



2026

Federal Priority Agenda

WSAC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2025-26

- Clallam County Commissioner Mark Ozias, President
- Walla Walla County Commissioner Gunner Fulmer, 1st Vice President
- Kitsap County Commissioner Katie Walters, 2nd Vice President
- Lincoln County Commissioner Rob Coffman, Immediate Past President

Derek Young, Executive Director

Intergovernmental Relations and Local Control

WSAC affirms 10th Amendment constitutional principles and advocates for counties' autonomy to address local needs. Overreach by other levels of government undermines this partnership by shifting burdens without corresponding resources. **WSAC opposes the commandeering of local resources and the imposition of unfunded mandates, advocating for a relationship of mutual respect and fully funded shared responsibilities.**

Transportation

As intergovernmental partners, counties collaborate with the federal government to strengthen infrastructure and transportation systems nationwide. Counties are major owners and operators of our nation's transportation infrastructure, investing \$60 billion nationwide, and nearly \$1 billion in Washington alone. But county roads and ferries still face a significant investment gap that they can't bridge on their own.



WSAC SUPPORTS:

- Direct federal funding for local governments
- Permitting reform
- Enhanced technical assistance and capacity-building resources
- Improved road safety measures



Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)

PILT is vital for many counties' budgets, even though it generates less revenue than private property taxes. **WSAC calls on Congress to provide long-term (10+ years) and/or permanent reauthorization for the PILT program** to fairly compensate counties for tax-exempt federal land and the services they offer on that land.

Secure Rural Schools (SRS)

SRS provides revenue for essential services in timber communities. **WSAC advocates for the permanent reauthorization of SRS**, local appointments to Resource Advisory Committees, and increased funding levels to match historical standards with inflation adjustments.

Federal Emergency Management Act

Counties play a key role in disaster management and urge Congress to provide increased federal resources for protection and recovery. **WSAC supports reforms to FEMA's reimbursement process and elevated funding for emergency management and mitigation grants.**

Behavioral Health

WSAC urges Congress to maintain consistent funding for substance use and mental health services provided through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and pass legislation that enhances counties' ability to provide and/or support local systems of care. Future appropriations bills should maintain or increase funding levels from Fiscal Year (FY) 2024/2025, with a focus on the Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services (SUBG) and Community Mental Health Services (MHBG) block grants.

Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy (MIEP)

The Social Security Act (Sec. 1905(a)(A)) prohibits the use of federal funds and services for medical care provided to "inmates of a public institution." This federal law, known as the "Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy," does not differentiate between a convicted inmate and a person incarcerated prior to conviction, stripping individuals, who are still presumed innocent, of their federal benefits.

The disruption in continuity of care for individuals caused by this federal regulation, especially for those with complex medical and behavioral health conditions, is a major concern.