



2017 - 2018 Guiding Principles (Proposed)

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FINANCE, TAX & ADMINISTRATION

Taxation and Funding of Local Government

County governments have the responsibility to provide not only core public services, but also to provide the infrastructure and services that form the foundation of local and state economies. Adequate revenue must be raised to fund these local needs, while also providing for services and programs that are mandated by the state. If counties are to succeed in meeting their responsibilities, an adequate and fair local tax policy that is commensurate with the many responsibilities of modern county government must be developed. The mechanisms for financing county services should be able to adapt to emerging technology, changing economic circumstances, and should be structured to address the ever-increasing demands on county government service delivery.

- FTA 1. The Florida Association of Counties is dedicated to protecting the integrity, functionality and fairness of local ad valorem taxing authority, as well as that of the other locally available revenue sources.
- FTA 2. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies that consider impacts to state revenues shared with counties for the provision of local services and is opposed to permanent modifications to state shared revenue sources or related funding formulas that would significantly impact the counties' ability to continue to fund local services.
- FTA 3. The Florida Association of Counties supports tax reform measures that simplify administration and provide an economic boost to Florida's taxpayers while at the same time considering and minimizing the collective and cumulative negative impact on local revenues, including state shared and local discretionary revenue sources that are critical to local governments.
- FTA 4. The Florida Association of Counties supports measures that enhance the effectiveness of existing local revenue sources to meet current and future public service demands.
- FTA 5. The Florida Association of Counties supports the comprehensive Payment In Lieu of Taxes programs that offset the impact of lands acquired by Federal, State, or other tax-exempt entities. PILT programs should be funded in a fashion, so as not to diminish the fiscal capacity of small counties. Additionally, the Florida Association of Counties supports the adjustment of PILT payments to accommodate the increased value and/or the valued use of the property by the purchasing entity.
- FTA 6. The Florida Association of Counties recognizes the unique fiscal challenges of Florida's rural counties and state-designated fiscally constrained counties. The Association is

dedicated to preserving established programs that provide critical resources for essential programs and infrastructure needs of these counties.

Economic Development

Economic prosperity depends on communities with dependable basic services, but also where the quality of life encourages businesses and individuals to flourish. Maintaining and enhancing the standards that Floridians expect and deserve will require more innovative cooperation between the public and private sectors. Therefore, counties need flexible tools to develop economic strategies that target local strengths, enhance and expand employment opportunities, and maintain adequate infrastructure.

- FTA 7. The Florida Association of Counties supports measures that empower local governments and provides resources to work with community partners towards the creation of quality jobs, more vibrant Florida communities, as well as an enhanced level of national and global competitiveness.
- FTA 8. The Florida Association of Counties supports legislation and appropriation that enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of the state and local government partnership in economic development through the greater use of targeted strategic investments in infrastructure and programmatic enhancements designed to induce sustainable economic activity resulting in a consistent positive return on investment for both state and local governments.
- FTA 9. The Florida Association of Counties supports state and local policies, programs, and funding mechanisms that not only preserve, but enhance as well, the Florida tourism industry.
- FTA 10. The Florida Association of Counties supports enhancing programs to increase funding for rural infrastructure, job growth, and workforce development policies.
- FTA 11. The Florida Association of Counties supports enhancing the ability for Rural Areas of Opportunity (RAOs) to advance local rural economic development initiatives through allocation of additional resources.

Administration

The power to administer county government can be found in the State Constitution and the Florida Statutes. However, the system of shared governance between the state and counties, and its political subdivisions, is critical to the successful administration of local services in the most efficient and effective manner. Decisions regarding statewide administrative policy must

accurately reflect the ability of the state and counties to utilize resources in an optimal manner to provide and produce essential public services.

- FTA 12. The Florida Association of Counties supports that policies related to retirement, workers' compensation and other administrative systems be based on sound and accurate data analyzed with consideration for state and local fiscal impact, fairness and accessibility for state and local employees, as well as, predictability and stability relative to market forces for the long-term effective management of state and local financial plans.
- FTA 13. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies that enable local governments to comply with public notice and legal advertisements requirements through the application of various available mediums of technology to achieve an ideal balance between fiscal efficiency and public effectiveness.

Accountability and Transparency

The foundation of a strong democracy is a public that is educated and informed about the decisions of its government. Accessible and accountable county governments are more responsive to the needs of their citizens and result in more engaged and satisfied constituents. Counties work to uphold the trust of their voters and taxpayers by maintaining open and accessible meetings and records; providing timely, informative, and accurate public information; and adhering to the highest standards of administrative and fiscal transparency.

- FTA 14. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies that promote ethical standards for public officials that are fiscally reasonable, consistent throughout all levels of government, and that do not inhibit the efficient and effective administration of local services
- FTA 15. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies that promote access to public records in a manner that is not frivolous; that upholds fiscal responsibility; that does not prevent the efficient and effective administration of local services; and allows for exemptions to protect the safety and security of individuals providing or receiving critical public services.
- FTA 16. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies that promote the provision of accurate and accessible administrative and fiscal public information in a manner that is fiscally responsible, publicly comprehensible, technologically efficient, and that does not constrain the effective administration of local services.

- FTA 17. The Florida Association of Counties is dedicated to preserving, when at all possible, the link between the programs and services provided by counties with the decisions related to the funding for these programs and services, in an effort to maximize the manner and source of accountability of public officials to the citizenry.

Intergovernmental Relations

Florida's elected county commissioners are ultimately answerable to their voters for the provision of programs and services and associated funding decisions. Since Florida's citizens conferred home rule power to counties with the ratification of the 1968 Constitution. County officials have been dedicated to the preservation of democratic principles, specifically that the government closest to the people is the appropriate authority to serve the needs and requirements of the community. County governments reflect the communities that they serve and, particularly in a state as large and diverse as Florida, the needs and values of these communities vary widely between counties.

- FTA 18. The Florida Association of Counties is dedicated to maintaining the integrity of county home rule power which allows counties to develop and implement community-based solutions to local problems, without State limitations or mandates.
- FTA 19. The Florida Association of Counties opposes any state or federal unfunded mandates and preemptions that ultimately limit the ability of local elected officials to make fiscal and public policy decisions for the citizens to whom they are accountable.
- FTA 20. The Florida Association of Counties support the establishment of an agreed upon course of action whereby state and county elected officials deliberatively evaluate the appropriate funding and delivery of intergovernmental service responsibilities between counties and the state.
- FTA 21. The Florida Association of Counties recognizes that the statewide regulation of certain sectors may not be inconsistent with the principles of self-governance, to the extent that the state regulations do not hamper the counties' ability to regulate and control county facilities and to maintain minimal safety, aesthetic, and environmental standards.
- FTA 22. The Florida Association of Counties opposes the dilution of decision-making ability of local county commissioners/councilmembers with regard to the funding of the local duties of other constitutionally proscribed county officers.

- FTA 23. The Florida Association of Counties supports the provision of adequate state funding for constitutionally proscribed county officers that are required to perform duties on behalf of the state.
- FTA 24. The Florida Association of Counties opposes the use of local revenue sources to fund the state's judicial responsibilities.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Health and Human Services Policy

County officials recognize the importance of adequately providing for quality health and human services to protect and assist citizens in need. As a critical link in the federal/state/county human services partnership, counties must be included in formulating and implementing policies that protect the health, safety, and welfare of all the citizens of the state.

- HS 1. The Florida Association of Counties supports allowing for flexibility in the delivery of health and human services within communities to achieve the desired level of services based on local needs and priorities.
- HS 2. The Florida Association of Counties supports expanding health care access and believe that efforts to refine and enhance state and local programs that provide access to affordable health care are essential.
- HS 3. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies that increase access to acute care behavioral health services for individuals and families.
- HS 4. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies that increase supportive housing, jail diversion, and employment and education initiatives for people with mental health, substance abuse issues, behavioral health issues and/or disabilities.
- HS 5. The Florida Association of Counties supports diverting, medically assisting, or treating the mentally ill outside of the criminal justice process through alternative programs, such as Crisis Intervention Teams.
- HS 6. The Florida Association of Counties supports Medicaid reform initiatives to ensure that persons with substance abuse and mental health treatment needs are appropriately served.

- HS 7. The Florida Association of Counties supports the implementation of discharge protocols and/or procedures for hospitals, correctional facilities, and mental health facilities when releasing homeless persons.
- HS 8. The Florida Association of Counties supports the development of policies that would allow local governments to work with the state and federal government to serve target populations: the chronically homeless, veterans, and families and children, with emphasis on children aging out of the foster care system.
- HS 9. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies that promote continued coordination with the state's Council on Homelessness, specifically as it recommends policies and practices in support of the Federal Strategic Plan to End Homelessness.
- HS 10. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies that lessen fragmentation, inefficient operation, and costly duplication of transportation disadvantaged services.

Health and Human Services Funding

While most health and human service programs and the laws that govern these programs are established by federal and state governments, many of these services are being provided through community-based services at the local level. Given the varying capacity and funding capabilities of counties, adequate federal and state funding to ensure uniformity in the human services continuum.

- HS 11. The Florida Association of Counties supports, when feasible, directing existing funding from institutional care to community-based care programs.
- HS 12. The Florida Association of Counties supports increased funding for core and crisis mental health services, including beds, statewide.
- HS 13. The Florida Association of Counties supports proactive policies, as well as increased funding providing life-saving interventions, medically-assisted detoxification programs, and diversions from the criminal justice system for those suffering from opioid addiction and other substance abuse issues.
- HS 14. The Florida Association of Counties supports increased funding of the Criminal Justice Mental Health and Substance Abuse Reinvestment Grant Program with recurring dollars in a trust fund.

- HS 15. The Florida Association of Counties supports sustainable matching state funds to counties that have received both planning and implementation Reinvestment Grant funds.
- HS 16. The Florida Association of Counties supports a system for distributing Low Income Pool dollars that ensures IGT-donor counties are able to direct the federal matching dollars generated by their local IGT contributions to best meet the health care needs of their constituents, rather than having those dollars redistributed throughout the state.
- HS 17. The Florida Association of Counties supports adequate funding for the Community Care for the Elderly Program, which provides cost efficient diversion from nursing home placement for impaired elders.
- HS 18. The Florida Association of Counties supports funding Graduate Medical Education programs to meet the healthcare needs of the state and its local communities, with an emphasis on programs that provide for specialties in need, as well as the development of physicians to practice in medically underserved areas.
- HS 19. The Florida Association of Counties supports funding for the Florida Healthy Start and Healthy Families program.
- HS 20. The Florida Association of Counties opposes policies that further shift state Medicaid costs to counties.
- HS 21. The Florida Association of Counties supports the continued evaluation of the county-state Medicaid cost-share arrangement, taking into consideration the impacts of state policies designed to contain growth in Medicaid costs, including statewide Medicaid managed care and diagnosis related group reimbursement for hospitals.
- HS 22. The Florida Association of Counties supports increasing state general revenue funding for county health departments (CHDs), and opposes any state reductions to the CHD Trust Funds.
- HS 23. The Florida Association of Counties supports maintaining a coordinated system of CHDs that is centrally housed within the Department of Health (DOH).
- HS 24. The Florida Association of Counties supports preserving the ability of CHDs to provide primary care and direct patient care services, particularly in communities without adequate substitutes or alternative providers for these services.

- HS 25. The Florida Association of Counties supports a dedicated state funding source for homeless programs.
- HS 26. The Florida Association of Counties supports the continuation of the Medically Needy program.
- HS 27. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies that allocate state funds to hire Veterans Services Officers in counties in order to increase services and federal benefits for Florida veterans.
- HS 28. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies that protect the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) trust fund, as well as dedicated state funding for the TD program, including funding to address unmet TD needs in rural areas.

Public Safety and Emergency Services

Providing for public safety is one of the core functions of county governments. Counties provide for safety through support of first-responder services from sheriffs' offices, ambulance services, fire and rescue, and emergency management centers that protect the public during natural or man-made disasters, terrorism, emergencies, and public health threats.

- HS 29. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies that maintain and enhance established trauma care funding, including incentives for the development of new trauma centers.
- HS 30. The Florida Association of Counties opposes policies that shift the state's financial responsibility for the trauma system to counties or divert trauma care funding for purposes other than those intended by the existing legislation.
- HS 31. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies that protect the ability of counties to provide for coordinated, countywide systems of emergency medical services, and not limit the ability of ambulance and other emergency medical transportation providers to be reimbursed for their services.
- HS 32. The Florida Association of Counties opposes sentencing of state inmates to county jails, but supports counties' ability to contract with the Department of Corrections for housing state inmates.
- HS 33. The Florida Association of Counties supports funding for capital improvements to county courthouses and other court-related facilities, including jails.

- HS 34. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies designed to prevent human trafficking, protect victims, prosecute human traffickers, and create partnerships across all levels of government, the private sector, and state agencies to provide training opportunities for local government employees and their agents to recognize the signs of human trafficking including government inspectors, law enforcement, criminal justice, health care, transportation and public transit, educational partners, and employees working with vulnerable populations.
- HS 35. The Florida Association of Counties opposes policies that would shift funds or impede counties from building and maintaining an interoperable radio communication system as authorized by statute.
- HS 36. The Florida Association of Counties supports increased funding for locally-operated crime analysis laboratories.
- HS 37. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies and funding targeted at enhancing the quality of volunteer firefighting services in rural and unincorporated communities.
- HS 38. The Florida Association of Counties supports the provision of state matching funds for all disaster-related / emergency management projects deemed eligible and approved by FEMA including, but not limited to, backup generators for facilities for elders.
- HS 39. The Florida Association of Counties supports continued state funding for county EOCs to ensure each is able to meet the minimum structural survivability and operational space criteria established by the state and federal government.
- HS 40. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies and funding that provide enhanced training and education opportunities for County Emergency Management employees.

Criminal Justice System

Florida's counties also play a critical role in state's criminal justice system, providing prevention, pre-trial, and reintegration services, juvenile programs, victims' assistance, and jail funding throughout the state. Success of such programs hinges on a comprehensive and coordinated approach across local agencies, jurisdictions, and with state and federal partners. When determining appropriate programming and funding, Florida's counties work to encourage improved outcomes for system participants and communities while also seeking cost reductions and efficiencies. Public safety and criminal justice services continue to have increased funding

needs, however, as counties and their public safety partners face new and evolving threats to the safety and welfare of their communities and counties must be empowered to adequately address funding of necessary services. Furthermore, considering the interconnected nature of many of these threats, increased federal and state funding is essential to ensure that effective public safety systems are provided throughout Florida.

- HS 41. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies preserving counties' ability to provide risk assessment pretrial release services that prevent new offenses and ensures appearance as obligated.
- HS 42. The Florida Association of Counties opposes policies limiting the discretion of the first appearance judges.
- HS 43. The Florida Association of Counties opposes policies that restrict pretrial services to only indigent defendants.
- HS 44. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies that reduce county jail expenses, including juvenile and adult diversion programs.
- HS 45. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies that provide Medicaid eligibility for persons incarcerated in county jails while waiting disposition of their cases and to ensure that existing Medicaid benefits are not terminated during incarceration.
- HS 46. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies and initiatives which reduce juvenile detention through prevention, civil citation, treatment, and rehabilitation services.
- HS 47. The Florida Association of Counties supports state investments in juvenile facilities to improve the conditions of secure confinement for detained youth without such costs being shifted to the counties.
- HS 48. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies that ensure that adequate safety, supervision, and facility maintenance is provided at juvenile residential assessment centers and secure detention facilities.
- HS 49. The Florida Association of Counties supports state funding of Juvenile Assessment Centers throughout Florida to strive to achieve equal treatment of youth offenders.

- HS 50. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies that increase judicial oversight and authority for charging and sentencing juvenile defendants as adults without creating additional county service requirements.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT, AGRICULTURE, TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENTAL

Growth Management

The impact of growth and development in Florida during the last 30 years has brought significant benefits and costs to county government. Given Florida's expected future growth and because Florida's communities are remarkably diverse, Florida's counties must have flexibility in planning decisions to address unique local concerns and conditions. County officials must have the ability to make reasonable decisions for the advancement of the local community on zoning, comprehensive planning, transportation, and infrastructure issues without being subjected to prohibitive claims for damages for infringement on private property rights.

- GATE 1. The Florida Association of Counties supports comprehensive policies that reduce a county's risk to the impacts of coastal and inland flooding.
- GATE 2. The Florida Association of Counties recognizes and supports the critical role Regional Planning Councils play in supporting communities by coordinating intergovernmental solutions to growth problems on greater-than-local issues, providing technical assistance to local governments.
- GATE 3. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies that provide a mechanism to ensure the extra-jurisdictional impacts from large-scale development projects are adequately addressed within the impacted counties prior to development approval.
- GATE 4. The Florida Association of Counties supports retaining the full amount of dedicated documentary tax revenues to fund state and local affordable housing programs.
- GATE 5. The Florida Association of Counties supports the development and maintenance of dedicated funding of the Florida Forever Grant Program and Florida Communities Trust which provide recreational opportunities for parks, open space, greenways and trails to help meet growth challenges and protect natural resources.
- GATE 6. The Florida Association of Counties supports the development and maintenance of dedicated funding the Rural and Family Lands Protection Act to allow for the purchase

of rural easements to prevent the subdivision and conversion of such land into other uses.

GATE 7. The Florida Association of Counties supports the distribution of land management appropriations to local governments in proportion to the percentage of public conservation lands managed within local jurisdictions.

Transportation

FAC believes that Florida's transportation system is a vital component in building and sustaining communities, moving people and goods, and developing competition at local and regional levels, and on a national scale. Florida's counties play a critical role in the state's transportation system. Florida's counties should be recognized as major partners in the maintenance and development of Florida's transportation infrastructure and provided levels of funding and authority that adequately reflect their role in the state's transportation system.

GATE 8. The Florida Association of Counties supports funding for all modes of the state and local transportation infrastructure network.

GATE 9. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies and funding that encourage and facilitate more efficient and effective use of regional transportation solutions.

GATE 10. The Florida Association of Counties supports critical state funding for the Small County Road Assistance program (SCRAP).

GATE 11. The Florida Association of Counties supports continuing enhanced state funding for the Small County Outreach Program (SCOP).

GATE 12. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies providing for Strategic Intermodal System funds to be used on roads and other transportation facilities not designated on the SIS network if the improvement relieves congestion on the SIS.

GATE 13. The Florida Association of Counties opposes any effort to divert revenues from the state transportation trust fund for non-transportation purposes.

Environment

Conservation and protection of Florida's natural resources is critical to managing growth, promoting economic development, and maintaining a healthy environment to ensure a high quality of life for Floridians.

- GATE 14. The Florida Association of Counties supports the allocation of matching funds to county governments to purchase environmentally sensitive and endangered lands.
- GATE 15. The Florida Association of Counties supports a comprehensive state climate change action plan, with energy policies and other initiatives to reduce greenhouse gases and to address ecosystem sustainability, long term water supply, flood protection, public health and safety, and economic prosperity.
- GATE 16. The Florida Association of Counties supports state and federal recognition of adaptation and mitigation as critical to any climate change plan, and the funding necessary to assist local governments in developing and implementing these initiatives.
- GATE 17. The Florida Association of Counties supports maintaining funding of the Small County Consolidated Grant Program, and maintaining the waste tire fee as a dedicated revenue source for funding mosquito control, solid waste and recycling programs.
- GATE 18. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies that provide appropriate resources and incentives to local governments to achieve statewide recycling goals, with credit afforded for all recycled materials including municipal biomass and other waste-to-energy processes.

Water

Increased demands on Florida's water supply are forcing many diverse interests to work with county government to plan the future of water policy in Florida. In an effort to achieve the best possible result, county government should continue to expand partnerships with the agricultural community, urban water users, regional government agencies, and environmental organizations to encourage water conservation, water resource, and water supply development projects. The primary goal of such water resource planning efforts should be ensuring resource availability for all reasonable beneficial uses, consistent with the protection of water and related natural resources.

- GATE 19. The Florida Association of Counties supports the allocation of matching funds to county governments to restore impaired springs, estuaries, lagoons and other waterbodies in accordance with state policy and local needs.
- GATE 20. The Florida Association of Counties supports state funding for water quality improvement projects designed to reduce nutrient pollution in Florida's impaired waterbodies, recognizing that multiple sources contribute to nutrient loading,

- including, but not limited to, wastewater and septic systems, industrial, agricultural, and residential water use.
- GATE 21. The Florida Association of Counties supports policies that enhance regional and local financial capacity to address water supply development with allocation flexibility in all available funding sources.
- GATE 22. The Florida Association of Counties supports the funding of the Water Protection and Sustainability Program within the Department of Environmental Protection for the development of alternative water supplies, water quality improvement projects, and comprehensive water infrastructure needs.
- GATE 23. The Florida Association of Counties supports the “Florida Green Industries Best Management Practices” as a basic level of water quality protection, with more stringent protections authorized to address water bodies in need.
- GATE 24. The Florida Association of Counties supports the economically, technically and environmentally feasible use of reclaimed water with incentivized infrastructure investment and reliable distribution including reuse service areas and prioritized irrigation and nonpotable uses.
- GATE 25. The Florida Association of Counties supports state legislation to prohibit new well stimulation activities, including hydraulic fracturing (fracking).
- GATE 26. The Florida Association of Counties opposes efforts to increase offshore drilling activities.