

Fiscal Highlights

Are Services Really Distributed Statewide? - Russell T. Frandsen

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The Social Services Appropriations Subcommittee is reviewing "how funds are distributed within the state when passed through to local government entities or allocated to various regions" for programs larger than \$1.0 million. In 1986 the Legislature established an interim subcommittee to study the allocation of social services programs to local governments. This subcommittee subsequently recommended the Legislature enact a series of bills to: 1) establish funding formulas to ensure the equitable distribution of state and federal funds to local authorities in the areas of mental health, substance abuse, aging, and public health, and 2) institute a matching requirement on counties for pass through funds (10% in Aging, 20% in both Substance Abuse and Mental Health, and a percentage to later be determined for local public health). These recommendations were codified through a series of bills. For example, the current statute for distribution of funds to address substance abuse and mental illness (UCA 62A-15-108) states, "The division shall establish . . . formulas for allocating funds to . . . provide substance abuse prevention and treatment services. . . . The formulas shall provide for allocation of funds based on need. Determination of need shall be based on population unless the division establishes, by valid and accepted data, that other defined factors are relevant and reliable indicators of need. The formulas shall include a differential to compensate for additional costs of providing services in rural areas." This section of the statute then defines the funds to which the formula should apply. The list below highlights certain programs where the distribution of funds seems disproportional to the concept of funds distributed based upon need when need is determined based upon population.

1. \$5.4 million distributed to domestic violence shelters - current distribution does not reflect population. After providing for a rural differential, funds are distributed to shelters equally where they exist throughout the state, whether in larger urban settings or smaller rural areas. The agency states, "DCFS is still planning to update the funding formula. A few unforeseen circumstances have caused the process to be delayed. The funding formula for next fiscal year will be the same as this year. DCFS has encountered some problems with the data provided by the shelters."
2. \$5.0 million distributed for drug court services - current funding distribution, for example, provides Salt Lake County with only 29.6% of the funds (37.2% of the population) but Carbon, Emery, and Grand counties with 7.3% of the funds (1.1% of the population). The Drug Court Funding Committee uses a case rate methodology for the distribution of drug court funds. All drug courts that meet the certification requirements set forth by the Administrative Office of the Courts receive funds. Available funds are divided by a three year average enrollment number to develop a case rate. Drug Courts are required to have at least 15 participants. No Drug Court receives funding for more than 125 participants.
3. \$1.8 million distributed to four local mental health centers for autism services - current funding distribution goes only to Valley Mental health (Salt Lake), Weber Human Services, Wasatch Mental Health in Utah County, and Southwest Education Center in St. George.
4. \$32.1 million distributed statewide for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits - current funding distribution, for example, provides Salt Lake and Tooele counties with 62.0% of the funds (39.3% of the population) while Davis, Morgan, and

Weber counties only receive 6.3% of the funds (19.7% of the population) and Utah, Juab, Summit, and Wasatch counties only receive 10.8% of the funds (21.6% of the population).

5. \$5.5 million distributed for "Other Assistance" which includes the Job Growth Small Business Bridge Program and the Education Training Voucher Program - current funding distribution, for example, provides Washington County with 16.8% of the funds (5.1% of the population) while Salt Lake County only receives 15.8% of the funds (37.2% of the population).
6. \$15.8 million distributed to six regions for Direct Vocational Rehabilitation Client Services - current funding distribution, for example, provides Salt Lake, Tooele, Wasatch, and Summit counties with only 32.9% of the funds (41.6% of the population) while Carbon, Duchesne, Uintah, Daggett, Emery, Grand, and San Juan counties receive 13.8% of the funds (3.9% of the population).
7. \$4.3 million distributed to six Independent Living Centers - for example, current funding distribution provides Salt Lake, Tooele, and Summit counties with only 23.7% of the funds (40.6% of the population) but Carbon, Duchesne, Uintah, Daggett, Emery, Grand, and San Juan counties with 17.3% of the funds (3.9% of the population).

For the full report please visit the following [link](#).