INTRODUCTION

Wisconsin’s unique state-county partnership predates statehood. As with all long-term relationships, there have been ebbs and flows, but counties value efforts made by state elected officials during the most recent legislative session to solidify the partnership.

As partners, counties represent the state through the provision of services to residents statewide. These services include maintaining state roads, administering elections, serving individuals with mental health needs, protecting children from abuse and neglect, enrolling individuals in state and federal programs, and administering the state court system. All of these services contribute to Wisconsin’s high quality of life and overall prosperity.

As state leaders work to promote economic growth, it is essential that we continue to prioritize the state-county partnership. A strong investment in county government assures roads are plowed, infrastructure is maintained and citizens are protected – all integral pieces to a strong state economy. This investment may come in the form of additional funding for state programs administered by counties, more flexibility so counties can provide these services more efficiently, or simply a greater level of communication and collaboration between state and county government.

The following pages represent the Wisconsin Counties Association’s (WCA) 2017-2018 Legislative Agenda. While many of these items require additional state investment, those investments pay dividends. Counties are committed to using state resources to improve the state’s economy and infrastructure for the betterment of Wisconsin citizens, businesses and the state itself.

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AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT & LAND USE

- Increase funding for state and county efforts to combat invasive species.
- Enact comprehensive groundwater quantity legislation that balances the need to protect groundwater from contamination and overuse while respecting the needs of the agricultural economy.
- Restore and support the sustainability of the state’s forestry account.
- Provide continued funding for recycling programs, clean sweep and medication collection programs.
- Maintain the funding for county land conservation staffing and cost-sharing grants established in the 2015-17 biennial budget and further increase funds to reflect the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection’s (DATCP) statutorily recommended funding level.
- Enact legislation that provides counties with the authority to establish public improvement standards where there is an absence of standards in a town’s ordinance or the town’s standards are less restrictive.
- Ensure that counties have input with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in establishing groundwater quantity criteria that are appropriate in each county and reflect decisions made at the local level.
- Give counties additional flexibility and autonomy regarding decisions made on shoreland zoning and other land use regulations.

COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION STAFF
Annual State Grants, 1997-2016

- Standardize the County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO) Improvement Grant application process to achieve maximum flexibility in the distribution of grant funds.
- Modify state statutes to eliminate all references to a ‘cause’ standard for termination of employment, except for those county officers that are elected by county voters or unless otherwise provided by the county board.
- Adopt statutory authority for counties to organize independent of state mandate and allow counties to provide regional services uninhibited from state requirements and mandates.
- Amend state statute to provide counties absolute home rule authority to establish committee/board size and structure so long as the statutory duties incumbent upon the committees are assigned to a committee/board.
- Require the Wisconsin State Legislature to wait until local governments produce and provide their numbers, wards, and district information when redistricting and to use local boundaries to create state districts.
- Amend state statutes to provide counties that pass an ordinance the option to adopt a biennial budget.
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Behavioral Health
- Increase Medical Assistance reimbursement rates for behavioral health services.
- Increase funding to counties for substance abuse services to address the increasing impact of opiate and other drug use throughout the state.

Income Maintenance (IM)
- Continue to support the partnership on the evolution of the IM consortia model by allocating $1 million GPR to fund state approved activities associated with implementation of Income Maintenance Operational Analysis (IMOA) initiatives and recommendations.
- Provide adequate GPR funding in the income maintenance administration allocation (IMAA) to ensure an ongoing level of support to county IM consortia.
- Continue to support consortia fraud and program integrity by allocating another $1 million GPR for those efforts.

Child Welfare
- Due to increasing caseloads, increase the children and families aids allocation to allow county child protective services (CPS) workers to provide services to children and families involved in the CPS system.
- To prevent out-of-home placements and facilitate permanence, increase funding for in-home safety services.

Mental Health Institutes
- Return the remainder of the Department of Health Services’ institutional operations and charges appropriation under Wis. Stat. § 20.435(2)(gk) to counties in a manner determined and approved by counties.
- Adopt statutory language, similar to language found in Wis. Stat. § 20.410 (3)(hm) and (ho), to ensure large surpluses, funded through county charges, do not accumulate in Wis. Stat. § 20.435(2)(gk).

PUBLIC HEALTH
- Provide $2.5 million annually to local health departments to control and prevent communicable disease in Wisconsin.
- Support a statewide study, funded by the state of Wisconsin, on the impact of industrial wind turbines on human health.

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES (CPS) REFERRALS
2007-2014

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Referrals</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>72,698</td>
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4 – WCA LEGISLATIVE AGENDA
AGING
- Increase funding for the elderly and disabled transportation program (Wis. Stat. § 85.21).
- Expand programs and services for persons with dementia and their caregivers. Encourage connection to these services through local Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC) and aging units.

JUVENILE JUSTICE
- Increase funding allocated to counties for juvenile justice services to fund all costs associated with bringing 17-year-old first time, non-violent juvenile offenders back to the juvenile justice system. Support bringing 17-year-old first time, non-violent juvenile offenders back to the juvenile justice system only if fully funded.

CHILD SUPPORT
- Streamline the paternity establishment process in Wisconsin by allowing local child support agencies to assist participants through the paternity establishment process (administrative paternity).
- To better serve children and families throughout the state, make all child support cases IV-D unless the parties involved choose to opt out.

COUNTY NURSING HOMES
- Exempt county government-owned IMDs and state-only licensed facilities from the provider bed assessment (bed tax).
- To ensure a minimum payment to county nursing facilities under the supplemental payment program, modify Wis. Stat. § 49.45(6u)(am) to read as follows: ... the department shall distribute to these facilities and to care management organizations at least $39,100,000 in each fiscal year.
- Provide Medical Assistance rate increases to skilled nursing facilities in FY18 and FY19 to: (1) reimburse facilities for direct care services at the median cost of providing care; (2) increase funding for support services by $5 per day; (3) increase funding for select labor regions to meet the state-wide direct care target; (4) provide an inflationary rate increase in FY19.
JUDICIAL & PUBLIC SAFETY

911 FUNDING
- Find an alternative to the existing landline fee to fund a statewide contract for telecommunications services to public safety answering points (PSAP).
- Provide statewide funding to allow PSAPs to upgrade to new technologies as vendors will no longer service current systems beginning in 2017.

COURTS
- Increase the filing fees for small claims to correspond with the higher thresholds for small claims court established in 2011 Wisconsin Act 32.
- Return a greater portion of the court support services fee to counties through increases in court support services, guardian ad litem, and court interpreter payments.

TREATMENT, ALTERNATIVES, AND DIVERSION (TAD)/EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING (EBDM)
- Increase state funding to support county efforts to implement TAD and EBDM practices on a statewide basis.

TAD PROGRAM FUNDING DECISIONS
CALANDAR YEAR 2017

PROBATION & PAROLE HOLDS
- Increase funding in the appropriation used to make probation and parole hold payments to counties to ensure counties are paid the statutorily set rate of $40 per day.
- Eliminate the Department of Corrections’ ability to prorate payments to jails.

PUBLIC SAFETY
- Enact statewide legislation prohibiting the enactment of local ordinances restricting the residency of sex offenders.
- To better connect with the 21st Century Policing initiative, increase training dollars for local law enforcement officers.
- Participate in the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) via an opt-in from the state of Wisconsin.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
- Increase the annual allocation in the Wisconsin Disaster Fund.
- Enact legislation requiring that damages recovered from a person liable for a forest fire be paid in equal proportion to the state and to the county in which fire suppression services were performed.
**TAXATION & FINANCE**

- Amend property assessment requirements to close the “dark store” property assessment loophole.
- Amend Wis. Stat. § 70.67(1) so that municipal treasurer bond amounts are required to be in an amount of at least the total county and state portion of the property tax levy.
- Provide counties flexibility with tax deed publication requirements in Wis. Stats. §§ 75.07 and 75.12.
- Enact an exemption from levy limits for economic development efforts.
- Modify the current annual levy limit adjustment from the change in property values due to “net new construction” to the change in property values due to “new construction.”
- Seek an increase in the shared revenue appropriation to reflect the growing costs of providing state-mandated services.

**TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC WORKS**

- Adopt long term funding solutions to meet the state’s transportation needs.
- Invest in the maintenance of the County Trunk Highway system by increasing funding for general transportation aid payments to counties.
- Increase funding for mass transit operating aids to reflect the growing costs for counties.
- Maintain state funding levels for the local road and bridge programs.
- Make additional investments in the Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) recognizing that LRIP funding has not been increased since 1998.
- Increase funding for the Specialized Transportation Assistance Program for Counties formed by Wis. Stat. § 85.21.
- Increase the level of bonding authorized for the freight rail preservation program (FRPP).
- Establish a “Federal Swap Program” that gives counties and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) the ability to “exchange” federal funds for state funds within the Surface Transportation Program (STP).
- Support an increase to the competitive bidding statute by raising the threshold to $100,000.

### NET NEW CONSTRUCTION 2011-2016

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### COUNTY GENERAL TRANSPORTATION AID PAYMENTS 2006-2016

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