

**2017-19 State Biennial Budget**  
***Joint Committee on Finance Public Hearings – WCA Suggested Topics***

**Modernizing 911**

Modernizing Wisconsin's 911 system has been a priority for local governments, Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), law enforcement and the telecommunications industry since the 2009-11 state biennial budget.

Governor Walker's 2017-19 state budget proposal does not provide funding to transition to Next Generation 911. WCA requests that the Joint Committee on Finance take steps to begin the Next Generation 911 transition by requiring the state Department of Administration to issue a request for proposal (RFP) to procure a provider to build a state-hosted emergency service IP network (ESInet). WCA believes this network could tap into the current BadgerNet infrastructure to reduce costs. WCA requests \$7 million in state funds be allocated in this budget and on an ongoing basis to build and maintain the network. Once the statewide network is built, counties will need funding to upgrade their local PSAPs.

**County Conservation Staffing and Cost Sharing Grants**

The County Conservation Staffing and Cost Sharing Program provides dollars for counties to assist the agriculture community with implementation or construction of conservation practices. These practices typically focus on preventing soil erosion and limiting runoff of nutrients into lakes, rivers, and streams.

In order for the program to remain viable and effective, the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) believes \$9.3 million must be appropriated annually. In order to reach program viability, WCA requests that the Joint Committee on Finance appropriate an additional \$2.2 million to the program above the funding levels proposed in the Governor's budget.

**Child Welfare Funding**

State statute requires all counties, except Milwaukee County, to provide child welfare services and employ personnel who devote all or part of their time to child welfare services. Child welfare services include initial assessment of reports received, investigation, the provision of services to children and families, as well the removal of children from their homes to ensure their safety.

States across the nation, including Wisconsin, are seeing an increase in the number of individuals using, and ultimately becoming addicted to, substances such as heroin, other opiates, and methamphetamines. The drug-addiction epidemic is increasing the need for child welfare services across Wisconsin.

In response to the growing caseloads in county child welfare departments, the Governor's budget increases county child welfare funding by \$5 million annually beginning in calendar year 2018. WCA requests the additional funding be maintained and supported by the Joint Committee on Finance.

The Governor's budget also includes additional funding for the In-Home Safety Services (IHSS) program. The program provides services to children and families while children are in the home to address safety issues and prevent the need for removal of children into out-of-home care placement. The budget provides nearly \$3 million in additional funding for this program to expand the program to all counties throughout the state. WCA requests the additional funding be maintained and supported by the Joint Committee on Finance.

### **Transportation Funding**

The Governor's budget provides significant increases in local transportation aids to counties and other units of local government. These increases are specifically targeted to general transportation aids, the local road improvement program, the local bridge program, and routine maintenance agreements.

The Governor's budget, however, does not include a long-term solution to funding the state's infrastructure needs. WCA requests that a long-term, sustainable, solution to funding the state's infrastructure be adopted in this budget to ensure the proposed local aids are sustainable and there is adequate funding for the state's entire transportation network.