

Wood County

Impact of the 2012-13 state budget (HB 153)

Ohio's budget for 2012 and 2013 cut local government aid by a billion dollars. This means cuts in services we depend on, from road repair and emergency services to crossing guards, senior transportation and child protective services. What are the implications for Wood County?

The state cut the Local Government Fund to the county, forcing Wood County to make cuts to jurisdictions within the county. The state also cut direct funding to municipalities, and slashed reimbursements for taxes it had eliminated, taxes that businesses and utilities had paid to local governments. School districts and the public library fund were also cut. Losses in calendar years 2012 and 2013, compared to 2010 and 2011, include, among others:

- Public Library Fund - \$268.0 thousand
- Schools - \$13.5 million
- County operations (including townships and parks) - \$5.9 million

Loss of tax reimbursement

- Bowling Green - \$403.0 thousand
- Northwood - \$404.0 thousand
- Perrysburg - \$883.0 thousand
- Rossford - \$474.0 thousand

Loss to health and human service levies

- County mental health - \$2.0 million
- County children's services - \$241.0 thousand
- County senior services - \$162.0 thousand
- Wood County Health District - \$129.0 thousand

Notes and Quotes

"You always hate to go to the people for more money in this day and age... Some people don't have a job. They're losing their homes. But it's gotten to the point we're afraid we're going to have to." – Gary Britten, Perrysburg Township Trustee, Wood County. From Russon, Gabrielle, "Levy sought to fund EMS, fire services," *Toledo Blade*, May 29, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/8kscvzx>.

Key findings

- Wood County, its jurisdictions, schools, services and levies, lost \$24 million in the current state budget.
- Health and human services lost \$2.5 million.
- Lake Board of Education cuts staff and services.
- Levies and cuts are under consideration.

In response to state budget cuts, the Lake Board of Education eliminated 43 positions in March of 2012. Eight of these positions were teachers. The Board also reduced its kindergarten program from every day to every other day. Walbridge Elementary School closed at the end of the 2011-2012 school year. From Rogers, Debbie, "Lake cuts deep," *Sentinel-Tribune*, March 22, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/7dn9acx>.

In November, Perrysburg Township will vote on a fire and EMS services levy that would raise about \$1.45 million per year. Fire Chief Tom Brice says cuts will be likely if the levy does not pass. From Russon, Gabrielle, "Levy sought to fund EMS, fire services," *Toledo Blade*, May 29, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/8kscvzx>.

"There's no fat. There's no fluff. What do you have to cut? Meat – that's it. That's all that's left to cut." – Margene Akenberger, board member of Lake Local School District. From Carr-Smyth, "Ohio school districts await Kasich's new funding formula," *The Associated Press/The News-Herald*, February 26, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/9llq79o>.

NOTES: The current state budget cuts the **Local Government Fund** to counties, municipalities and townships by 25 percent in the first year and by 50 percent in the second year. This 77-year old state revenue sharing program has, for generations, been essential to helping Ohio communities fund schools, provide services, and lift people out of poverty. The current state budget also phases out most of the **tangible personal property tax** and **public utility property tax reimbursements**, which were promised to local governments when the state cut taxes in recent years. These are not the only losses to local governments because of this budget. There are others in specific programs. Here we detail some of the bigger shifts. Change in revenues shown here include: 1) **Local Government Fund "County Undivided Fund,"** which counties share with their cities, townships and villages. We show how much less money the counties are receiving under the current 2-year state budget (for 2012 and 2013) compared to the two years under the prior state budget (which was for 2010 and 2011). Here the funds are shown on a calendar year basis because that is how the tax department forecasts and records their distribution to local governments, and it is how local governments budget (The state budget is based on the fiscal year, July 1 through June 30); 2) **Local Government "Municipal Direct" allocation** from the Local Government Fund that the state gives directly to localities. This is also shown in terms of funding provided in the calendar years 2012 and 2013 compared to 2010 and 2011; and 3) **Property tax reimbursements** promised to local governments during tax reductions enacted earlier in the decade. The loss of funding in calendar years 2012 and 2013 is compared to the level of funding provided in 2010 and 2011. The figures for changes in funding levels are based on data provided by and spreadsheets online at the Ohio Department of Taxation for local government funds and tax reimbursement distributions.

