



Lehigh County Annual Report for Citizens 2015

Citizens of Lehigh County:

It is my pleasure as your County Executive to provide you with the County's first-ever annual report. My intent is not to bury you in financial details but to provide you with a better understanding of what the County does and a brief overview of finances. The county's detailed budget—over 800 pages—is always available online but is not the easiest read.

During my ten years working for you--first as Director of Administration and now as County Executive--it has become increasingly obvious that what County government does is a mystery to the majority of citizens. The fact is that, since the bulk of County spending is directed at a broad range of functions I've labeled "Law & Order" and services for those in need, what the County does is understandably unknown to many of our citizens. Perhaps that's a good thing!

A critical County function is to return as much funding as possible from Harrisburg and Washington, DC to provide the services it is required to provide or which are requested by the citizens; those funding streams represent 51% of the county's overall revenue while 31% comes from real estate taxes. As you will see in this report, the vast share of your county real estate dollars go to "Law & Order" functions, which are largely unfunded by the state or federal government.

Public safety is the County's top priority. If you need help, the County's 911 system is available. If crimes are committed, your county provides some unique support to local police departments in addition to the required prosecution and incarceration of offenders. And the court system also meets all civil needs and handles a wide range of domestic relations issues.

Fiscally, *your* County is sound and that fact has been confirmed by enhanced ratings from the important bond rating agencies—Moody’s and S&P—over the past several years. *Your* County’s infrastructure is sound and more modern than is the case in other counties across the state despite population growth averaging almost 1% per year for the past 25 years. And, importantly, *your* County’s tax rates remain low because we have worked hard to reduce the amount of “government” and focus on the most important issues. As a result, the average taxpayer’s County tax bill for 2016 is \$668.

Overall, Lehigh County—*your county*—is enjoying good times. Companies see it as *the* place to be, unemployment is down, real estate prices are rising and construction focused on shopping and entertainment is strong. Center City Allentown has gotten the help it desperately needed to turn around via the NIZ from the State but the challenge now is to ensure Allentown’s success expands beyond Center City and isn’t at the expense of neighboring municipalities. More broadly, our citizens are increasingly calling for a greater commitment to the preservation of farmland and open spaces to maintain a high quality of life.

Your Lehigh County also has issues. We are in the midst of a drug epidemic, too many of our children are not getting the education they need to realize their potential, a growing number of citizens are living near or below the poverty level and the number of citizens over age 65 and in need of support is beginning to grow dramatically. Both child and senior citizen abuse continue to rise. These issues all put added pressure on County government—greater in the long term if left unaddressed now.

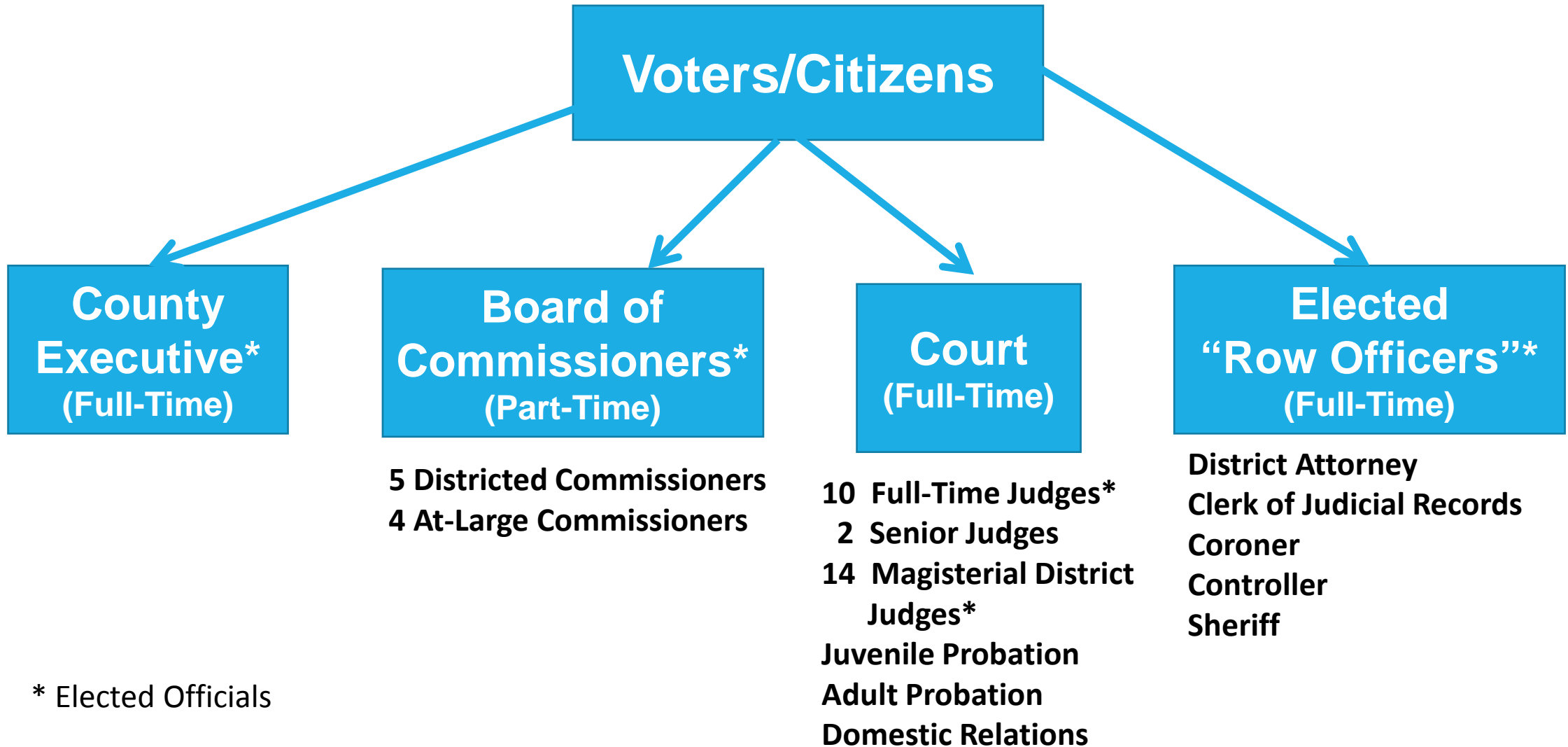
Your County government is committed to addressing these issues and to fighting for the support needed from others to succeed.



Thomas S. Muller
Your Lehigh County Executive

Lehigh County Government

(Home Rule Charter Since 1978)



2015 Financial Highlights

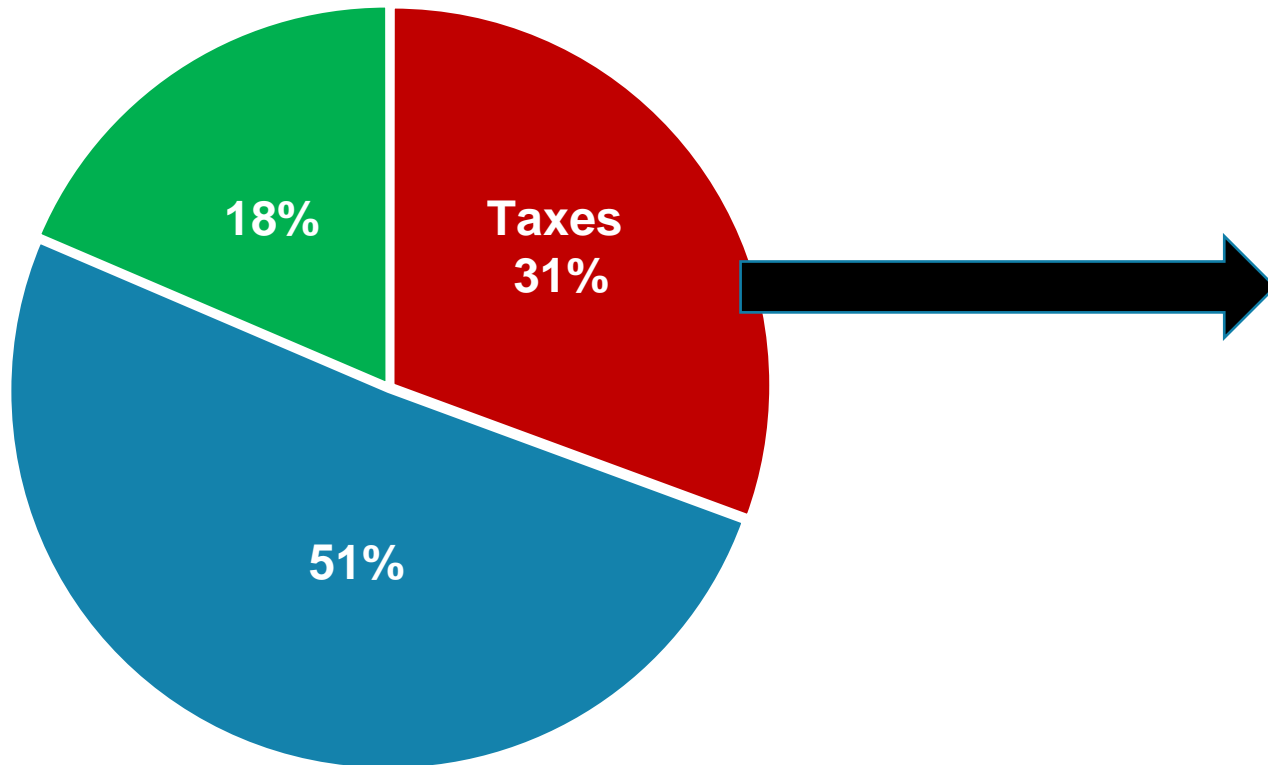
- Revenue exceeded budget by 0.8% and expenses were 2.5% under budget
- The County's "Rainy Day Fund" remains at \$25 million, which is 25% above recommended levels

	Budget	Actual	Difference
County Tax Revenue*	\$106,763,582	\$107,652,531	+\$888,949
County Tax Spending	\$107,464,885	\$104,795,363	(\$2,669,522)
Deficit/Surplus	(\$701,303)	+\$2,857,168	\$3,558,471

*Includes delinquent tax revenue from prior years

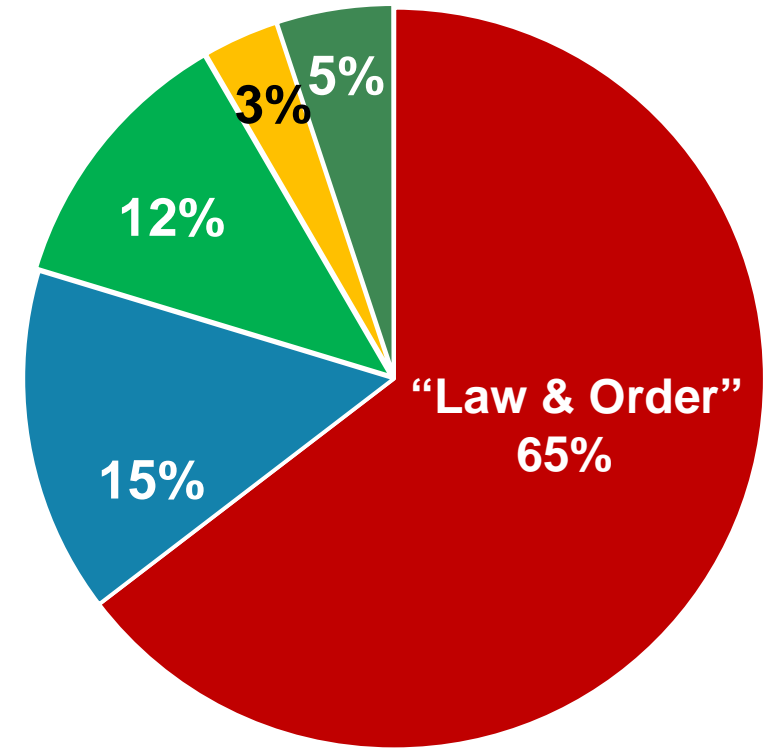
Your County Tax Dollars

2015 County Revenues



- County Real Estate Taxes
- Grants & Reimbursements
- All Other

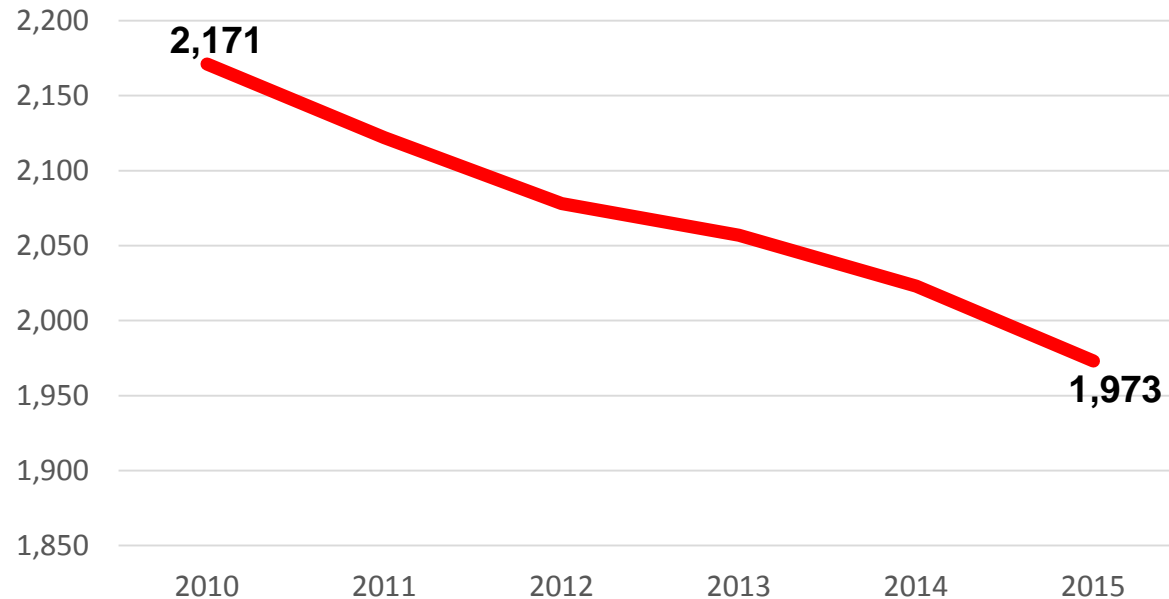
2015 County Tax Dollar Spending



- "Law & Order"
- Debt Service
- Retiree Costs
- Cedarbrook

County Personnel Count

The size of Lehigh County government has been shrinking steadily.



Note: The personnel count was 2,200 in 1990

	2010	2015
“Law & Order”	840*	786
Cedarbrook	660	623
Human Services	340	276
General Services	92	75
Administration	114	104
All Other	125	109
Total	2,171	1,973

*Includes 49 at the Juvenile Detention Center, which is now mothballed.

The Cost of “Law & Order”

- Includes Court, Corrections, District Attorney, Sheriff, Public Defender, Coroner, 911 Center and Emergency Management.
- The County receives very limited reimbursement for “Law & Order” functions—less than 5¢ of every dollar spent. In 2015, the total cost was \$81.8 million; 82.9% (\$67.8 million) was funded from County tax dollars and 12.7% was recovered through costs and fines.

County Tax Dollar Spending (\$000)	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Courts	\$27,017.9	\$27,257.1	\$26,667.4	\$25,791.6	\$25,847.9
Corrections	27,747.3	26,552.8	27,667.7	25,059.8	26,156.4
District Attorney	4,579.5	4,827.4	5,359.8	5,437.9	5,713.3
Sheriff	4,352.3	4,255.6	4,350.0	4,523.3	4,523.2
Public Defender	2,014.6	2,142.6	2,217.9	2,262.2	2,334.1
Coroner	1,495.8	1,657.8	1,718.6	1,708.4	2,056.3
911/EMS	204.5	221.7	173.0	1,429.5	1,125.6
Total Tax Dollars	\$67,411.9	\$66,915.0	\$68,154.5	\$66,212.7	\$67,756.7

2015 Criminal Justice Stats

- A total of 5,423 cases were filed, down 4.7% from 2014; 4,679 were new cases and 744 were reopened cases. A recent ruling regarding life sentences for juveniles will drive the reopening of sentencing for a number of incarcerated juveniles.
- A total of 5,592 cases were disposed, with 60.1% in guilty pleas and 35.5% receiving Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition—a program primarily for first-time offenders of lesser crimes to avoid punishment and eventually get their record expunged.
- 28.8% of incoming prisoners self-reported psychiatric history
- 21.5% of incoming prisoners required detoxification
- The County's Pre-Trial Services unit arranged for the release of 1,690 individuals without pre-trial supervision, thus providing significant cost savings relief versus incarceration. Of those 1,690, 417 were diverted to mental health treatment.
- 81% of new commitments to the Corrections system were male and 19% female.

District Attorney

In addition to effectively and fairly prosecuting adults and juveniles convicted of crimes, the office of District Attorney, **Jim Martin**, has created task forces for specialized investigations for areas such as Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, Auto Theft, Insurance Fraud and Drug Offenses.

The office also includes the following units which are not generally found in counties across the State:

Central Booking

Located in the County Jail facility, this unit enables police officers to drop off individuals they arrest for arraignment via video with Magisterial District Judges, booking and drug testing. The unit helps get officers back to their posts quickly, which is particularly critical for our smaller municipalities. The unit operates profitably due to charges authorized by the Court for the process and there is no chargeback to municipalities.

Regional Crime Center

Known more formally as the Regional Information & Investigation Center, this unit is the only one of its kind at the county level in the State and its staff has access to extensive data bases not accessible to local law enforcement officials to provide assistance and guidance in criminal investigations. Its value is particularly high in dealing with investigations crossing municipal or even county borders. An early success was the arrest and conviction of a murderer and the only information available was that the escape was in a van with a broken taillight. Northampton County has recently agreed to participate in the center and others are considering joining.

Officer David M. Petzold Digital Forensic Lab

Named after a fallen Upper Saucon Township police officer, this unit on the DeSales University campus is staffed by officers from municipalities who are specially trained to examine electronic equipment, including phones, involved in a criminal investigation. The unit is funded by the David M. Petzold Foundation and the District Attorney's forfeiture funds and the space is donated by DeSales University. In 2015 the unit played an important role in the charging and successful prosecution of a teenage girl for her mother's murder.

Sheriff's Department

- Under Sheriff **Joe Hanna**, the department provides security for County buildings and all court rooms, transports adults and juveniles who are under custody, serves/processes warrants, issues gun permits and processes real estate sales as directed by the Court.
- In 2015, the department served processes for approximately 12,000 civil cases, 1,900 family court and “Protection from Abuse” actions and 1,600 criminal warrants and 788 domestic relations warrants were resolved.
- The department also issued approximately 5,800 gun permits and processed 1,100 real estate sales.
- In 2015, transport activity included 10,581 adults and 571 juveniles being transported to court and 2,042 inmates transported to Federal or State prisons or jails in other counties.
- Transports included 31,047 miles to transport juveniles to and from detention centers in Berks and Lancaster counties following the mothballing of our juvenile detention center, which saved \$750,000 annually.

Department of Corrections

- “Corrections” includes the Lehigh County Jail in Allentown, the Community Corrections Center (aka “Work Release”) in Salisbury Township and the outsourced incarceration of juveniles.
- In 2013, the Community Corrections Center was renovated and expanded to accommodate both men and women.
- The average daily jail census in 2015 (1,114, including 185 in the Community Corrections Center) was down for the 8th straight year.
- Corrections also held an average of 83 individuals for other jurisdictions at a profitable rate to offset overall Corrections costs.
- The average daily number of youths being held was 8.16—all at out-of-county centers--which validates the decision made two years ago to mothball our own juvenile detention center, which once held over 30 youths.

Juvenile Probation

- Department staffing includes 37 full-time employees, 11 managers and 8 part-time employees
- The department utilizes sophisticated and proven evaluation tools to determine the best-suited probation supervision and direction for each juvenile with the goal of preventing any additional offenses and setting that individual on a course toward productive adulthood.
- In 2015, the department had 1,267 referrals, a decrease of 2% from the prior year, and 84.3% of youths completed supervision without re-offending.
- A total of 169 youths were detained in 2015—a reduction of 20%--and 199 were placed out of their homes.
- Juveniles under the supervision of the department completed 13,847 hours of community service and the department collected \$86,092 in restitution for crime victims.

Adult Probation

- The Adult Probation Department consists of 42 Probation Officers, 6 Probation Officer Aides and a support staff of 7.
- In 2015 the department supervised 5,010 individuals; DUI, property and drug offenses accounted for 74% of the cases.
- 316 offenders received a sentence of house arrest/electronic monitoring, thereby avoiding incarceration and saving the taxpayers money.
- At Christmas, the staff donates presents to families who otherwise wouldn't be able to celebrate the holidays.

Public Defender

- The Public Defender is recommended by the County Executive and appointed by the Board of Commissioners. **Kim Makoul** became the first full-time Public Defender in County history with her appointment in 2014.
- The staff includes 19 attorneys, 2 investigators and 4 administrative assistants, supplemented by contracted professionals as needed for cases.
- The Public Defender's office provides free representation to individuals who can't afford a private attorney. That representation continues throughout the entire judicial process, including appeals.
- The office also represents juveniles in delinquency matters and individuals in involuntary mental health commitment proceedings where representation is constitutionally required.
- In 2015, the office opened 5,661 adult cases, 747 juvenile cases and 526 mental health commitment cases.
- The office handles 80-85% of all adult criminal cases and approximately 95% of all juvenile cases.

Domestic Relations

The County is reimbursed for two-thirds of all expenses for this critical function. In 2015.....

- There were 11,586 active support cases.
- This unit was responsible for support collections of just under \$48 million.
- There were 4,287 support conferences and 5,072 contempt conferences conducted.

Judicial Records

- Functioning within the Court system, the Clerk of Judicial Records, **Andrea Naugle**, and her staff oversee a wide range of civil and criminal court filings, record all deeds, register wills and process passport requests.
- The department is the result of the consolidation of three departments in 2008 which reduced staffing by 20% and helped offset significant decreases in fees due to the recession.
- In 2015, passports activity increased by 1,000; the County earns \$25 per passport.
- 2015 activity in both Deeds and Wills was similar to the 2014 levels; the department turned over \$25.5 million in inheritance taxes to the Commonwealth and earned \$145,000 in commissions.
- Also in 2015, the department opened E-Filing to all users after a successful pilot test.

Controller' Office

- The Controller's office, under Controller **Glenn Eckhart**, is responsible for protecting the taxpayers' money by performing independent, internal audits of company operations, particularly the processing of funds.
- In 2015 the department provided oversight for over 40,000 vendor payments totaling over \$181 million, over 18,000 pension payments totaling over \$27 million.
- In addition to auditing internal operations, including the 14 Magisterial District Judge offices, the department conducts audits of hotel taxes and maintains the County's ethics hotline for anonymous concerns regarding any County operation or employee.

Coroner's Office

- Operating from the County's new Medicolegal Center built in partnership with Cetronia Ambulance Corp and under the direction of Coroner **Scott Grim**, the Coroner's Office once again dealt with a record number of investigations. There was a particularly disturbing increase in drug-related death cases and 2016 is already well ahead of that pace.

	2014	2015	Change
Natural Deaths*	2,592	2,804	+8.18%
Field Investigations	869	907	+4.37%
Cremation Reviews	2,288	2,456	+7.34%
Autopsies	244	260	+6.56%
Suicide Deaths	73	77	+5.48%
Homicide Deaths	12	15	+25.0%
Drug-Related Deaths	88	117	+32.95%
Accidental Deaths	313	369	+17.89%

* Deaths certified by physicians also get referred to the Coroner's office but require no field investigation

Department of Human Services

<https://www.lehighcounty.org/Departments/Human-Services>

Human Services helps people navigate through crisis or chronic situations where external help and guidance are needed for them to move forward with their lives and rediscover their personal power and self sufficiency. Services are designed to assist people in a variety of difficult life situations

Aging & Adult

Mental Health

Drug and Alcohol

HealthChoices

Children and Youth

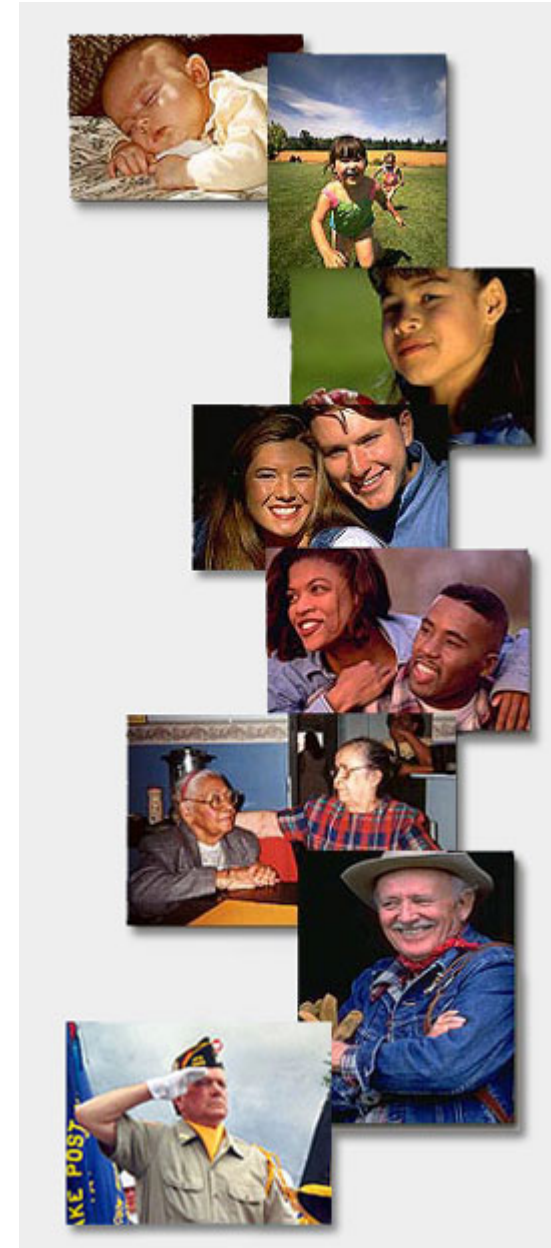
Intellectual Disabilities

Early Intervention

Integrated Services

\$000	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Budgeted Expense	\$174,592.4	\$169,293.5	\$136,918.3	\$133,787.6	\$136,569.6	\$147,488.5
Local Tax Dollars	\$6,505.8	\$5,855.8	\$5,865.7	\$5,857.4	\$5,481.6	\$5,488.7
% of Local Match	3.7%	3.5%	4.3%	4.4%	4.0%	3.7%

80% of all Human Services funds go directly to client services.



Department of Human Services

Demand increases annually.....

- There were **1,297** reports of suspected child abuse, with **105** substantiated. In 2014 the numbers were **790** and **54**
- There were **338** reports of elder abuse and **121** reports of adult abuse (ages 18-59). In 2014 the numbers were **269** and **55**
- There were **187** children in placement on 12/31/15 and **34%** were placed with relatives to maintain families
- There are **826** individuals with Intellectual Disability Waiver Services, and nearly **330** individuals receiving Family Support Services
- Over **2,300** clients receive Mental Health Services, and over **50** police officers have received Crisis Intervention Training

Over 78,000 County citizens received some form of DHS funded service!

General Services

The Department of General Services is responsible for the maintenance of all County-owned buildings and land. That includes:

- 47 bridges—41 solely owned by the County, 3 jointly owned with Northampton County and 3 jointly owned with the City of Allentown. The County has been committed for years to address any bridge identified as needing work or replacement and has gotten strong support from PADoT.
- 15 parks
- Over 4,200 acres of recreation space
- Over 40 miles of trails



Link for Parks & Recreation: <https://www.lehighcounty.org/Departments/Parks-And-Recreation>

Link for Lehigh County Sports Field Association*: <http://lcsportsfields.org/>



* Operates the County-owned sports fields on Broadway in South Whitehall Township

Cedarbrook Nursing Homes

<http://cedarbrookseniorcare.com/>

- 670 licensed beds
 - > South Whitehall: 473 licensed beds
 - > Fountain Hill: 197 licensed beds
- Rated 4 stars by Medicare
<https://www.medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare/profile.html#profTab=0&ID=395465&state=PA&lat=0&lng=0&name=CEDARBROOK%2520NURSING%2520HOMES&Distn=0.0>
- Cedarbrook is open to all Lehigh County seniors in need of long-term skilled nursing care and to parents of County residents needing skilled nursing care.
- Management provided by **Good Shepherd**, effective April 4, 2016
- The critical 2016 decision is to determine if future (2030) needs can best be met through an addition to the South Whitehall operation concurrent with planned renovations or through the construction of a completely new home. Both options will require bond funding.
- No additional skilled nursing beds have been licensed by the State in Lehigh County since the late 1990's so the responsibility for seniors in need will increasingly fall to the County as the population ages. Due to inadequate reimbursement from the State, the County experiences a net loss on each Medicaid resident. We continue to lobby the State to address this inequity.

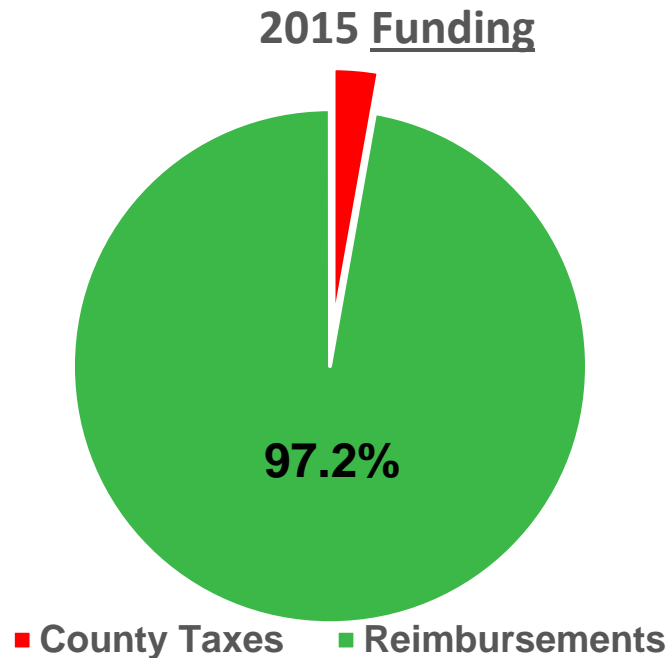


South Whitehall



Fountain Hill

Cedarbrook Nursing Home Financials



\$000	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Gross Expenses	\$58,248.7	\$59,648.2	\$59,586.3	\$57,853.7	\$57,154.2
Retiree Costs	5,383.8	5,518.0	6,276.7	5,963.7	6,349.1
Debt Service	1,084.2	1,178.2	813.5	839.1	779.2
Operating Expenses	\$51,780.6	\$52,952.0	\$52,496.1	\$51,050.8	\$50,025.9
County Tax Contribution	\$2,002.8	\$5,618.0	\$4,994.5	\$3,106.1	\$1,597.8
Daily Census	656	654	632	625	623
% Medicaid	81.8	84.7	85.3	88.2	88.6

Note: State reimbursements for Medicaid residents do not fully cover costs. Legislation that would address this is stalled in Harrisburg.

Support for Veterans

- Under the District Attorney's office, the Veteran Mentor Program assigns volunteer mentors to work with veterans who have committed lesser offenses and would be best served through mentoring. To date the program has served 60 veterans.
- Created in March, 2015, the Lehigh Valley Homeless Veteran Task Force has permanently housed 49 veterans and placed another 23 in transitional housing.

In 2015, the County's Veterans Affairs department.....

- Filed 157 VA claims resulting in awards of just over \$3 million
- Assisted in securing the property tax exemption for 50 veterans who were 100% disabled
- Filed Temporary Assistance Grant requests to help pay bills such as rent, utilities and car repairs for 23 veterans experiencing a temporary loss of income
- Distributed over 31,000 American flags for placement on veterans' graves before Memorial Day
- Distributed \$77,200 in burial benefits to the families of 667 eligible veterans and spouses
- Participated in numerous veteran events to show support, provide information and generally reach out to Lehigh County veterans

Bet You Didn't Know.....

- The County's annual budget, which relies heavily on State funding, must make assumptions about State support for half of the State's current fiscal year and half of the next.
- It costs the taxpayers \$69.27 per day—over \$25,000 per year--to hold a prisoner in the County jail and \$31.54 per day at the Community Corrections Center.
- The County's cost per meal in jail is 95.4¢.
- When an individual enters a County Corrections facility, his/her medical expenses are paid for by County taxpayers *even if there has been no conviction*.
- The coroner in the county where a death is declared is responsible to determine the cause via autopsy, lab tests, etc.. Since Lehigh County has two major trauma center hospitals with helicopters, many out-of-county victims are declared dead here and become the Lehigh County Coroner's responsibility.
- Lehigh County has the highest percentage of English language deficient citizens in the State—21.8%. If they go to court, the taxpayer funds the required interpreter....for at least 16 languages. If the defendant is fluent in English but a key family member isn't, a County-funded interpreter is required for that individual.
- Every cremation in the County must be approved by the Coroner's Office, regardless of the cause of death.
- Lehigh County ranks #5 in the State for acres of farmland preserved at 21,659 acres and #3 behind only Berks and Lancaster in the percent of total county acreage preserved—9.7%.

Lehigh County Contact Information

Lehigh County Website: www.lehighcounty.org Phone: 610-782-3000

Address: 17 South 7th Street, Allentown, PA 18101

Borough/Township Information: <https://www.lehighcounty.org/Community/Boroughs-Townships>

County Executive Tom Muller: tommuller@lehighcounty.org

Director of Administration, Dan McCarthy: danielmccarthy@lehighcounty.org

Director of Human Services, Kay Achenbach: kayachenbach@lehighcounty.org

Director of General Services, Rick Molchany: rickmolchany@lehighcounty.org

Director of Community & Economic Development, Frank Kane: frankkane@lehighcounty.org

Board of Commissioners E-mail Address: commissioners@lehighcounty.org

Board of Commissioners Website: <https://www.lehighcounty.org/Departments/Commissioners>

Aerial Tour of Lehigh County: <http://media.lehighcounty.org/LehighCountyStateoftheCounty.wmv>

Video Tour of Lehigh County:

http://www.elocallink.tv/m/v/player.php?pid=Q6xAzA14&fp=paleco_welrev3_iwd

Other Websites of Possible Interest

- Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation: <http://www.lehighvalley.org/>
- Discover Lehigh Valley: <https://www.discoverlehighvalley.com/>
- LANTA: <http://www.lantabus.com/>
- Lehigh Northampton Airport Authority: <http://www.flylvia.com/public-info/board-governors/lnaa-meetings/>
- Lehigh County Authority (water & sewer): <https://lehighcountyauthority.org/>