

Local Property Taxpayer Protection



Washington County seeks to protect our local taxpayers from any further shifts of state costs to the county property tax, which is a regressive and unpopular form of taxation, and the potential erosion of our ability to deliver high-quality, essential services in an efficient manner. We encourage the Legislature and the Governor to provide flexibility and full funding for any mandates imposed on local governments.

Issue At-A-Glance

- County governments are tasked by both the state and federal governments to carry out mandated programs on their behalf.
- Federal and state financial assistance does not cover the full cost of providing the mandated services.
- Inadequate state resources threaten the ability to continue providing core functions of county government at reasonable cost to taxpayers.
- The demand for many human service and health care services are likely to increase substantially in 2021, and county funds will need to be repurposed to meet increased demand.

75%

75% of operating and capital costs in the annual county budget are to pay for mandated services.

3/4

Nearly 3/4 of the entire county property tax levy is needed to pay for mandated service costs.



Increased service costs



Inadequate funding



Inability to respond to increased demand for service

County Facts

- Second lowest operating costs per capita of the seven metropolitan counties and the third lowest levy per capita.
- Lowest human services administrative costs per capita of all Minnesota counties and one of the lowest county tax rates.
- Holds highest credit rating (AAA) from both major rating agencies.

Support

Counties and local governments that also seek mandate relief.

Previous Consideration

The county has advocated this position for many years.

No Action

Counties will continue to be responsible for new, unfunded mandates that will likely result in burdening local property taxpayers.

Financial Implications

County levy increases are likely to be larger than otherwise necessary if the state and federal governments would fully fund the costs of mandated services.

Proposed Solutions

Counties have identified many mandated services that could be repealed, reformed or funded

- eliminate county share of state court costs
- eliminate increases in the county cost share for many human service programs
- eliminate requirements for county financial information publications and instead allow for web publication

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