

# Counties: Responsibilities and Revenue

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# What's the Problem?

“Dow Hits 22,000 in Another Record-Breaking Day for the Stock Market”

August 2, 2017



“Washington State Ranks No.1 for Combined Job and Wage Growth”

February 15, 2016

*The Seattle Times*

“Revenue Forecast for Washington State up \$288 million”

September 20, 2017



# “Clark County Budget Faces 20 Million Shortfall”

July 25, 2016



# “Spokane County Facing \$10 Million Shortfall”

September 11, 2017



# “Reductions Still Needed to Balance Lewis County Budget”

August 24, 2017



# “Proposed budget cuts would hit sheriff’s office hard”

October 5, 2016



# An old problem, getting worse

“Washington local governments are fighting a losing battle to fulfill their responsibilities in today’s changing world. Their powers fall short of their problems; their structures are often outdated, and hard to change; most of all, *their revenues are inadequate for the services they are expected or required to perform.*”

Washington State Local Government Study Commission, *The Quiet Crisis of Local Governance in Washington*, **January, 1988**

“Revenue authority has been eroded from 2001 to 2007 to such an extent that in many counties, *funding is not adequate to sustain equal access to basic services.*”

Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, County Financial Health and Governance Alternatives, **December, 2007**

“Local governments continue to face the fiscally challenging combination of *rising costs and constrained revenues* that could jeopardize their financial stability long after the state and national economies fully recover.”

Washington State Auditor’s Office, *State Auditor’s Office Progress Report: Local Government Financial Health*, **August 2014**

# Solutions

We have asked for help:

- Controlling costs
- Increasing state shared revenues
- Providing new locally approved revenue tools

Given lack of Legislative response and other options, WSAC is exploring a litigation strategy

HB 2011 – compare local government responsibilities and revenues



# QUESTIONS?

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