



NACo's Board of Directors set the organization's 2017 priorities at its meeting in Leon County, Fla.

Basic Principles: NACo supports federal policies and programs that equip the nation's 3,069 county governments with the resources and tools needed to effectively serve their residents. NACo works to preserve local decision-making and protect counties from unfunded mandates and preemption of local authority.

National Policy Priorities

Protect the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds

NACo supports preserving the federal deductibility of local property and income taxes and the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds that provide critical funding for public facilities, infrastructure and development. Provisions such as the tax exemption for municipal bond interest have been part of the federal tax code for more than 100 years, helping to efficiently and safely finance trillions of dollars in public works projects.

Protect the federal-state-local partnership for Medicaid

NACo supports maintaining the federal-state-local structure for financing and delivering Medicaid services. Counties continue to be concerned about measures that would limit the ability of states to direct supplemental payments to county providers, curtail the ability of counties to contribute local funds to match federal dollars or otherwise shift federal and state Medicaid costs to counties including cuts, caps or block grants. We support efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of policies and operations.

Promote county surface transportation priorities

NACo will work to ensure that any transportation and infrastructure measures reflect county priorities, including allocating more funding for locally owned infrastructure, increasing local decision-making authority, prioritizing investments that increase economic development, mobility and safety. NACo will also continue to urge Congress to resolve the long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund.

Work for a more effective definition of "Waters of the U.S."

NACo believes that local streets, gutters and human-made ditches should be excluded from the definition of "Waters of the U.S." (WOTUS) under the federal Clean Water Act. NACo calls on Congress to require the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to withdraw the new WOTUS rule and rewrite it in consultation and collaboration with state and local governments.

Support county authority to collect existing sales tax

NACo supports legislation to permit the collection of existing sales and use taxes from remote sellers. The issue of collecting remote sales taxes has escalated in recent years due to the internet's growth as a retail marketplace. As a result, state and local governments have lost billions in uncollected sales taxes, and Main Street businesses find themselves at a significant competitive disadvantage to online merchants. This disadvantage is amplified because online merchants and their customers use local infrastructure and services without contributing to their provision.

Support policies to promote behavioral health and criminal justice reform

NACo supports measures that enhance the ability of counties to prevent and treat mental illness and substance abuse disorders. NACo also supports programs and legislation to reduce mental illness in jails and provide appropriate treatment to those in custody, while protecting overall public safety.

Support the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools (SRS) programs

NACo supports restoring full mandatory funding for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program, which compensates counties for tax-exempt federal land within their boundaries. NACo also supports extending the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program as a transitional funding mechanism until the federal government fully implements a sustainable long-term forest management program with adequate revenue sharing for forest counties and schools.

Support programs that assist counties to prevent and reduce poverty

NACo supports federal investments and strategies that focus on serving those most in need and address the root causes of poverty. Because counties are responsible to maintain the local social safety net and are mandated to provide indigent care, NACo supports fully funding programs that assist those most in need and maintain the maximum amount of efficiency and flexibility possible at the local level. Key federal programs that assist counties in tackling poverty include the Social Services Block Grant, the Community Services Block Grant and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.