



Minnesota Inter-County Association

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www.mncounties.org



www.maccac.org



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April 21, 2020

Re: County Support of Corrections Funding in Supplemental Budget 2020

Dear Legislator:

On behalf of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), Minnesota Inter County Association (MICA), Minnesota Association of County Probation Officers (MACPO), and Minnesota Association of Community Corrections Act Counties (MACCAC), we want to share our united support for the community supervision funding in Gov. Tim Walz's current supplemental budget and H.F. 4540. We appreciate the opportunity to outline our perspective on how the funding will significantly impact county government, and urge your support as you make critical budget decisions this year.

Minnesota's county-based probation systems have been underfunded for nearly two decades. The Community Corrections Act Subsidy has only been increased an average of 2/3 of a percent annually over the last 10 years. The County Probation Officer Reimbursement is currently at 29% of the statutorily mandated 50% reimbursement.

County-based probation systems use evidence-based practices that have been shown through research to reduce recidivism rates and keep communities safe. Without the critical funding for community supervision, it is impossible to keep caseloads at a manageable level, which means that agents cannot provide effective evidence-based practices.

Keeping caseloads manageable has become increasingly difficult since the start of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Across the state prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, and law enforcement are working together to ensure that only the highest risk individuals are remaining incarcerated. Jail and prison populations are being significantly reduced in favor of community supervision and electronic home monitoring. This has created challenges in the probation community with increases in caseloads during a time when clients are in crisis and need more support.

As you may remember, county-based probation systems did not receive an increase in state funding for fiscal year 2020 and 2021. County probation departments throughout the state will be facing significant county budget shortfalls due to property tax delays. It is therefore even more imperative that the State provide funding for the next year of the biennium.

We urge the Legislature to consider and fully fund the community supervision request that is contained in the Governor's supplemental budget request and H.F. 4540. Though it will not make up for historical budget shortfalls, it will provide a much-needed increase in order to continue effective client supervision and protect public safety in our current COVID-19 environment and beyond.

If you have any questions or would like further information, feel free to reach out to AMC Public Safety Policy Analyst, Carli Stark at cstark@mncounties.org or 651-789-4335, or Nancy Haas, MACPO Legislative Counsel, at nhaas@messerlikramer.com or 651-274-5166.

Sincerely,

Julie Ring, Executive Director
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Matt Massman, Executive Director
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Midge Christianson, President
Minnesota Association of Community Corrections Act Counties

Terry Fawcett, President
Minnesota Association of County Probation Officers