

Scioto County

Impact of 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 Scioto County?

The state cut the Local Government Fund to the county, forcing Scioto 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 - \$161 thousand
- Schools - \$3.0 million
- County operations (including LGF for townships) - \$1.8 million
- New Boston Corp. - \$299 thousand
- Portsmouth - \$1.2 million
- Scioto County Joint Ambulance - \$21 thousand

Loss to health and human service levies:

- County mental health/developmental disabilities - \$430 thousand
- County children's services - \$93 thousand
- County senior services - \$26 thousand

Notes and quotes

The Scioto Township Fire Department's budget was reduced by 56 percent from 2011 to 2012. As a result, the department had to cut full time staff by 25 percent and part-time staff by 75 percent. The number of fire fighters on duty at any given moment has been reduced from six to three. These cuts were due largely to the privatization of emergency services at a local correctional facility. From Lucas, Matt, "Scioto Township levy fails on second try," *Circleville Today*, March 7, 2012 <http://tinyurl.com/93phfuz>.

Key findings

- Scioto County, its jurisdictions, schools, services and levies lost \$7.1 million in the current state budget.
- Health and human services lost \$549 thousand.
- Scioto County's Engineering Department has spent the last two decades creating a countywide tax map that reveals property boundaries for property tax purposes. On January 1, 2012, budget cuts halted the work.
- Full-time staff at the Scioto Township Fire Department had been cut by 25 percent and the use of part-time staff had been cut by nearly 75 percent. An additional 3.8 mill levy for fire and EMS services failed to pass in March and the representative Fire Chief Porter R. Welch says that the staffing cuts will have to go further, despite staffing only three firefighters per day.

“We’ve cut staffing to the bare bones at this point. Employees have already taken concessions ... Unfortunately, these will have to go farther.” – Porter R. “Chip” Welch, Scioto Township fire chief. From Lucas, Matt, “Scioto Township levy fails on second try,” *Circleville Today*, March 7, 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/93phfuz>.

Title XX funding for Access Scioto Public Transit was eliminated, and as a result senior citizens began having to pay to use public transportation in 2009. From 2008 to 2011, senior citizen ridership decreased by 43 percent. From “Access Scioto County Public Transit 2011 Year End Report,” Access Scioto Public Transit, 2011, <http://tinyurl.com/buq85mf>.

Since 1900, the Scioto County Engineering Department had maintained and updated property maps for tax collection purposes. Due to budget cuts, the Engineering Department stopped updating these maps in January of 2012. From Allen, Wayne, “Engineer’s office no longer updating tax maps,” *Portsmouth Daily Times*, January 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/8gnyoa3>.

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;
- **Local Government “Municipal Direct” allocation** from the Local Government Fund that the state gives directly to municipalities with an income tax, and
- **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.

