



# The California County Platform | Chapter 16 Realignment

*Adopted by the CSAC Board of Directors November 2020*

## INTRODUCTION

In 2011, an array of law enforcement and health and human services programs – grouped under a broad definition of “public safety services” – was transferred to counties along with a defined revenue source. The 2011 Realignment package was a negotiated agreement with the Brown Administration and came with a promise, realized with the November 2012 passage of Proposition 30, of constitutional funding guarantees and protections against costs associated with future programmatic changes, including state and federal law changes as well as court decisions. Counties will oppose proposals to change the constitutional fiscal structure of 2011 Realignment, including proposals to change or redirect growth funding that does not follow the intent of the law.

CSAC will oppose efforts that limit county flexibility in implementing programs and services realigned in 2011 or infringe upon our individual and collective ability to innovate locally. Counties resolve to remain accountable to our local constituents in delivering high-quality programs that efficiently and effectively respond to local needs. Further, we support counties’ development of appropriate measures of local outcomes and dissemination of best practices. These statements are intended to be read in conjunction with previously adopted and refined Realignment Principles, already incorporated in the CSAC Platform below. These principles, along with the protections enacted under Proposition 1A (2004), will guide our response to any future proposal to shift additional state responsibilities to counties.

## SECTION 1: GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Facing the most challenging fiscal environment in the California since the 1930s, counties are examining ways in which the state-local relationship can be restructured and improved to ensure safe and healthy communities. This effort, which will emphasize both fiscal adequacy and stability, does not seek to reopen the 1991 state-local Realignment framework. However, that framework will help illustrate and guide counties as we embark on a conversation about the risks and opportunities of any state-local realignment.

With the passage of Proposition 1A the state and counties entered into a new relationship whereby local property taxes, sales and use taxes, and Vehicle License Fees are constitutionally dedicated to local governments. Proposition 1A also provides that the Legislature must fund state-mandated programs; if not, the Legislature must suspend those state-mandated programs. Any effort to realign additional programs must occur in the context of these constitutional provisions.

Counties have agreed that any proposed realignment of programs should be subject to the following principles:

- 1) **Revenue Adequacy.** The revenues provided in the base year for each program must recognize existing levels of funding in relation to program need in light of recent reductions and the Human Services Funding Deficit. Revenues must also be at least as great as the expenditures for each program transferred and as great as expenditures would have been absent realignment. Revenues in the base year and future years must cover both direct and indirect costs. A county's share of costs for a realigned program or for services to a population that is a new county responsibility must not exceed the amount of realigned and federal revenue that it receives for the program or service. The state shall bear the financial responsibility for any costs in excess of realigned and federal revenues into the future. There must be a mechanism to protect against entitlement program costs consuming non-entitlement program funding.
  - a. The Human Services Funding Deficit is a result of the state funding its share of social services programs based on 2001 costs instead of the actual costs to counties to provide mandated services on behalf of the state. Realignment must recognize existing and potential future shortfalls in state responsibility that have resulted in an effective increase in the county share of program costs. In doing so, realignment must protect counties from de facto cost shifts from the state's failure to appropriately fund its share of programs.
- 2) **Revenue Source.** The designated revenue sources provided for program transfers must be levied statewide and allocated on the basis of programs and/or populations transferred; the designated revenue source(s) should not require a local vote. The state must not divert any federal revenue that it currently allocates to realigned programs.
- 3) **Transfer of Existing Realigned Programs to the State.** Any proposed swap of programs must be revenue neutral. If the state takes responsibility for a realigned program, the revenues transferred cannot be more than the counties received for that program or service in the last year for which the program was a county responsibility.
- 4) **Mandate Reimbursement.** Counties, the Administration, and the Legislature must work together to improve the process by which mandates are reviewed by the Legislature and its fiscal committees, claims made by local governments, and costs reimbursed by the State. Counties believe a more accurate and timely process is necessary for efficient provision of programs and services at the local level.
- 5) **Local Control and Flexibility.** For discretionary programs, counties must have the maximum flexibility to manage the realigned programs and to design services for new populations transferred to county responsibility within the revenue base made available, including flexibility to transfer funds between programs. For entitlement

programs, counties must have maximum flexibility over the design of service delivery and administration, to the extent allowable under federal law. Again, there must be a mechanism to protect against entitlement program costs consuming non-entitlement program funding.

- 6) ***Federal Maintenance of Effort and Penalties.*** Federal maintenance of effort requirements (the amount of funds the state puts up to receive federal funds, such as IV-E and TANF), as well as federal penalties and sanctions, must remain the responsibility of the state.