

Human Services Block Grant

DPW and the County Commissioners Association of PA (CCAP) have reached substantial agreement on the Human Services Block Grant (Block Grant). The block grant will fundamentally transform the relationship between the state and county governments for the delivery of certain critical human services programs. The Human Services Block Grant will provide counties the flexibility to prioritize funds where each locality needs them most.

- Many states given the fiscal constraints that the recession has placed upon their revenues and budgets, and the burdensome maintenance of effort provisions under the affordable care act, have outright eliminated their versions of state-only funding for many human services. This speaks to the innovative nature of the Corbett Administration and CCAP, to work together on finding a new business model to keep funding many of these essential human services.
- Under this proposal, beginning on July 1, 2012, specified non-Medicaid and non-IDEA county appropriations including: Mental Health Community Programs, Intellectual Disabilities Community Base, County Child Welfare Special Grants, Homeless Assistance Program, Act 152, Behavioral Health Services and Human Service Development Fund appropriations would be consolidated into one appropriation, the Human Services Block Grant.
- This proposal does not impact the billions of dollars for services currently included in the Governor's proposed budget for joint state/federal programs including the Intellectual Disabilities Waiver programs (\$871 million), Behavioral Health HealthChoices Program (\$1.4 billion) or the County Child Welfare Needs Based Budget (\$955 million).
- The current system of categorical funding frequently prevents dollars from being used where they can be most effective or to provide integrated care across several programs. The block grant will give counties the flexibility to use the funds where they need it most, which can improve outcomes for clients and families.
- Counties are at the forefront of delivery of human services to local communities. By overseeing these programs and interacting with local recipients on a daily basis, counties not only know what services are most needed at the local level, but also how they can be most effectively managed with minimizing unnecessary costs.
- CCAP and DPW have been working closely to assure the block grant will offer counties the ability to address the needs of local communities.
- The block grant will be phased-in to allow counties to make administrative and programmatic changes to provide coordinated and integrated human services programs.
- In addition, this proposal will provide counties the ability to maximize local resources and control cost increases through the reduction of administrative overhead. Reporting will be restructured, resulting in a substantial decrease in the volume of paper work currently submitted by counties.
- Program planning requirements will also be streamlined into a unified annual county plan to replace the numerous plans for each categorical in the block grant, currently submitted by counties.
- Consistent with DPW and CCAP's priority for overall county human service system reform, a separate task force has been working on recommendations for regulatory and operational reforms to jointly operated state and county human service programs.