

Fairfield County

Impact of Ohio's 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 Fairfield County?

The state cut the Local Government Fund to the county, forcing Fairfield 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 - \$141.0 thousand
- Schools - \$11.6 million
- County operations (including LGF for townships and parks) - \$3.9 million
- Lancaster - \$1.4 million
- Pickerington - \$307.0 thousand
- Violet Township - \$354.0 thousand

Loss to health and human service levies

- County mental health - \$809.0 thousand
- County seniors services - \$96.0 thousand

Notes and quotes

"For a city this size, we should probably have around 80 firefighters. The work is there, and we have that many runs in the city....But the other reality is the funding is not there. Having a department with 68 firefighters and medics may very well be the norm for the foreseeable future, and we have to be prepared for that." - Greenfield Township Fire Chief Terry Morris. From Burnett, Carl Jr., "Exclusive watchdog report: City fire cuts straining surrounding townships." *Lancaster Eagle Gazette*. January 15, 2012. <http://tinyurl.com/cvtte3v>.

In October 2011 Lancaster laid off 13 firefighters and closed an Engine House to adjust to the budget cuts. From Burnett, Carl Jr. "Exclusive watchdog report: City fire cuts straining surrounding townships." *Lancaster Eagle Gazette*. January 15, 2012. <http://tinyurl.com/cvtte3v>.

Key findings

- Fairfield County, its jurisdictions, schools, services and levies, lost \$18.5 million in the current state budget.
- Health and human services to lose \$905 thousand.
- Several communities are short-staffed for firefighting and emergency medical services.
- Communities have reduced public transportation hours.
- Mental health services have been cut.

"We already are short-staffed here... We normally have four medics on duty around the clock" - Greenfield Township Fire Chief Terry Morris (speaking on making mutual runs into Lancaster).

From Burnett, Carl Jr. "Exclusive watchdog report: City fire cuts straining surrounding townships."

Lancaster Eagle Gazette, January 15, 2012.

<http://tinyurl.com/cvtte3v>.

"Fire and police [unions' bargaining units] had closed contracts, but they opened them up to allow us to work with them on a number of issues... But Smith still had to lay off the firefighters, and he insisted that Senate Bill 5 wouldn't have saved the day for anybody." – Lancaster Mayor David Smith. From Somanader, Tanya. "Ohio GOP Mayor Slams Senate Bill 5." *Think Progress*. November 1, 2011.

<http://tinyurl.com/ckzt2x4>.

An approximately \$230,000 cut in funding has forced Lancaster Public Transit to cut the number of vehicles it runs and reduce its daily operations from 12 hours to 10 hours. From Ellis, Nate. "Lancaster Public Transit plans to reduce hours, vehicles." *Pickerington Times-Sun*. February 15, 2012. <http://tinyurl.com/d3wnbmd>.

Gaps in mental health and addiction services have developed due to reductions in resources and budget cuts. From "Fairfield ADAMAH Board Annual Report." *Fairfield County*. August 22, 2011. <http://tinyurl.com/d5voph2>.

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:

- **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 on a fiscal year basis, from July 1 to June 30).
- **Local Government "Municipal Direct" allocation** from the Local Government Fund that the state gives directly to municipalities with an income tax. This is also shown in terms of funding provided in the calendar years 2012 and 2013 compared to 2010 and 2011.
- **Property tax reimbursements** promised to local governments during tax reductions enacted earlier in the decade; 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.

