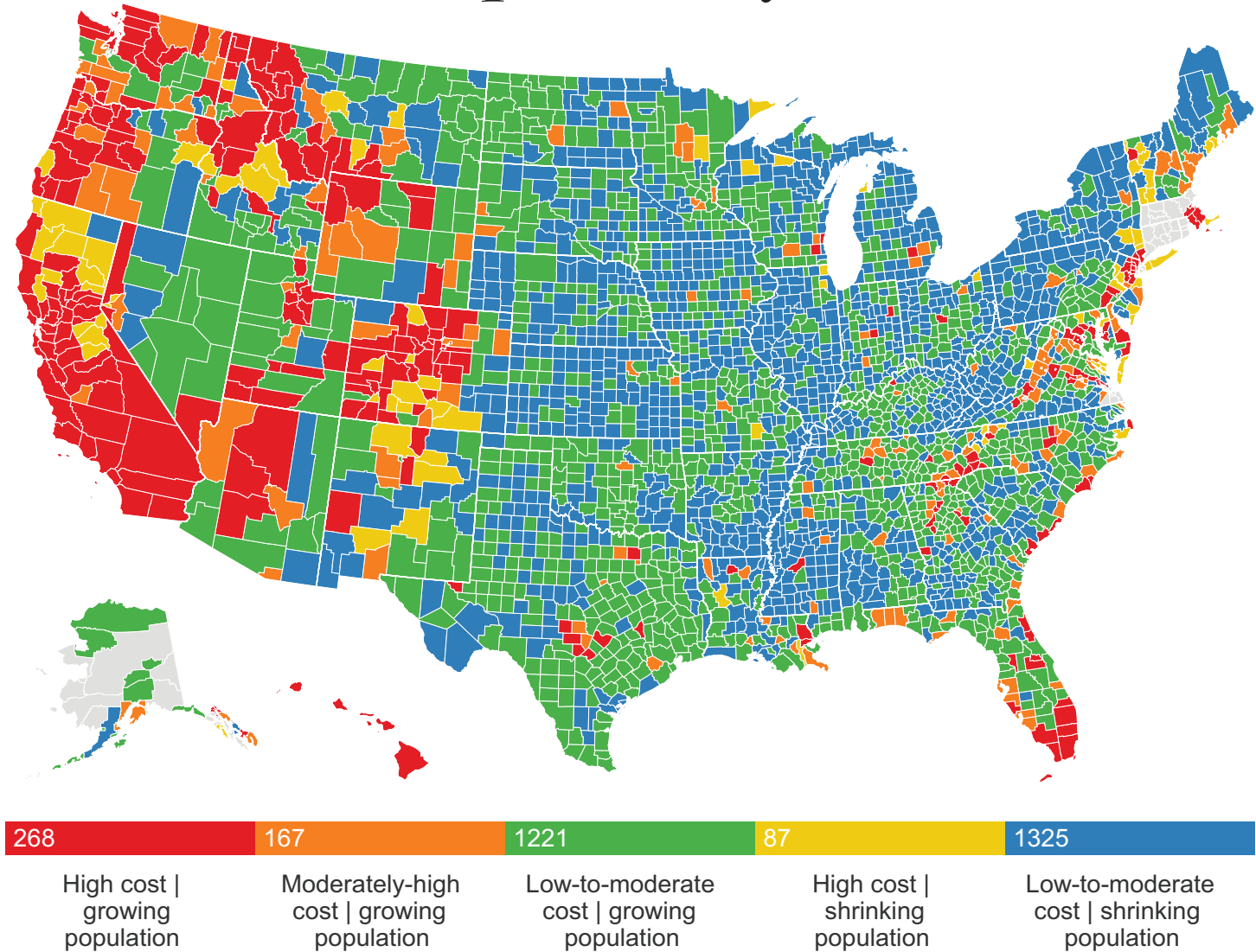
First, the tool places each county housing-market category based on two metrics: Population change and the home value to income ratio.

Population change illustrates the community's demand for additional housing over time, while the home value to income ratio primarily depicts challenges with affordability.

Communities with a growing population (high demand) need to build enough housing to accommodate individuals and families moving to the area.

A community with a shrinking or stable population may still have affordability challenges but will typically focus more on maintaining the quality of existing homes rather than expanding housing stock.

Garnering insights on affordability is slightly more complex. Affordability reflects both housing price or rent levels and how much income households earn: There is no single home price that is equally "affordable" to all households. Furthermore, there



is typically a correlation between wages and home prices; people who live in high-cost-of-living areas often earn higher incomes.

Because labor markets operate at the regional scale rather than within single cities or counties, the matchmaker calculates housing affordability as the ratio of the median house values within each county and the median household income for the metropolitan area (or state for counties not in a metro area).

High-priced counties may look affordable to those currently living in that county but unaffordable to typical households in the broader metro area. Housing affordability challenges — and solutions — benefit from a region-wide approach: for in-

stance, many people work and live in different counties within the same region.

In addition to classifying counties by population growth and housing affordability, the Housing Solutions Matchmaker provides country-specific profiles that guide users through selected housing supply, affordability, and quality metrics to understand local conditions better.

A key findings table helps explain how individuals should interpret these metrics and communicate their findings to others.

Finally, the tool provides a series of policy recommendations to help guide county leaders in undertaking data-driven deci-

sions.

The policy recommendations are linked to each county's specific population growth, affordability, and quality metrics. Though they do not provide a detailed implementation plan, the resources can help leaders chart a general direction for policy solutions based on community needs.

Recognizing that local governments vary in available resources and legal powers, no single comprehensive strategy works for all places. Instead, the tool provides a data-informed assessment, referring local officials to resources supporting county leaders' continued actions to improve local housing stock's affordability, quality and supply.

The tool does not aim to provide resources for all housing challenges, such as homelessness or mixed-use residential and commercial development. County leaders can find information on additional topics outside the scope of the Housing Matchmaker Tool on the "Resources on Other Housing Topics" tab on the tool's homepage.

The Housing Solutions Matchmaker tool is a joint effort from NACo, the Brookings Institute and the Aspen Institute. View your county profile and associated housing resources at www.naco.org/MatchmakerTool.

Kevin Shrawder is an associate economist in the Counties Futures Lab at NACo.

Bipartisan Safer Communities Act offers funding opportunities for counties

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- \$40 million for the National Child Traumatic Stress Network to improve treatment services for children, adolescents and families who have experienced traumatic events
- \$60 million for training in mental health for primary care providers who treat children and youth.
- \$500 million for the School Based Mental Health Services Grant Program to support qualified mental health service providers who administer mental health services to students in school districts with demonstrated need.
- \$500 million for Mental Health Services Professional Demonstration Grants funding partnerships between institutions of higher education and school districts to prepare school-based mental health service providers for employment in high-need schools.
- \$250 million for community violence programs through the U.S. Department of Justice for community violence intervention and prevention initiatives.

Learn more about Bipartisan Safer Communities Act provisions at <https://www.naco.org/blog/congress-clears-bipartisan-gun-reform-legislation>.

ARPA funding fuels two-generation approach to family services

by **Charlie Ban**
senior writer

Escaping her old life in Nebraska was just the first step for Paulina Gutierrez. Fleeing an unstable, abusive household, she needed a fresh start for herself and three daughters, one of which was a newborn. But she couldn't rest once she got home to Colorado.

Her mother could shelter the four in her apartment, but that wasn't a long-term solution for anyone in the family. Gutierrez found one in the GOALS program — Generational Opportunities to Achieve Long-term Success — administered by the Family Tree, a local Arapahoe County, Colo. nonprofit.

"At the lowest point in my life, they cared," Gutierrez said. "They went above and beyond to get my daughters what they needed and made sure we had stable housing. They pushed and pushed and pushed and made sure it happened."



Cheryl Ternes, Arapahoe County human services director Photo by Hugh Clarke

"All throughout my life I was always in situations where someone would say something and then they wouldn't do it, or they'd take advantage of you," she said. "This was different."

A year later, Gutierrez has earned a GED, secured housing for her family and found a job. The organization also helped Gutierrez secure a home health nurse to see to her infant daughter's needs. Her toddler is thriving.

That's the kind of result Arapahoe County was looking for when it allocated \$1.2 million of its American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to GOALS. They had a kindred spirit in Family Tree.

"It's one-of-a-kind in the country, because the program is built on the two-generation approach, which basically

means that we're serving both adults and children simultaneously focused on meeting their needs in order for them to be successful," said Cheryl Ternes, Arapahoe County's human services director.

Ternes began refining the Aspen Institute-inspired two-generation approach in 2015, after touring an emergency shelter with Arapahoe County Commissioner Nancy Sharpe and seeing the stagnant lives children led there amid uncertain lives.

"When we walked out of there, I told the commissioner we can do better for these families, and the Board of Commissioners has gotten behind that," Ternes said.

Over the next three years, the county surveyed service providers and TANF recipients to find out what families needed to succeed. Ternes found the infrastructure — the programming, the staff and the real estate — in Family Tree.



Family Tree CEO Scott Shields Photo by Hugh Clarke

The organization's four-building campus in eastern Arapahoe County serves families who are experiencing homelessness, giving them a place to stay, up to nine months. A handful of human services organizations occupy one building. And the organization had plans that its share of the ARPA funding will accelerate: Family Tree will soon start renovating one building to house five classrooms that will serve 70 children, ages 6 months to 5 years in the GOALS program and in surrounding Aurora, a community in a "childcare desert."

"Without ARPA funding, I would honestly say we would not be at the phase where we are," said Family Tree CEO Scott Shields. "We probably still honestly [need to] be in a



Family Tree client Paulina Gutierrez Photo by Hugh Clarke

fundraising mode.

"What we heard from many of our partners during this time is that finding capital dollars to do renovations or other construction projects, especially in the last 2.5 years, has been hard to come by, so this was a really, really critical support."

The county's investment unlocked additional funding from the United Way, helping Family Tree finish its fundraising ahead of schedule.

"It was that confidence that Arapahoe County and the Board of County Commissioners saw using once-in-a-lifetime ARPA funds to make this happen, that's really giving us the opportunity to create this vision and make it a reality," Shields said.

The gathering restrictions and physical distancing regulations during the height of the pandemic challenged Family Tree's service delivery model, but to be able to make dramatic progress on long-term planning 2.5 years after the pandemic started has given Shields a great deal of optimism.

"The hardest part during the pandemic was supporting our team, who had to work face-to-face during a very scary and uncertain time," he said. "We continued to provide excellent high-quality services during that time with reduced occupancy to enable physical distancing with signing up for utilization kitchens and common space areas."

Gutierrez didn't notice when she came there for help,

though.

"My first interaction was very hopeful," she said. "I know I can always come here if I need resources for anything."

Keeping people housed

Even as other Denver-area counties sought her organization's services, Megan O'Byrne wanted to work in Arapahoe County. After setting up eviction clinics in Denver and Adams counties for Colorado Legal Services, where she is a supervising attorney, O'Byrne got the call she wanted.

"We had our eye on Arapahoe County because it has one of the highest eviction filings in the state," she said.

The clinic places two attorneys and a paralegal in an office near the county courthouse three mornings a week, helping tenants draft answers to eviction filings, preventing them from receiving default judgments. The attorneys take on some cases, pro bono. Having an eviction on their records makes it harder for tenants to find new housing, to say nothing of the disruption the process means for their safety and long-term health if they lose their place to live.

"We are able to at least buy them time to continue getting rental assistance money," O'Byrne said. "Our clinics are able to help some of the most vulnerable populations in that county and also be able to save [the county] money in the back end because evictions are so

costly to the community in terms of healthcare and safety resources."

While Arapahoe County had approached Colorado Legal Services earlier about establishing the clinic, it took federal funding to make it happen.

"Without APRA, this program would not exist," O'Byrne said.

Tashay Turner was referred to the eviction clinic by a courthouse clerk.

When she faced eviction, Turner was able to place her daughters with relatives, but all bets were off for her and her mother.

"Without their assistance, I would probably be on the streets because the lingo, the knowledge that they know that you don't happen to know, is very helpful," Turner said.

Most landlords have attorneys, O'Byrne said, which puts most renters at a disadvantage, particularly low-income renters.

"Legal proceedings are not necessarily made for people without lawyers," she said.

Turner said rising housing costs are surprising many people who felt secure with their family budgets only months ago.

"A lot of people I know are making decent money, but it's just not enough anymore," she said. "It's really hard for people to even try to find housing in general because of the prices and the wages that [employers

California counties band together to take the lead on juvenile justice

From CONSORTIUM page 1

the California Youth Authority, was responsible for more than 10,000 juveniles. By the time of realignment, youth with low-level convictions had already been moved to county facilities, so there were only about 700 juveniles in the DJJ — those deemed as “higher need” for specialized services and security needs, said Jacqueline Wong-Hernandez, the California State Association of Counties’ deputy executive director of legislative affairs.

‘The Consortium’s really meant to enhance communication and problem solving...’

“That’s who they then dispersed to the 58 counties, so counties are now trying to figure out how to serve these populations, where there may just be a few, but now you’re having to figure out ‘What is your staffing? What are your infrastructure needs for what may just be a handful of juveniles?’ But now [counties] are responsible for doing it instead of some amount of economy of scale that the state had,” Wong-Hernandez said.

Some California counties don’t have detention centers, and many don’t have high-need specialized programs, so the Consortium was created to address different counties needs for their youth in an organized and equitable way, said Karen Pank, the executive director of the Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC).



Jehan Clark, institutions superintendent for San Mateo County Probation, stands in the “multisensory deescalation room” at juvenile hall. Photo by Beth LaBerge/KQED; used with permission.

“The Consortium’s really meant to enhance communication and problem-solving and be a place for innovation on the specific issues about what counties can do for each other,” Pank said. “To break down those county border barriers that might be present at times, because they are their own separate governmental entities.”

Graham Knaus, the executive director of the California State Association of Counties, also spoke to the importance of the Consortium providing opportunities for regional collaboration.

“Tuolumne [County], before all of this happened, built an

entirely new facility and then there was [Senate Bill] 823, and there were other changes that occurred where they had a number of beds that were sitting vacant that they were paying for, and one small county cannot stand that up on its own, so their model really depends on other counties placing their juveniles in their facility,” Knaus said. “And then there are other counties that hardly have any placement opportunities at all locally, so they need something like a Tuolumne in order for there to be sufficient capacity and an overall system.”

Knaus and Pank are both on the Consortium’s board, along

with the California Association of County Executives President Wendy Tyler and probation officers from each county — one of whom is El Dorado County Chief Probation Officer Brian Richart, who said the realignment has been a difficult adjustment for his county.

“The legislature was really quick to act and there was very poor planning going into the development of the closure of the DJJ, so we’ve had to sort of pick up the ball — a very malformed ball,” Richart said. “There are really no rules to the game, there’s really no game. [The state said] ‘We’re just going to shut down this other game, and you have to create a whole new game for us locally.’”

The annual budget allocations for counties were about \$40 million in the fiscal year 2021-2022 and \$120 million in FY 2022-23. According to the SB 823 County Implementation Policy and Practice Manual, in FY 2023-24, it will be about \$192 million and \$209 million in FY 2024-25 and every year thereafter, adjusted annually for growth.

Senate Bill 823 created the Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant, which required counties to create a Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council sub-committee and submit a detailed facility plan to the Office of Youth and Community Restoration to be eligible for funding.

Counties receive funding based on a formula of 30 percent of the per-county percentage of the average number of youth committed to DJJ; 50 percent of the by-county distribution of youth adjudicated for certain violent felony offenses according to DOJ data; and 20 percent based on by-county distribution of youth population, ages 10-17. A county will receive at minimum \$250,000 annually.

“El Dorado County has banked most of that money knowing that most of what we end up spending is going to have to be paying other counties to take special use cases that we can’t support,” Richart said. “I probably can keep certain types of youth, but maybe

See CONSORTIUM page 16

Arapahoe County invests ARPA funds in families

From ARPA FUNDS page 6

are] giving the people. They’re not making ends meet anymore.”

Like many counties, Arapahoe saw its lower-wage workers both exposed to more health risks early in the pandemic and vulnerable to job losses. And Katherine Smith, Arapahoe

County’s community resources director, said giving residents a way out of that would guide the county’s ARPA spending.

“Our lower-wage workers who didn’t have that ability to work from home may have had ... challenges [with] childcare and we and we still see some of that,” two years later, said Katherine Smith, Arapahoe

County’s community resources director.

“Now our focus with our dollars for business support has been really strongly around retraining,” she said. “It’s focused on how we can ‘upskill and reskill’ and get people either back to work or in a higher level position so that their income is higher.” **CN**

NACo/Nationwide scholarship winners share thoughts on retirement readiness

For 19 years, the NACo/Nationwide scholarship essay contest has been an educational opportunity for high school students transitioning into a new stage of their lives. Engaging young people in civic life and responsibilities is an important way to show high school students the valuable roles counties play in their residents' lives. The program's goal is to help ensure that young people get involved and stay involved in local government — and understand the importance of being good stewards of their future finances.

Children and grandchildren of NACo 457 Deferred Compensation Program contributors were eligible to apply for this scholarship. They were asked to write a short essay on the importance of retirement readiness, especially when considering the impact of Covid. The winning entries were submitted by:

- Rebecca Yetter, Sussex County, N.J.
- Chad Philpot, Coconino County, Ariz.
- Alyssa Gomez, Riverside County, Calif.
- Alyssa Murray, Bartholomew County, Ind.

In their essays, each student communicated the importance of preparing financially for retirement in response to the following question:

The recent COVID pandemic has impacted the way we approach and plan for many of life's decisions. As we turn the corner on the challenges that we have faced over the past two years, what lessons can we learn as it relates to "Retirement Readiness?" As you formulate your response, please consider lessons learned and how you would approach the following when you graduate college and start planning for your financial security: Use of Employer Sponsored Retirement Plans, Budgeting, Asset Diversification, Emergency Funds and Financial Literacy. As you consider your response, you may also want to consider the following economic levers

that may impact Retirement Security: Healthcare Costs, Social Security, Market Risk and Increasing Life Expectancy.

Each winning senior received a \$2,500 college scholarship from Nationwide and the National Association of Counties.



Yetter

Rebecca Yetter

Hi! My name is Rebecca Yetter. I will be majoring in Business Management at the University of Central Florida. My goal is to eventually own a business, one that might help make a positive impact on society. I love being outdoors, as well as spending time with friends and family. In high school I was part of several clubs. I was given the opportunity to volunteer so much of my time to those in need, and I plan on doing that again in college and beyond. I also was involved in a business club, which I plan on doing again. I am super excited to see where my interests and goals bring me!



Philpot

Chad Philpot

Chad Philpot will be attending Northern Arizona University this fall where he will

be majoring in Biology. Chad believes people's lives are improved through the love and companionship of a pet and he desires to become a veterinarian, a goal he has had since first grade. He enjoys dirt bike riding, fishing, camping, archery, weightlifting and visiting national parks with his family. Chad is honored to be recognized with the Nationwide/NACo College Scholarship which will help him achieve his long-term college and career goals.



Gomez

Alyssa Gomez

My name is Alyssa Nicole Gomez and I am 18 years old. I was born and raised in Riverside County. I have one younger sister who is a sophomore in high school this year. I graduated from Heritage High School in June 2022 with honors. During my high school years, I played both club and high school soccer, was a member of the California Scholarship Federation and was a youth leader at my local church. In the fall, I will be attending the University of California-Irvine where I will be pursuing a degree in Mechanical Engineering. My goal is to graduate with my bachelor's degree in 2026 and make a difference in the world

one day. During my free time, I enjoy exercising, trying new foods and spending time with my friends and family.



Murray

Alyssa Murray

My intended college major is Business Management. I may continue my education with law school or graduate school for a master's in Business. I am a direct admit to the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University. Aside from my studies, I enjoy dancing and intend to join dance clubs at Indiana University. I am passionate about staying up to date on current events and making myself knowledgeable about political issues. I very much enjoy spending time with my family and friends.

Scholarship honors 40-plus years of partnership

Nationwide and NACo are committed to helping participants plan for retirement as well as their family's future. Nationwide sponsors the NACo-Nationwide scholarship to recognize its three-decades-long partnership with NACo and its member counties.

For additional information about the NACo De-

ferred Compensation Program, please contact Carlos Greene at cgreene@naco.org or 404.263.3656, or David Belnick at Belnid1@nationwide.com or 410.790.5440.

Nationwide Retirement Solutions (Nationwide) partners with the National Association of Counties (NACo) to provide counties and their employees with a competitive deferred compensation program. As part of this partnership, Nationwide pays a fee to NACo in exchange for NACo's exclusive endorsement, marketing support, and program oversight of Nationwide products made available under the program. For more information, including fees paid, Nationwide encourages you to visit NRSforu.com.

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Nationwide Retirement Specialists are registered representatives of Nationwide Investment Services Corporation: Member FINRA. Nationwide representatives cannot offer investment, tax or legal advice. Consult your own counsel before making retirement plan decisions.

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Nationwide®

Palm Beach County's opioid treatment pilot expands to 12 counties in Florida

by **Meredith Moran**
staff writer

An opioid addiction recovery program that has reduced overdoses in Palm Beach County is expanding to 12 counties across Florida as Coordinated Opioid Recovery (CORE), a network of addiction care.

CORE is Gov. Ron DeSantis' (R) response to Florida's rampant opioid crisis. The state had more than 8,000 reported overdose deaths in 2021 -- its highest one-year total ever recorded -- and fentanyl-related deaths have increased by 790 percent since 2015.

Palm Beach County's addiction treatment program has 400-500 patients receiving care at any given time from physicians, psychiatrists, addiction-specialized therapists, nurses and other health care providers, according to Robin Kish, director of media relations for the county's Health Care District.

"We probably had the highest number of overdoses in the state, certainly one of the highest in the nation," said Commissioner Melissa McKinlay. "It was crushing our community. I think we had somebody overdosing every 11 minutes in our county — we were losing on average more than two people a day."

In the late 2000s, South Florida was home to a robust "pill mill" industry of unregulated pain clinics that issued prescriptions for opioid-based painkillers with minimal examination. Counties passed ordinances that closed most of them a decade ago, but millions from Florida and beyond were already addicted.

Palm Beach County dedicates about \$1 million a year to its addiction treatment program, so that anyone seeking care can receive it, regardless of their ability to pay, so the financial burden doesn't fall on the hospital, McKinlay said.

"This public-private collaboration provides a unique ecosystem where patients can receive treatment for their Sub-



Commissioner Melissa McKinlay of Palm Beach County, Fla. speaks at the NACo Annual conference last year in Prince George's County, Md. Photo by Denny Henry

stance Use Disorder (SUD) in the ER for the most acute stage of their illness, as well as a continuum of care right after discharge at the Health Care District's outpatient clinic for as long as it's needed," Kish wrote in a statement. "Since SUD is a lifelong illness, this approach affords patients access to quality care on an ongoing basis."

The pilot program was initially just for patients at HCA Florida-JFK Hospital in West Palm Beach who had been taken to the emergency room due to an opioid overdose. As the program grew, the hospital created a formal outpatient clinic and Addiction Stabilization Unit (ASU).

"The way that we've molded the program now is anybody can walk in, and we tried to do that where, at least with our [ASU] we have a triage program, if somebody comes in off the street, our staff then tries to determine, 'Do you need inpatient? Do you need heavy outpatient? Can we come and treat you in your home?'" McKinlay said. "Like, '[what is] the best option?' And then the other thing that we tried to establish

'I think we had somebody overdosing every 11 minutes in our county...'

was if you're the parent or the loved one of somebody going through addiction, you can pick up and call and ask for guidance in trying to find help."

Looking ahead, McKinlay said the county has dedicated \$10 million to \$12 million from the American Rescue Plan Act to tackle mental health and substance abuse issues.

"That mental health piece is so key, because a lot of addiction issues are a result of those self-medicating, because they're not addressing their mental health issues," McKinlay said.

The recovery program has been successful in Palm Beach, with drastically lower relapse rates among those participating in the program versus those who are not. Brief addiction monitoring assessments, which are self-reporting questionnaires that pertain to mental and physical health in relation to sobriety, have also shown that patients' average

protective factors go up and risk factors go down, according to Kish.

The counties involved in the first phase of CORE are Brevard, Clay, Escambia, Gulf, Marion, Pasca and Volusia, and phase 2 will be Citrus, Duval, Flagler, Manatee and Pinellas.

DeSantis publicly announced the program during a visit to Brevard County. "We don't want Floridians to receive overdose treatment and then simply be sent back into the world for this to happen all over again, so we're trying to give them the tools they need to navigate their path to a productive, drug-free future," DeSantis said at an Aug. 3 press conference. "We have to work to try to break the cycle of addiction."

Last year, the Brevard County Sheriff's Office saw a 72 percent increase in fatalities related to fentanyl, prompting the county fire and rescue agency to relaunch the Project Care and Share program, which provides

Narcan to families and loved ones of drug users, so they can save a life in case of an overdose.

The program was initially created in 2019, but was paused because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Brevard was approached by the state to be a part of the CORE network, because it already had the infrastructure in place for it and the county had worked with organizations like the Florida Department of Children and Families to address the opioid crisis, said Orlando Dominguez, junior assistant chief of emergency medical service operations at Brevard County Fire Rescue.

Dominguez said that although the county is only in the beginning stages of implementation, he "absolutely" thinks Brevard will benefit from CORE.

"We know that there's a problem, and we're addressing this no different than our focus on cardiac resuscitation, on heart attacks, on strokes, on trauma," he said. "We're faced with this opioid situation and we're addressing it aggressively to hopefully allow opportunities for recovery for these victims." **CN**

SPONSORED CONTENT

Ramsey County, Minn. resilience tested during COVID-19 response

by Lea Price

For over two years, counties throughout the country have faced unprecedented challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic. Some counties had disaster response experience and access to resources to help them cope. Other counties, especially those without experience with national disaster relief programs, encountered continuity of business and community operations that were complex in nature. By leveraging external assistance and consultancy, emergency management agencies are given the confidence to address and respond to disasters and know that they will prevail when audited and spending records are assessed.

Ramsey County, Minn. is an example of this. Ramsey is the second-most populous county in Minnesota and home to more than 550,000 residents, many of whom are less than resilient disproportionately impacted by disasters, thus leading to longer-term effects and/or slower recovery. Ramsey was at the forefront of the COVID-19 disaster response when it faced a 300 percent increase in unsheltered homeless, an economic crisis and public unrest.

Director of Ramsey County's Emergency Management and Homeland Security division, Judson "Judd" M. Freed, MA, CEM, quickly recognized that the County's COVID-19 response efforts required a significant expansion in capacity. The former New York paramedic knew that the county and its 5,000 staff members would benefit from an outside consulting team to support their preparedness, response and recovery efforts.

Ramsey County's Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division partnered with Tidal Basin Government Consulting for the County's COVID-19 response and recovery and, more recently, the After-Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) and Comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).

"The County team members did the best they could for our people in the most moral and ethical way. We did the right things, maybe not one hundred percent correctly, but we did everything right. We had outside expertise to support and help us navigate the federal funding allocation and AAR support," said Freed.

He also commented on Tidal

Basin's support throughout the pandemic to avoid potential staffing and support pitfalls. "We were able to have someone come in and show us what we did right, what we didn't do right, and how we fix it to avoid the same mishap in the future," continued Freed. He also remarked on the information a consultant such as Tidal Basin provided to the emergency management team and contributed to the County's response and recovery successes.

"We were privileged to work with the Ramsey County, Emergency Management and Homeland Security Department to facilitate their county-wide COVID-19 AAR," remarked Michelle Burnett, Tidal Basin Project Manager.

Burnett noted the county's forward-leaning efforts during the COVID-19 response, as well as the team's culture of transparency and willingness to engage in the after-action process, all contributed to its achievements. "This resulted in the successful completion of the project, identifiable successes, challenges, and areas for improvement across the County structure."

Lea Price is senior director of Marketing for Tidal Basin.

GET TO KNOW...

Saline County, Mo.

Welcome, Saline County, Mo.!

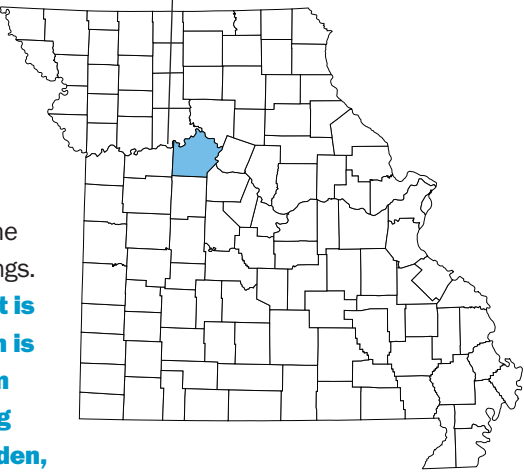
First established in 1820, Saline County was named for the region's salt springs. **The county seat is Marshall, which is home to the Jim the Wonder Dog Museum & Garden, whose namesake was a Llewellyn setter said to have the ability to predict the winner of the Kentucky Derby and the sex of unborn babies.**

Saline County measures about 767 square miles and its population, according to the 2020 Census, is just under 23,000. Located along the Missouri River, the county is part of the Big Muddy National Fish Wildlife Refuge, which is a 17,000-acre restoration effort for natural floodplain conditions and habitat for the river's wildlife. It was established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service following the monthslong Great Flood

of 1993.

The Saline County Fairgrounds hosts the annual Missouri State Corn Husking Championship, which is set for the end of September. The goal of the competition is to husk as many ears of corn, in a timeframe ranging from 10 to 30 minutes, as cleanly as possible. Points are deducted when competitors leave an excess of husks on the ground, so many use husking hooks, which are essentially leather straps with a blade, for efficiency.

"Get to Know" features new NACo member counties.



BEHIND THE SEAL

ST. FRANCOIS COUNTY, Mo.



Established by the state legislature in 1821, St. Francois County, Mo. was named for the St. Francis River, which is said to have been named by early settlers in honor of St. Francis of Assisi.

Prior to gaining notoriety on the rating and discussion website Reddit in January, the St. Francois County seal was a gray circle featuring a bald eagle in front of the U.S. flag, surrounded by a pickax, a shovel, the Bible, a cross and a map of the county, with "The Great Seal of St. Francois County" and "In God we trust" lettered across the edges. It was designed in 2018 by the county's presiding commissioner, Harold Gallaher.

After it was uploaded to Reddit, the seal received more than 17,000 "up votes" and comments poking fun at its design, which prompted the county to hold a contest for a new seal. Out of 264 entries across 35 states, Farmington, Mo. resident Bryan Finch's design was chosen in April by a committee of anonymous judges. The new seal incorporates some elements of the previous design -- pickaxes, a map of the county and "In God We Trust" are still featured --- but it has a more cohesive feel.





Photo by Robin Woltman flickr



finally!

NACo swag is now available online!

naco.org/store

Would you like to see your county seal featured? Contact Meredith Moran at mmoran@naco.org.

PROFILES IN SERVICE

CLAUDIA HUGGINS TUCK, LCSW

NACo Board Member
Director,
Community Support Services
Alachua County, Fla.



TUCK

Number of years active in NACo: 12

Years in public service: 18

Education: Master of Social Work degree from Florida State University and bachelor's degree from the University of Delaware majoring in International Relations and Sociology

Occupation: Social worker by profession; currently director of Community Support Services for Alachua County.

The hardest thing I've ever done: Say goodbye to my mother as she passed suddenly when I was a teenager.

Three people (living or dead) I'd invite to dinner: My mother, Eleanor Roosevelt and Mother Theresa

You'd be surprised to learn that I: Was adopted and spent the first five months of my life in an orphanage.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: Accept my current position in Alachua County, leaving behind 35-plus years in Palm Beach County — family and close friends, moving to an unknown territory and being a Seminole in Gator territory to boot!

My favorite way to relax is: To sit on my porch reading, while also looking at the activity on the lake and the birds in the yard.

I'm most proud of: My children — how they have grown and are contributing in their fields.

Every morning I read: The local and national news postings as well as emails.

My favorite meal is: Almost anything with peanut butter.

My pet peeves are: Dishonesty and lack of follow-through.

My motto is: Let it go and move on.

The last book I read: "Not Impossible"

My favorite movie is: "The Sound of Music"

My favorite music is: Contemporary Christian

My favorite U.S. president is: Franklin Delano Roosevelt

My county is a NACo member because: Of the ability to learn from the work of others, share ideas, participate in advocacy and advance issues of concern.

A dream I have is to: Become fluent in Spanish

Un sueño que tengo es: Ser fluido en Español

ON THE MOVE

NACo OFFICERS

● President **Denise Winfrey**, Executive Director **Matt Chase**, Legislative Director **Jessica Jennings** and Membership Director **Kim Hall** attended the Texas Association of Counties Legislative Conference, held Aug. 30-Sept. 1 in Travis County.

NACo STAFF

● **Carolina Buitrago** has joined NACo as senior program manager for Resilient Economies and Communities in the Counties Futures Lab. She previously worked as Open Streets program manager for the District Department of Transportation and Main Streets program director for District Bridges in Washington, D.C. She earned a master's degree in International Development and Social Change from Clark University and a bachelor's degree in Anthropology from the University of South Florida.

● **Meredith Moran** has joined NACo as a *County News* junior staff writer. She previously interned at *Slate Magazine* and *Henrico Citizen* newspaper while earning a bachelor's degree in Journalism from the University of Richmond.

● **Moah Pollas** has joined NACo as a membership associate. He previously worked in several positions for District Derp and earned a bachelor's degree in Political Science from Howard University.

● **Lucy Umoetok** has joined NACo as a staff accountant. She previously worked as a financial planner, senior finance officer and accounts receivable representative. She earned a bachelor's degree in Accounting Management.

● Associate Program Director **Rashida Brown** was recently named one of 22 Aspen Institute Ascend Fellows. Ascend Fellows work across sectors to drive early learning, racial equity and family wellbeing. They focus on reinventing systems of care and learning with research that changes the course for policies and practices directly affecting communities.

● Chief Government Affairs Officer **Mark Ritacco** and Legislative Director **Blaire Bryant** attended the New York State Association of Counties Fall Seminar held Sept. 19-21 in Erie County.

● Government Affairs Director **Eryn Hurley** attended the Council of Southern County Associations Annual Conference, held Sept. 14-16 in Chatham County, Ga.



Buitrago



Moran



Pollas



Umoetok



Brown



Karon

● Legislative Director **Mike Matthews** attended the National Association for County Community and Economic Development Annual Conference held Sept. 20-22 in El Paso County, Colo.

● Legislative Director **Rachel Mackey** attended the recent County Commissioners Association of Ohio Human Services Symposium in Montgomery County.

● Senior Program Manager **Samantha Karon** presented on the NACo Opioid Solutions Center Aug. 22 at the Wisconsin Counties Association Opioid Abatement Summit in Portage County.

● Research Associate **Sarah Edwards** attended the International Association of Assessing Officers Annual Conference, held Aug. 28-31 in Suffolk County, Mass.

● **Ritacco** and Associate Membership Director **John Losh** attended the Maryland Association of Counties Summer Conference held Aug. 16-19 in Worcester County.

● **Jennings** attended the Association of Minnesota Counties Fall Policy Conference held Sept. 14-16 in Douglas County.

● **Mackey** attended the American Public Human Services Association Economic Mobility Summit, held Aug. 14-16 and a co-located anti-hunger summit in Chatham County, Ga.

● **Hurley** and **Losh** attended the Iowa State Association of Counties Annual Conference held Aug. 24-26 in Polk County.

● **Brown** spoke Sept. 14 on a national Pritzker Children's Initiative panel, "Fireside Chat with Membership Associations of Public Officials" representing state and local elected officials and the private sector, in Baltimore City, Md.

● **Brown** also spoke recently on a National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers panel, also in Baltimore.

WORD SEARCH

HUERFANO COUNTY, Colo.
Created by: Charlie Ban

O I D U G N J H T F K P H O F B E Q Z I
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ATENCIO: Francis Xavier Atencio, also known as “X Atencio,” was an animator and Imagineer for the Walt Disney Company. He is perhaps best known for writing scripts and song lyrics for Disney theme park attractions including Pirates of the Caribbean and the Haunted Mansion. When you hear “Yo Ho (A Pirate’s Life For Me)” you are experiencing the work of X Atencio.

COUNTRY: The Spanish Peaks Country brand signifies it being a place for activities such as mountain climbing, hiking, hunting, fishing, golf and many other activities.

FORD: American outlaw Robert Ford, best known for assassinating Jesse James, lived in a home in the county that still stands at 302 W. 7th St. in Walsenburg.

FRANCISCO: Fort Francisco is the last standing adobe fort in the state of Colorado. Col. Francisco founded a trading post at the foot of the Spanish Peaks in Colorado territory in 1862 which is now known at the Francisco Fort Museum.

GARDNER: Gardner is a town in the county named after the son of a Massachusetts governor, Herbert Gardner.

HUERFANO: Huerfano County was one of the original 17 counties created by the Territory of Colorado on Nov. 1, 1861.

HUAJATOLLA: Huajatolla is a Comanche word meaning double mountain and/or “Breasts of the Earth.” Also known as the Spanish Peaks.

LATHROP: Lathrop State Park, located approximately three miles west of Walsenburg, provides a swim/beach area, walking trail around the lake, two lakes for fishing and camping and access to the Walsenburg Golf Course.

LIBRE: Spanish word that means free, however used in terms of liberation and liberty.

ORPHAN: Huerfano is a Spanish word meaning “orphan.”

PEAKS: Nobody knows for certain where the local common reference “Spanish Peaks” originated.

PLAZA: Walsenburg was originally settled under the name of La Plaza de Los Leones in 1859 by Don Miguel Antonio de Leon. The translation from Spanish to English is Plaza of the Lions.

SPANKY: This was the nickname for George Robert Phillips McFarland, who lived in Walsenburg and helped to convert the old American Legion fairgrounds to Fiesta Park.

VETA: The town of La Veta gets its name from the Spanish word for “the vein.” Interesting historical note: On Nov. 8, 1913 a miner by the name of William Gambling refused to join the 1913–1914 United Mine Workers of America strike, resulting in a volley of gunfire killing five people, however Gambling was not one of them. This was part of the early stages of the Colorado Coalfield War.

WALSENBURG: The county seat, originally settled under the name of Plaza de Los Leones, was later named Walsenburg after an early settler by the name of Fred Walsen.



UPCOMING EVENTS



For more information, visit www.naco.org/events



2022 FALL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING & LUCC SYMPOSIUM
November 30-December 2
Will County, Illinois



2023 LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE
February 11-14
Washington, D.C.



2023 WESTERN INTERSTATE REGION CONFERENCE
May 17-19
Washington County, Utah



2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPOSITION
July 21-24
Travis County/Austin, Texas

BRIGHT IDEAS CHESTERFIELD COUNTY, Va.

Pandemic Prompts County to Create Teen Mental Health Media Campaign

PROBLEM:

The COVID-19 pandemic increased feelings of isolation, anxiety and depression in youth and parents weren't equipped to deal with it.

SOLUTION:

Provide resources for youth seeking support in a way that appeals to them and encourage parents to have broader conversations around mental health with their children.

by **Meredith Moran**
staff writer

Amidst a mental health crisis among youth exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, Chesterfield County's Communications and Media and Mental Health Support Services teamed up with the Youth Citizen Board (YCB) to create a media campaign, "Mental Health Is a Puzzle, But We Have the Missing Piece," targeted at Chesterfield teens and parents.

Anxiety, depression and eating disorders in teens increased during the pandemic, and according to a CDC survey, 44 percent of high school students reported persistent sadness or hopelessness.

A primary goal of Chesterfield County's campaign was to broaden the conversation around all aspects of mental health, not just suicide prevention, said Melissa Ackley, Chesterfield Mental Health Support Services' prevention services manager.

"Even before the pandemic, we've heard from youth, 'you train us on how to recognize or respond to signs of suicide, and that's great, but we're struggling so much earlier and with so many other things -- we're struggling with anxiety and eating disorders and [other] mental health concerns -- and when the only thing you talk to us about that's mental health-related is if you're having thoughts of suicide, or

you're recognizing thoughts of suicide in someone else, that leads us not to talk about the other things,'" Ackley said.

The YCB is made up of Chesterfield high school students and functions as a way for teens to participate in local government and advise the county's Board of Supervisors on youth-related issues.

Chesterfield's Mental Health Support Services trained the YCB on safe messaging related to mental health and the county's Department of Communications and Media trained the students on the logistics that go into an effective technology campaign. Planning for the campaign started in September 2020 and it ran on social media through April into May 2021 in honor of Mental Health Month.

The aim of the campaign was to reach both students and parents, so content posted on social media channels was tailored to the platform's demographic.

Instagram has a much younger user base, so the campaign's Instagram posts focused on accessing local



and national resources for seeking help, while Facebook attracts an older age group, so the Facebook posts dealt more with encouraging an open dialogue around mental health, said Susan Pollard, director of Chesterfield County's Department of Communications and Media.

"[My generation] didn't grow up talking about mental health," Pollard said. "We didn't grow up thinking, 'Boy, if someone's struggling with mental health issues, you should talk to them and not about them.' Whereas these kids have grown up being really comfortable talking about mental health, and what they were telling us was, 'When we do say something to our parents, they flip out or they cry, or they shut down,' and so part of

what we knew that we needed to do was give parents tools for having those conversations."

With schools operating online due to the pandemic, Chesterfield's Mental Health Support Services saw that parents were struggling to recognize and respond to signs of mental health concerns, Ackley said. The CDC found that teens having a sense of being cared for, supported and belonging at school is important for mental health, but fewer than half of youth reported feeling close to people at school during the pandemic.

"We were seeing this outcry from parents who were used to having the schools be the mental health safety net for their kids," Ackley said.

To expand the message's audience beyond those who already followed the county's social media accounts, posts included the hashtags #BreakTheStigma, #MasterTheMind and #YouAreNotAlone and the YCB utilized traditional media outlets, doing interviews with NBC12, *Richmond Family Magazine* and *Richmond Magazine*.

Three YCB members also co-wrote an op-ed on the importance of teen mental health awareness that was published in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*.

The campaign reached more than 40,000 people across social media platforms, and its potential reach was greater than 212,000 for print media and 550,000 for broadcast. The page view for the YCB's website, which directed users to mental health resources, increased by 18,000 percent.

"Something that has been heavily emphasized to me over the past year is how important constituent voice is," Ackley said.

"I think so much of what made us successful is that we weren't just listening to the people that we wanted to serve, we were involving them in creating and implementing it, which is why the campaign made its mark." **CN**

Chesterfield County, Va. won the NACo 2022 Best in Category Achievement Award in Civic Education and Public Information.



CALIFORNIA

The **LOS ANGELES COUNTY** Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to **waive citizenship requirements for government jobs**. The exception to the motion is for positions in which being a U.S. citizen is required by state and federal law, including Los Angeles County Sheriff jobs and any county-appointed position for peace officers. Los Angeles County Public Defender Ricardo Garcia said in a statement that cultural, racial, ethnic and religious barriers oppose the county's core values.

"This motion, by Supervisors [Hilda] Solis and [Sheila] Kuehl, will promote equity in hiring and give the Public Defender's Office access to the most qualified applicants for employment, irrespective of their citizenship status," Garcia said. "An immigrant's experience will advance our vision, mission and values to protect our clients' legal and human rights and enable us to more readily realize my goal that our employees fully represent the demographics of the population that we serve."

COLORADO

BOULDER COUNTY's Navigating Disaster program has gone digital, launching a website for those affected by last year's Marshall Fire and seeking disaster relief help. The site creates an easy process for those in need of support to make appointments with a recovery navigator, who helps with a variety of services, including connecting individuals and families with legal and insurance claim advisors and referrals to mental health services. The program is funded by Boulder County and the Community Foundation of Boulder County's Wildfire Fund.

"Recovering from a disaster can take a toll both mentally and physically," Katie Arrington, Boulder County's assistant disaster recovery manager, said in a statement. "Those impacted by the Marshall Fire know there is a lot of paperwork, procedures to follow, and deadlines to make, all while trying to manage the needs of their everyday life. We want to help relieve that bur-

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION



Photo courtesy of Brunswick County, N.C.

den as much as possible."

FLORIDA

• **LEE COUNTY** has implemented two programs, The Low-Income Home Water Assistance Program and the Low-Income Home Energy Program, to cover **past-due water and electric bills** of county residents whose income is at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level. The assistance programs are the county's response to inflation and rising costs and are projected to benefit around 5,000 families.

• **LEON COUNTY** is install-

ing **menstrual product dispensers** in county facilities, including the county courthouse, libraries and parks, in an effort to bridge the gap in "period poverty." The dispensers will provide free pads and tampons to accommodate women who might not otherwise be able to afford them. Twenty-one percent of women in the county live at or below the poverty level and one-third of low-income women in the county miss school or work because they don't have access to menstrual products. A local organization, the Oasis Center for Women and Girls, also recently partnered with the Junior League

of Tallahassee on the Giving Sustainability Grant awarded by national non-profit The Pad Project that will provide \$17,000 worth of reusable period underwear to women in the community.



HAWAII

MAUI COUNTY is establishing a "safe sleeping zone," which will allow its **unhoused population to sleep overnight**

in their vehicles on county land. The County Council unanimously approved the bill, which was created as a response to rising housing costs and limited shelter space. The one-year pilot program is set to launch as early as October and the preferred site will be The J. Walter Cameron Center, which provides meeting space for social service agencies and is near Maui Memorial Medical Center and the Maui Police Station.

MISSOURI

The **JEFFERSON COUNTY** Health Department has secured \$700,000 in local, state and federal grants for a pilot program that includes making **mental health support** accessible to students, KSDK-TV reported. A waiver signed by parents or guardians allows students to take a mental health self-screening tool. Based on their answers, students receive a risk level. After screening is completed, a counselor is alerted, who connects students with appropriate resources.

NEBRASKA

MERRICK COUNTY first responders are better equipped to encounter someone on the

GEORGIA

FULTON COUNTY'S solution to a lack of **affordable housing?** A neighborhood of tiny homes. The county is devoting \$1 million in funds from the American Rescue Plan Act to build six to eight homes smaller than 500 square feet on a half-acre of county land. Prior to the 6-0 Fulton County Commissioner vote in favor of the pilot program, Chairman Rob Pitts said, "These tiny homes are a thing of the future. [This is] an opportunity for us to



set an example nationally for other local governments to follow." Tiny house initiatives created with the purpose of

combating housing insecurity have also popped up in Ventura County, Calif. and Bozeman, Mont.

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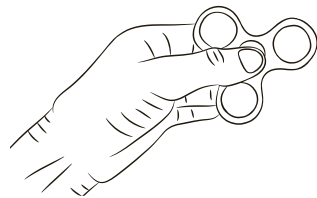
NORTH CAROLINA

A **BRUNSWICK COUNTY** Library program will give children a chance to **practice reading aloud** to an eager audience: a therapy dog named Bailey.

Books for Bailey aims to improve children's confidence and literacy skills during occasional events held at various branch locations. Children also receive a sticker showing that they have read to Bailey, a 9-year-old Collie who has served as a therapy dog for seven years.

"Read to a Dog" programs are a great asset to reluctant readers and other students who just need that confidence boost," said Library Director Patricia Dew. "The children who are able to participate here are gaining reading and literacy skills that will benefit them throughout life."

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autism spectrum thanks to a donation from the Autism Action Partnership. The organization donated 16 sensory kits to the county—one for every sheriff's vehicle and ambulance. The kits include a laminated communication card, headphones, sunglasses, stress ball and fidget toys.

NEW JERSEY

• **CAMDEN COUNTY** is offering \$1,000 in relief funding to **caregivers** from a \$1 million allocation of its American Rescue Plan Act funding.

Eligible caregivers provide hands-on, direct assistance including functional living skills and basic care needs, like feeding and toileting; perform a low- or moderate-income position including care attendant, caregiver, home health aide, hospice aide, institutional attendant or nurse aide; work in institutional settings (nursing homes and hospitals,) assisted living facilities, independent living arrangements, group residential homes, schools for individuals with special needs, adult and youth day programs and/or private homes.

OHIO

Several **STARK COUNTY** agencies are providing support and legal counsel for families, in an effort to keep children out of the **foster care system**.

Dubbed Boosting Understanding, Interventions and Legal Defense or B.U.I.L.D., it is a collaboration between Job & Family Services, Family Court, the public defender's office, Community Legal Aid Services and Stark County Family Council.

The program provides custodial parents with an attorney at no cost in the early stages of a child welfare case, while the child remains in the home, *The Repository* reported. Parents also receive support in

NEW JERSEY

• **BURLINGTON COUNTY** launched a program called **LIFT UP: Lunches & Infor-**



developing and progressing on their case plan. The state Supreme Court is funding the project, along with similar pilot programs in **SUMMIT, WAYNE, CLARK, ERIE** and **CUYAHOGA counties**.

TEXAS

DALLAS COUNTY is helping low-income, first-time homebuyers master the process with a **home-buying seminar**. The Upfront Cost Assistance Program is a collaboration between the county's Home Loan Counseling Center and Health and Human Services department.

The Upfront Cost Assistance Program provides an eight-hour home buying seminar for low-income, first-time home buyers. Topics include financing, selecting a Realtor, understanding title companies and more. Applicants who meet certain financial requirements

mation For Tenants and Underserved Populations. County staff last month connected with more than 150

residents at a lunch session to assist them with a wide range of issues and provided information about available assistance, including SNAP benefits, mortgage and rental aid, utility and home repair assistance and the county's first-time homebuyer program.

The county's Department of Human Services planned the events — a series of lunches throughout the county — as an extension of the services offered by the County Housing Hub.

can receive help with a down payment, a loan that is forgiven if the resident lives in the home for at least five years.



VIRGINIA

The thing about **e-bikes, scooters and other micro-mobility devices** is that however easy it is to pick one up and get going, it's just as easy to leave them anywhere, including spread across sidewalks. **ARLINGTON COUNTY** is installing 100 special street parking spaces for shared conveyances in an effort to control the proliferation of used devices.

The hitching posts include six spaces around three bike racks, all tucked away out of the path of vehicles and without removing any parking spaces, *ArlingtonNow* reported.

WASHINGTON

The **KING COUNTY** Council approved the **Free Youth Transit Pass**, which will allow all county residents under the age of 19 to ride public transit for free. That age group previously paid \$1.50 per ride.

WISCONSIN

• The **BROWN COUNTY** jail is creating a reading program for children to spend quality time with their parents, remotely. The **"Making Reading**

Memories" project is a partnership between counties and Literacy Link — a University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension, program.

Interested parents, who are legally able to be in contact with their children, take a class explaining the program and the significance of reading to kids. Parents choose an age-appropriate book and record their reading of the story. Once their recording is viewed and approved by jail administration, the recording and a copy of the book are sent to their child if the child's caregiver permits the child to view the video.

• With staffing demands threatening **early childcare** operations, **CALUMET COUNTY** is offering six quality support specialists to come to their aid. The Early Childhood Stabilization Program uses \$700,000 in American Rescue Plan Act money, in collaboration with Child Care Resource and Referral Fox Valley, to offer help with a variety of needs, *The Post Crescent* reported.

The program offers free classes that are required for any assistant or lead teacher, offered sign-on bonuses, tuition discounts for children of childcare providers and other benefits that reduce costs for childcare businesses, while helping them recruit or train employees.

Charlie Ban and Meredith Moran compile News From Across the Nation. Does your county have news we should know about? Contact cban@naco.org and mmoran@naco.org.

ILLINOIS

SANGAMON COUNTY'S plans for The Double Black Diamond Solar Project are in motion and construction for the 4,100-acre **solar panel plant** is set to begin later this year. The plant is estimated to power 85,000 homes throughout the state, get all of Chicago's facilities on renewable energy by 2025 and create 1,000 jobs during construction. It will also benefit local schools and the community through its tax revenue, Sangamon County Board Chairman Andy Van Meter said in a press release.



'We can't really afford to let it fail, because these are our kids in our communities'

From CONSORTIUM page 7

I can't really run a strong girls program or I can't run a strong sex offender program. So, for those kids, I'm going to want to broker that out to another county that is doing that."

Sonoma County has agreed to provide a regional program for sex offenders and will sign contracts with individual counties, Richart said.

"That's one thing the Consortium is going to do is help figure out what those contracts look like and streamline them so they're consistent and it's not, you know, 'El Dorado County is contracting with Sonoma and that looks one way, and then Amador is going to contract with San Diego and that looks like a whole other thing,'" he said. "We're going to bring consistency to it so there's consistency in the resources being offered and the way that money is changing hands and the way that kids are being treated. We don't want

there to be a 'justice by geography' thing."

One of the first goals the Consortium has worked on is putting together a template memorandum of understanding (MOU), which is a formal agreement used to coordinate inter-agency work, so that counties don't have to start from scratch each time they want to contract or share a service, Pank said.

"Like, how can we break down some of those barriers so that we're not recreating the wheel every time something comes up?" Pank said. "But it gives counties a tool to start, and it gives counties a place to problem-solve on some of these very specific issues that pop up as we are moving into this more decentralized service system."

Two California counties, Los Angeles and Shasta, are not

part of the Consortium. The primary reason for that is because of how many resources they already have, Pank said.

"L.A. has a lot of their own resources, a lot of their own politics and a lot of their own ability to probably solve a lot of these problems on their own," Pank said. "So it wasn't that they opposed the [Consortium] — in fact they do work with us collaboratively within CPOC and CSAC contexts. They're very supportive, I think it just wasn't as necessary."

"Shasta's a little bit in the same boat too — they have a great facility and they have a lot of programming that they've already put in place."

Although Los Angeles County might have more resources than other counties, it's still facing challenges with the shift to a county-led system, partic-

ularly with staffing, said Helen Chavez, assistant chief of staff of communications for Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger.

"My boss, Supervisor Barger, has been a big proponent of providing holistic mental health support, recuperative care types of services — addressing trauma and substance abuse addiction, disorders," Chavez said. "All of that takes people power and making sure there's enough probation staff and multidisciplinary staff available. So, there are dollars set aside, but even when you set aside dollars, getting the bodies to fill the positions is another challenge that a probation department is trying to find its way through."

Moving forward, counties receiving sustainable funding, taking into account data and having both authority and flexibility in crafting their local system will be key factors, Knaus said.

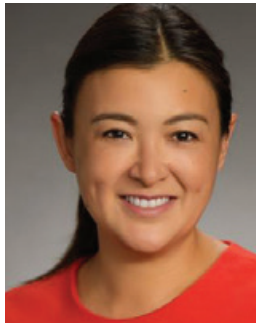
"What's the success rate?

How do we define success? Are the outcomes improved over what they would have been at the state? Are they the same? Are things going backwards? Understanding that is really important," Knaus said.

Although CPOC and the counties opposed the transfer, now the priority looking ahead is making sure it has the best outcome as possible for youth, Pank said.

"Our concern continues to be the unanswered question — Will we continue to get the support? And will people listen to the experts in the system, which we contend are counties and probation specifically in this case," Pank said. "We think it does have the potential to be a success and better for youth."

"The way in which it was done didn't set us up for success, but we do think we might be able to turn the ship, and that's what we're trying to do now ... we can't really afford to let it fail because these are our kids in our communities." **CN**



Wong-Hernandez

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