

HUMAN SERVICES AND EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

Every county in the United States administers and funds part of the cost of caring for and protecting and enhancing families. The Human Services and Education Association of Counties (NACo) exists to support counties in this work. Expenditures vary widely from state to state, but human services and health expenditures are a significant part of county budgets.

NACo supports a broad, comprehensive array of services for families, children, people with disabilities and the elderly. Social services, public health, preventive services, early childhood development, parent education and support, childcare, and other services that support families also strengthen communities throughout our country.

Poverty is a national problem and requires a national solution. Federal government must recognize that poverty is influenced by national economic factors that go beyond local or state governments.

Families in poverty usually need support services to become self-sufficient. Childcare, Medicaid, mental health and substance use disorder coverage, food assistance, services claims representation and work programs are supports that often are needed. Requirements in these programs should be flexible and coordinated with a seamless range of services.

Programs mandated by the federal government should be fully federally funded. New programs do not duplicate existing state and local efforts; the federal government should provide adequate time to implement major changes to prevent disruptions in programs.

New federal programs should be integrated with an appropriate, existing state and local system. Congress should encourage coordination with state and local governments, including citizen input, such as advisory committees to oversee program development and implementation, to avoid duplication of state and local coordinating efforts.

- Are there other models that may provide better outcomes?
- Have local elected officials been consulted?
- Has there been collaboration between federal, state, and local agencies?
- Does it limit local and state flexibility to be responsive to community needs?

Counties are the front-line providers of basic social services; we seek to ensure local administrative flexibility and federal and state standards to provide services to children and families.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAMS

Self-sufficiency programs are meant to be a temporary safety net for families experiencing unemployment, underemployment or have other barriers to employment.

- A. Block Grants for Entitlement Programs:** NACo believes that the federal government is responsible for adequately funding its entitlement programs. NACo opposes federal funding caps for federal assistance programs such as SNAP, Medicaid, and housing. Capped block grants in these programs would shift the full cost of these programs to states and counties. NACo also opposes reductions in administrative funding for these programs, which would result in unfunded mandates to counties and states.
- B. Block Grants for Categorical Programs:** NACo recognizes strong local government as an essential component and partner in the effective operation of national and state programs. Local governments are often best equipped to administer these programs; therefore, there must be assured an effective role in the development and implementation of these programs.

NACo supports consolidating existing categorical grant programs in order to improve flexibility and program delivery at the local level. Human services programs should follow the following principles:

- Programs should be controlled by elected county officials responsible for the program.
- Federal block grant proposals must be developed in close consultation with local government.

C. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF): The success of TANF programs depends on the flexibility to target local needs and support participants' work activities. Without the funding to implement it, the working families who are struggling need more supportive services and many will fall back on cash assistance. Welfare reform is about supporting working families in gaining self-sufficiency, not a one-size-fits-all approach to the welfare rolls.

Many TANF participants who find work continue to need assistance with transportation, counseling and other support services such as child care and health care. TANF programs must be able to react quickly to economic downturns and other emergencies. TANF programs need reserves that states can tap quickly.

- 1. Funding:** TANF should have an annual inflation increase, including high-growth states. The TANF state entitlement block grant structure should be maintained without carve-outs or set-asides. The funding level for the TANF block grant should be increased. NACo supports new funding for research and dissemination of best practices and information.
- 2. Flexibility:** States, counties, and Native American tribes should have the ability to use TANF funds on any allowable use of TANF. This would include transferring TANF funds to SSBG.
- 3. Participation Requirements and Work Activities:** NACo opposes mandatory counterproductive work and participation requirements and supports mutually negotiated outcome measures in which states are judged on their progress in achieving these goals. NACo supports greater flexibility in the TANF program to allow counties and states to meet the individual needs of their participants. These measures are not limited to, the following:

- A 50 percent work participation rate for two-parent and single-parent families
- Thirty hours of work a week for two-parent and single-parent families

- Allowing vocational education and high school equivalency programs to count toward work participation rates;
 - Exempting adults who are the primary caregivers of a child from the work requirements; and
 - Allowing a parent providing child care in a two-parent family to be exempt from the requirement.
- 4. Time Limits:** For time-limited assistance to be successful, it must be supported by federal and state funding for a wide continuum of supportive services that lead individuals toward self-sufficiency. NACo supports preserving and increasing state funds for administering the federal time limits. This includes allowing states to exempt the recipient participates in work and/or specific work activities, substance abuse treatment, behavioral health and domestic violence services in a case management or employability plan; and eliminating child care, transportation, and other costs of assistance.

NACo supports the twenty percent hardship exemption and the federal waiver of the TANF time limit. Victims of sexual assault should be added to the list of individuals who can be allowed to lift the lifetime ban on TANF eligibility for individuals with a felony conviction.

- 5. Maintenance of Effort:** Current law is unclear on the ability of states to increase funding with federal TANF funds, and under what circumstances states can increase existing state-funded programs. Once a state or county has established its Maintenance of Effort (MoE) for a given fiscal year, it should be able to draw on its TANF dollars for that year at any time. Unspent funds should be used for other allocations. Obligated funds should be treated and reported as state funds. These provisions must be clarified so that replacement of state dollars with federal dollars is prohibited, but allow using federal dollars to increase the coverage of the program above current state spending levels.

- 6. Teen Parents:** Teen parents in particular are at great risk of long-term economic hardship.

marriage promotion outcomes. NACo supports funding and discussion of these subjects.

9. Partial Credit: Many families, particularly those with special needs, have difficulty meeting participation requirements. Under current law, no credit is given for participation that falls short by as little as one hour. Counties and states should be allowed to give credit for the hours that these families participate.

10. Phasing-Out Benefits: A single dollar increase in TANF's income threshold can make a family ineligible for benefits and can serve as a disincentive to work. States should be allowed to gradually phase-out cash benefits as the family's income increases.

D. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): The SNAP program provides supplemental assistance funding to low income families and individuals to support adequate eating habits. SNAP is critical to struggling families and households. It is a countercyclical federal program because benefits can reach families during economic downturns as well as natural disasters. The program serves diverse populations and needs, and is administered by counties in a variety of states across the country. Moving a SNAP reauthorization in conjunction with a reauthorization of the federal budget is a priority.

1. Program and Funding Structure: NACo supports the current SNAP program and funding structure, including maintaining the 50 percent federal funding level. Given that counties contribute to the administrative costs of the SNAP program in non-administered states, SNAP should not be block granted, since such a change would add additional strain on both recipients and state and local governments. In states, SNAP is indeed a very responsive countercyclical program that has seen increases in SNAP participants during the great recession in the past. Block granting would seriously undermine that responsiveness, resulting in less access to food and further weakening the economy since SNAP is administered quickly and locally. Moreover, counties would see shifts in costs if the already low benefit is reduced under a block grant.

- b. For Recipients:** Congress and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (FNS) should work to reduce “churn” – the rolling out of individuals from the SNAP program – in the SNAP program, which can be a burden on individuals alike. Administration and application processes should be streamlined to reduce the burden of reapplying for benefits to enter a streamlined process, reducing the time between application and receiving benefits while also reducing administrative costs.
- 3. Importance to Children:** Proper nutrition is crucial to high quality education and ensures children are mentally and physically prepared to learn. SNAP benefits for families should be at an adequate level so that children can thrive.
- 4. Work Requirements and Time Limits:** NACo opposes arbitrary work and participation requirements and supports a strong county role in determining measures in which states are judged by their progress toward achieving their goals. NACo supports greater flexibility in the SNAP work requirements in order to better meet the individual needs of their caseloads.
 - a. SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) Program:** NACo supports the SNAP E&T program for individuals to find and secure long-term employment and training. NACo acknowledges the reality that for time-limited assistance to be effective, it must be accompanied by adequate federal and state funding for a robust program. The SNAP E&T program should receive more realistic funding levels from the federal government to ensure states and counties have the proper resources to help individuals find work and remaining employed, including increased funding for SNAP E&T. SNAP E&T is an employment program. SNAP E&T should be integrated with existing workforce programs at the federal, state and local levels, and supported by workforce development boards.
 - b. Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs):** NACo supports increasing reimbursement rates for employment programs, NACo supports reducing the time for ABAWDs and making the work requirements more flexible. NACo supports employment programs that are short term, and individuals who are not eligible for SNAP benefits.

6. **Phasing-out of benefits:** Recipients of federal benefits programs as they gain employment – the boundary line at which point individuals are given their rise in income. NACo urges Congress to consider grant programs, including SNAP, to ease the transition from benefits to employment.
 7. **Rural Solutions:** NACo urges Congress and the Food and Nutrition Assistance Administration to address the specific obstacles rural communities face in ensuring healthy eating habits in rural areas, which often lack access to healthy food. Rural populations and rural counties should be afforded additional flexibility in the SNAP program to help combat these challenges.
 8. **Use of Technology:** Among federal benefits programs, SNAP is a leader in the use of technology and simplification of benefits, including the use of SNAP EBT cards. NACo should continue to play a leading role in developing technology and streamlining administration more seamless. By pioneering advances at the federal level, NACo can streamline in states and local jurisdictions across the country.
 9. **Program Integrity:** NACo supports the goals of maintaining local control within the SNAP program. Counties believe that a federal commitment to program integrity, increased technological advances, and additional flexibility in the program issues (including program churn) will help achieve this goal.
- E. **Supplemental Security Income (SSI):** SSI benefits and resource limits are impacted by inflation. A significant number of persons, including the homeless, are not in the program, do not participate. Congress and the administration should:
- Consider the impact that changes to SSI will have on county general assistance and care programs;
 - Provide benefits to individuals who receive care in county-owned facilities;
 - Reevaluate payment levels to ensure SSI recipients are provided with a basic standard of living;
 - Reevaluate the asset limit to reflect inflation;

greater success in the future. Other advantages include early detection of problems, higher educational achievement, preventing juvenile delinquency, parental involvement in school programs, and reduced teen pregnancy. Research practices demonstrate investment in early childhood development prevents chronic health care services, utilization of child welfare programs, juvenile justice, and public assistance. NACo supports federal initiatives to help counties expand voluntary early childhood and parent education programs. They include:

- **Head Start/Early Head Start:** Congress should provide adequate funding for programs such as Head Start/Early Head Start, to ensure that needed social services are available to disadvantaged pre-school children with disabilities. Early Head Start, in particular, deserves stronger support so that their caregivers can take advantage of the program's continuum of services.
- **Educational Coordination:** NACo supports strengthened coordination between school programs with county agencies that provide related services. NACo further supports coordination between child care programs to provide full-day, continuous care at a single location. Better coordination and resources are needed to ensure that the gains made by Head Start are not lost.
- **Nutrition and Food Support:** Adequate nutrition not only prevents illness but also helps children improve their ability to learn. The Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) and the Feeding Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) are components of the continuum of services needed to ensure child development. NACo therefore opposes further cuts to SNAP and WIC.

B. Child Welfare Services: The child's natural family has the primary responsibility to provide each child a safe and nurturing environment. Society must provide resources and supports to safeguard and enhance the ability of all families to do this, it becomes society's responsibility to provide for expeditious, permanent and meet the child's physical, mental, and emotional needs. This is best when governments at all levels collaborate in their efforts to resoundingly support health and wholeness.

NACo believes that systems that protect abused and neglected children require a continuum of care, including a broad array of preventive services. When necessary, kinship placements must be thoroughly explored before a child is placed in foster care. Counties should be afforded flexibility in designing services that best meet the needs of children and communities.

1. Foster Care, Kinship Care, Guardianship and Adoption Assistance All situations should be available and sufficiently funded to provide for the needs of children. NACo strongly opposes block grants and/or funding formulas. NACo strongly supports the following:

- Modernizing the eligibility determination system by linking the 1996 Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) with the Child Welfare system, developing a financing system that responds to a child's immediate needs;
- Acknowledging the role that counties play in the foster care system by consulting county officials in the development and implementation of policy at the state level;
- Enhancing county and state flexibility to provide supportive services to foster families, including preventing unnecessary removal from the home for children;
- Using Title IV-E funds for subsidized kinship guardianship and adoption services both prospectively and retroactively;
- Allowing Medicaid to cover more than life threatening care for neglected and abused or neglected undocumented children in state custody. At a minimum, targeted case management associated with abused or neglected children is required by federal policy pertaining to foster children who are in state custody;
- Allowing counties and states to include reunification and adoption assistance within the definition of IV-E Foster Care maintenance payments;
- Allowing IV-E Adoption Assistance funds to be used for post-adoption services for children as well as subsidies;

vulnerable children. If Congress adopts a capped allocation rather than an open-ended entitlement, NACo recommends the following baseline:

- There must be adequate funding available through the duration of the program;
- Training and welfare information systems must remain separate;
- States should be required to maintain their current level of effort;
- Emergency funds should be flexible and broad enough to allow states to deal with sudden caseload increases;
- Foster care children must remain categorically eligible for Medicaid;
- States that opt to receive the capped allocation must be able to opt back to an open-ended entitlement at any time;
- States should be able to negotiate the funding baseline for a block grant with the federal government;
- States should be allowed to retain the current flexibility to negotiate with counties;
- State associations of counties, in states where counties operate as independent entities, should be consulted and state legislatures must have the right to approve any changes into the capped allocation system.

2. Foster Youth: Research shows that children aging out of foster care have poor outcomes. NACo urges a national “call to action” to raise awareness about children aging out of the foster care system. Additionally, NACo recommends the following measures to improve outcomes for youth aging out of foster care:

- Enable disabled youth receiving federal foster care payments to continue to receive benefits when leaving the foster care system;
- Enhance federal funding for workforce development, housing, job training, programs, mental health, substance abuse services, and transitional services;
- Coordinate and align resources between human services and workforce development, completion of secondary education, gainful sustainable employment, and occupational training.

3. Training and Administration of Foster Care, Kinship Care, and Adoption:

4. Child Protective Services: Federal policy must ensure local capacity for an immediate response to reports of child abuse and must provide a continuum of services systems that are designed to protect children and restore families. States should support the development of an outcomes-based child protection system with benchmarks developed at the local level that will monitor a continuum of services to socio-economic needs and priorities.

C. Child Care: High-quality child care services are needed to ensure the needs of children. Child care policies must recognize that the majority of children are employed at least during a portion of the child's early years. Child care should be available to all public assistance recipients who need it for employment, education, or training. Funding for the Child Care and Development Fund should be increased to meet the needs of eligible families, while maintaining TANF.

Federally funded childcare should be available to working parents and should continue to be available on a fee scale based on their ability to pay. There should be enough federal child care funds to ensure that quality services are available to families with incomes of up to 225 percent of the federal poverty level and for families with lower incomes. Financial support should be made available for infant care, child care for children in foster care, and child care during non-traditional hours when needed.

Public child care resources such as licensing and monitoring of providers and assistance in selecting appropriate care, should be available to all families. State and local licensing laws should be carefully monitored to ensure the safety of facilities and caretakers.

Employers should be given increased financial incentives to provide on-site or as a benefit. The Dependent and Child Care Tax Credit should be expanded.

D. Child Support: It is the right of every child to be supported by both parents.

NACo opposes private sector access to child support data and enforcement.

NACo supports legislation that creates a corrective action plan for states that fail to implement federal child support requirements; restricts penalties to ensure compliance; and allows alternative systems configurations that provide for automated child support payments.

NACo supports legislation to streamline the international enforcement of child support for parents who live outside the United States.

SERVICES TO OLDER AMERICANS

Between 2011 and 2030 the 78 million individuals who were born between 1941 and 1960 will reach the age of 65. This means that the number of older adults in the U.S. will increase significantly. As there will be significantly higher numbers of the elderly, they will also live longer. Those over the age of 85 are already the fastest growing sector of the population. The number of working age people is only increasing by 20 percent and there will be a significant increase in the retired population.

NACo supports a continuum of care for the elderly that provides support so that all persons remain active, productive and independent. These services would include transportation, respite care, housing alternatives, caregiver training, support services, family counseling, daily money management, public conservation services, as well as chore services, personal care, skilled nursing care, and long-term care.

NACo supports federal policies that recognize the role and responsibility of the federal government in assuring necessary and effective services for the elderly, including community-based services. Federal policy should recognize that these costs have increased significantly and facilitate and provide adequate federal funding for county implementation and responsibilities.

A. Older Americans Act: NACo supports the Older Americans Act as a coordinated program of services and opportunities for our older citizens.

Additional flexibility should be provided in Medicare, Medicaid, Veterans Affairs, and other federal programs to encourage and enable the expansion of community-based services and facilities as a means of avoiding unnecessary institutional care.

Informal caregivers should be given support and provided incentives to encourage them to provide support for those in need of services.

Rural counties have a higher percentage of senior citizens than urban counties. It is important for them to have access to in-home and community-based supports efforts to expand these programs in rural areas.

C. Adult Protective Services: Adult Protective Services (APS) vary widely among states. They cover neglect, self-neglect and fiduciary and physical abuse of the elderly. In many states, counties have the responsibility for APS. Unfortunately, the incidence of elder abuse and neglect nationwide although some studies suggest that 10 percent of people ages 60 and older faced some form of elder abuse and a study by the Mature Market Institute and the National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse found that seniors lose at least \$2.5 billion each year to financial abuse. There is a lack of information on the victims and perpetrators of abuse or evidence-based practices. The Elder Justice Act (EJA) is the first federal program designed to combat abuse of older adults. The program was authorized at \$777 million over four years. Local health departments, counties in many states are responsible for adult protective services and funding for the EJA and a federal research strategy.

D. Social Security: As the providers of last resort for health and social services, the interest in preserving the benefits received by the nation's most vulnerable is high. Social Security benefits prevent poverty for people of all ages. NACo supports Social Security, to protect the financial security of current and future generations, especially low-income individuals, the disabled and surviving spouses.

SOCIAL SERVICES

SSBG statutory funding has dwindled over the years from a level above \$1.7 billion, which in reality is lower because it is affected by sequential appropriations. NACo supports restoring the program to the highest level possible. Additionally, NACo supports continued flexibility in the SSBG program and maintaining the authority of TANF funds to SSBG. This flexibility enables states and counties to address their specific local needs and goals.

- B. Services to Individuals with Disabilities:** Counties recognize the importance of self-support, self-reliance, strengthening of family life, and protection of physically, mentally, and developmentally disabled. NACo supports these objectives by removing categorical restrictions that inhibit coordination of services to the disabled.

NACo supports federal action that increases incentives for deinstitutionalization and funds the expansion of community-based services, including the program financial support, to prevent reinstitutionalization. NACo supports individuals with disabilities in all aspects of American life. Federal efforts supplement local efforts to achieve program and facility accessibility and employment opportunity.

- C. Community Action Agencies:** Through its boards involving the private sector and the community, the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) fosters a partnership with counties, states, federal government and community organizations. NACo supports full funding for CSBG.
- D. Domestic Violence:** Domestic violence is a major social problem not only because of its incidence, but also because of its pervasive and self-perpetuating nature. It affects not only spouses, but also individuals in a wide range of living arrangements, including citizens, and those with developmental problems.

Children living in violent homes, whether victims or witnesses, frequently

Eligibility criteria should include renters. It should not discriminate and should not be limited to persons eligible for other federal programs. It should be made to coordinate with other programs in order to simplify the program.

Congress has not always appropriated emergency or contingency funds for the Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). There needs to be a fund that can respond to fluctuations in energy costs, natural disasters and extreme weather.

- F. Assistance for the Homeless:** NACo recognizes the need for a comprehensive approach to homelessness and poverty. A significant federal commitment is needed for services, including housing, mental health services, and substance abuse treatment. The burden for providing care and assistance to the homeless does not fall solely on local counties. NACo endorses the federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, and a commitment for greater cooperation among federal agencies and the states to serve veterans, families, and youth.
- G. Veterans' Services:** NACo strongly supports full funding to qualify for housing, and medical costs. County Veterans Service Officers, who are the primary point of contact for veterans, secure benefits for veterans by collaborating with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Veterans Service Organizations. NACo supports federal financial support for CVSOs providing these benefits services. These services are not limited to individual veterans and often provide cost savings to the federal government that goes back into the local economy. NACo endorses increased investment in ending homelessness, and encourages both the Administration and Congress to use resources targeted to end homelessness among veterans through programs such as the Supported Housing (HUD-VASH) program, Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF), the Grants and Per Diem program. NACo supports a process that is transparent and accountable, and their families, provides appropriate information, and facilitates access to services.

- H. National and Community Service:** The Corporation for National and Community Service and the programs it funds such as VISTA, Foster Grandparents, AmeriCorps, and the National Civilian Community Corps.

- Secures our borders;
- Includes a national strategy for coordination among federal, state, and local governments;
- Establishes a sensible and orderly guest worker program;
- Imposes no unfunded mandates on state and local governments;
- Includes no mandates on counties to enforce immigration laws;
- Preserves the eligibility of legal non-citizens for federally-funded health care and establishes a sustainable funding stream to counties for their cost of providing health care to legal non-citizens who are denied federally-funded health benefits;
- Establishes an earned path to citizenship that includes registering for employment, demonstrating employment, learning English and civics, paying taxes, and completing required education;
- Improves and simplifies the current legal immigration system;
- Provides green cards for science, technology, engineering and mathematics graduates who have received a graduate degree from American universities.

B. Services: Counties traditionally provide health, self-sufficiency programs, and other services to persons residing within their boundaries, regardless of their legal status. To ensure that the federal responsibility, the full cost, including administrative costs, of providing these services to non-citizens should be paid by the federal government rather than by the counties.

The 1996 welfare reform law limited refugee eligibility for SSI to states that have demonstrated supports restoring full SSI eligibility to refugees.

In addition to reimbursing county governments for costs incurred in providing services to refugees, undocumented individuals, and others, the federal government should support enforcement efforts to control illegal immigration.

C. Refugee Program: Refugees should be resettled in a manner that disperses them into a few counties. When making decisions to admit new refugees, the Department should give advance notice of those decisions to the states most likely to be affected by the refugee resettlement.

status and rights of applicants for asylum and their eligibility for federal benefits must be consistent.

The federal government must increase its dialogue with and accountability to state and local governments. NACo opposes any proposal that would transfer funds for refugee assistance to resettlement agencies without proper state agreement. States and counties should have the flexibility to use refugee funds as they see fit to serve populations who have been in the U.S. more than five years.

- D. Unaccompanied Children Crossing the Border:** NACo calls on the federal government to ensure that adequate federal funds are appropriated to shelter and provide medical and mental health assistance, to unaccompanied children crossing the border and to ensure that the services provided to these children are not transferred to counties.

EDUCATION

Education is key to the success of our economy and our ability to attract investment. Furthermore, our quality of life is directly related to a quality education.

Local education systems affect all segments of the community and are the backbone of our programs operated by counties. Regardless of the specific funding arrangements, school districts, they share a common tax base and are both faced with the same challenges.

- A. Elementary and Secondary Education:** Although states have the primary responsibility for elementary and secondary education, it is in the national interest and the public interest to provide financial support. NACo urges Congress to substantially amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to grant greater local flexibility in the use of student aid, to increase the number of interventions for schools not making Adequate Yearly Progress, to address the needs of students with disabilities and students of English as a Second Language. NACo urges Congress to fully fund the law so that states and local education agencies can implement all aspects of the law. Congress should provide increased support to local communities in meeting regulations designed to eliminate discrimination.

should include direct services such as medical appointments and services such as outreach and care coordination activities.

2. **Impacted Areas:** Congress must recognize the burdens placed on a number of federal employees and facilities and must continue to cover the extra costs involved in educating the children of federal employees.
3. **Education for Children with Disabilities:** NACo supports the right to education to all children with disabilities. Congress must keep the full funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and meet the law's requirements.
4. **After-School Programs:** County governments run a variety of programs, including care, mentoring/tutoring and recreational programs. Programs such as Learning Centers should be available directly to counties.
5. **School Construction:** NACo supports efforts to establish federal and local governments finance school repair, renovation, modernization and facilitate the development of community services for children.

B. Adult, Career and Technical Education: The federal government has placed emphasis on the promotion of career technical programs across the educational spectrum. These programs should respond to the needs of the workforce and be coordinated with local self-sufficiency and job training programs. There is inadequate funding for adult education, including English as a Second Language.

C. Higher Education and Financial Aid: According to the American Association of Colleges, there are 986 public community colleges nationwide and 1.5 billion in their revenues. Additionally, several local governments fund four-year colleges. A significant role in community college financial aid due to their lower tuition for low-income students. NACo therefore believes that Pell Grants and other federal programs are vital if this nation is to preserve equal educational opportunity for the fully developed talents of the younger generation. Loans and grants based on economic need and require reasonable levels of self-help.

NACo also supports veterans' and their dependents' utilization of G.I. Bill benefits.

HUMAN SERVICES AND EDUCATION RESOLUTIONS

Resolution to Support Linking 2-1-1 Lines with Substance Use Disorder Crisis Lines

Issue: 2-1-1 lines are not linked to substance use disorder crisis lines, resulting in a separate crisis line.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to enact legislative proposals that appropriate funding to link 2-1-1 lines with substance use disorder crisis lines.

Adopted | July 15, 2020

Resolution Urging Congress and the Administration to Maintain Child Welfare Funding

Issue: In February 2018, Congress passed and President Trump signed the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). The law provides new federal entitlements for child care prevention services meeting stringent best practice benchmarks and standards relating to congregate (group home) care that would reduce federal IV-E waiver requirements for states and counties. The FFPSA did not extend federal IV-E waivers slated to expire in 2019.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the 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 would result from Title IV-E eligibility to children who would remain eligible for state or local child welfare services and adoption assistance. Congress should also provide states and counties with the resources to identify and protect abused and neglected children as done currently under some state laws so that Congress amend and/or HHS mitigate the law's proscriptive provisions relating to congregate care so that states and counties already proceeding with similar efforts are not disadvantaged. Additionally, Congress should extend federal IV-E waiver authority through 2025.

time limits on education and allowing states to use TANF funds to support expenses. NACo supports congressional efforts to measure client outcomes and processes but is concerned that Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is not the best benchmarks to determine programmatic success.

NACo urges Congress to, at a minimum, retain and enhance state flexibility in subsidized employment. Given the demonstrated success of TANF subsidized employment, NACo urges Congress to increase funding for those programs but not at the expense of the TANF block grant or contingency fund. Given that Congress has allocated for the TANF program since its enactment in 1996, NACo urges that any reauthorization includes a provision increasing TANF funds annually at the rate of inflation. NACo supports continuing the ability of states to transfer TANF block grant to the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) in order to respond to such as responding to the opioid crisis. NACo further supports continuing to allow states to utilize TANF block grant funds for childcare expenses for families. Additionally, NACo supports transparency regarding the use of TANF block grant and state “maintenance of effort” requirements.

Adopted | July 15, 2020

Resolution to Minimize the Negative Impacts of Immigration Enforcement on Children

Issue: The need to carry out enforcement of immigration law in a manner that does not increase reliance on local social safety-net services or increase administrative costs for counties.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges that immigration law be enforced in a manner that minimizes negative impacts on children and does not increase reliance on local social safety-net services or create additional administrative costs for counties.

Adopted | July 15, 2020

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports investments in high quality early childhood development, including greater school programs in schools and county-run programs such as home visiting, Early Head Start and high-quality childcare. Additionally, NACo supports intervention entitlements through the Office of Special Education programs.

Adopted | July 15, 2020

Resolution Supporting Two-Generation Efforts to

Issue: Poverty is a national problem and requires a national solution. In the impacts of intergenerational poverty, federal, state and local partners should be addressing these issues.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) encourages and pursue policies that support and enable state and local jurisdictions to coordinate approach to combat poverty. Federal efforts to reform public assistance programs influenced by national economic factors that are not within the control of states that local and state governments are best positioned to help their citizens become flexible and support all generations within a family.

Adopted | July 15, 2020

Resolution to Enact the American Dream and Promise Act

Issue: The National Association of Counties (NACo) should support the enactment of the Act or similar legislation.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) calls upon Congress to enact the American Dream and Promise Act or similar legislation that, if enacted by counties, would allow certain undocumented immigrants who entered the United States for humanitarian reasons to attain legal status if they pass background checks.

Resolution to Support the Development of Pilot Programs for Innovative Social Services Programs that Are Offered through Local Governments

Issue: Local governments are responsible for delivering several federal social services programs. These crucial social services programs help low-income families with cash payments, and provide job training opportunities. Local governments have been required by Congress to deliver specific federal programs. This decentralization of federal programs is often overly complicated, leading to lower program enrollment and less success.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to support legislative and regulatory efforts that would provide additional funding for the development of, and fund pilot/demonstration programs for innovative community-based and workforce training programs that are offered through local governments. This funding would go directly to local governments, which are responsible for increasing the efficiency of delivery of federal social services programs through the use of technology and centralized community resource centers, which allow for the delivery of federal social services in a single location, reducing the burden on the counties and ensuring effective allocation of federal resources.

Adopted | July 15, 2020

Resolution Supporting Full Funding of Title I and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Issue: For over 50 years, the federal government has significantly underfunded Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, leaving inadequate resources to our most at-risk youth.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports the National Association of Counties urging Congress to fiscally meet its obligation to fully fund Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) over the next five years.

for their child; and, reforming the CTC to include, among other provisions, that all families may benefit from it.

Adopted | July 15, 2020

Resolution Supporting Legislation on Early Childhood

Issue: Children ages birth to three need a healthy start consisting of comprehensive and supportive services to help them reach their full potential for success in life.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports and increase investments in early childhood development to ensure that comprehensive and social services are available to children in the critical years of development from birth to three.

These investments include greater coordination among pre-school programs and programs such as home visiting programs, publicly funded child care, child nutrition programs, Head Start and quality childcare including the support of the early childhood workforce with highly trained and motivated partners who build exceptional early childhood experiences in providing a generation of young people who enter school ready to learn and demonstrating leadership in these early childhood development programs. These investments are successful educational outcomes to fight poverty and reduce inequality.

Adopted | July 15, 2020

Resolution to Support the Administration's FY 2021 Budget Proposal for the Family First Prevention Services Act

Issue: The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) makes reforms to child welfare services by providing federal reimbursement through IV-E federal foster care maintenance for prevention programs and services approved by FFPSA's Prevention Services Act. The FFPSA is to keep children in their homes whenever safe and possible.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports the administration's budget proposal and introduction of legislation to address the current lack of funding for programs eligible for federal IV-E reimbursement under the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). NACo supports the administration's proposal to allow the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to approve all programs currently rated as evidence-based by the Evidence-Based Clearinghouse and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Center of Effectiveness Project.

NACo also supports the administration's proposal to remove the federal exclusion of Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTPs) that are currently under the Individuals with Disabilities (IMD) payment exclusion in order to allow some congregate care placements that placement is appropriate and necessary.

Adopted | July 15, 2020

Resolution Urging Congress and the Administration to Maintain Current Policy and Funding

Issue: In February 2018, Congress passed, and President Trump signed the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). The law provides new federal entitlements for child care prevention services meeting stringent best practice benchmarks and standards relating to congregate (group home) care that would reduce federal IV-E funding to states and counties. The FFPSA did not extend federal IV-E waivers slated to expire on September 30, 2019 but were extended for two years in a subsequent law. Given the coronavirus pandemic, protecting children and families has become a priority, shifting resources and attention to the immediate public health emergency response and implementation planning in many states and counties. Furthermore, in December 2020, Congress appropriated \$500 million under the Family First Transition Act to assist with the implementation, but those funds have yet to be distributed to states. All funding under the FFPSA by October 1, 2021.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the administration to

Interim Resolution Encouraging Congress to Provide the Resources Necessary to Expanding Arts and Cultural Programming in Rural Areas

Issue: The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) is the only arts funding agency that supports the arts in 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. Every citizen of the country benefit from an NEA grant. The Challenge America funding campaign is a call to action for projects that extend the reach of the arts to populations whose opportunities are limited by geography, economics, or disability. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2019 provided a \$5.25 million increase to the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as waiver language that allows FY 2019 and FY 2020 grants to be used for emergency support, as requested by arts advocates.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the federal government to provide the resources necessary for developing and expanding arts and cultural programming in counties, parishes and boroughs throughout the U.S. NACo supports funding of at least \$167.5 million or above for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to ensure that all counties continue to access these important federal funds. Counties also propose that the federal government for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), Corporation for Public Broadcasting and Arts Education grant program, and the Department of Education.

Adopted | March 19, 2021

Interim Resolution to Update the Thrifty Food Plan Used to Calculate Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Benefits

Issue: Serving as the foundation for calculating Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) is used by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to determine what a “minimal cost,” nutritionally adequate food plan entails for different household sizes, ages, and gender. It is based on assumptions about dietary needs, actual consumption, and food prices. While benefits are tied to inflation adjustments, the underlying TFP has not been updated in over 20 years.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to guarantee all children have access to breakfast, lunch and snacks during the summer months at no cost. Congress must ensure that Local Educational Agencies and participating childcare providers receive adequate funding and reimbursement and meet rigorous nutrition standards, to remove administrative and resource barriers in accessing the nutrition they need to thrive. We encourage Congress to foster partnerships with local agricultural producers to incorporate healthy ingredients.

Adopted | March 19, 2021