

Taxation & Finance

Strengthening County Revenues	
Clear Creek County	
Preferred Contact:	George Marlin, Clear Creek County, gmarlin@clearcreekcounty.us 303-949-0980
Co-Sponsoring Counties/Commissioners:	None yet. Many have expressed interest.
Who is your subject matter expert?	Colton Rohloff, County Manager, Clear Creek County, 970-409-6035, Crohloff@clearcreekcounty.us Peter Lichtman, County Attorney, Clear Creek County, 303-903-9040 plichtman@clearcreekcounty.us
Has this proposal been approved by your BoCC?	Yes.
Have you reviewed the CCI Instructional Memo?	Yes.
Describe the problem your proposal will solve.	County Fiscal deterioration. CCI produced a survey in 2026 to better understand the fiscal condition of counties throughout Colorado. The survey put collective data points to the pain that counties are experiencing as we try to provide services tailored to each of our communities. Seventy-eight percent of Colorado Counties report moderate to severe fiscal pressure. The survey found that instead of being positioned to meet the moment for our constituents who are experiencing an affordability crisis, 52% of counties are laying off staff, freezing wages and reducing benefits. Fewer people to provide the core services our constituents rely on, reduced morale among those who stay, and higher turnover is resulting in service level deteriorations. The problem shows no sign of abating on its own.
Areas of Impact:	Day-to-day operations of the county, Functionality of county programs or services, Power/Authority/Mandate of county government, General community advancement
What is the ultimate source of this problem?	CCI survey results show the top four drivers of this county fiscal crisis: cost inflation on both personnel and supplies, declining tax revenue and reduced state and federal funding. There are a myriad of factors driving these conditions. Some of these factors are recent, such as the change to the residential assessment rates combined with recent state budget cuts

	while others are the result of decades of downward pressure on our fiscal capacity, such as HUTF failing to keep up with inflation. None of these factors show any sign of abating themselves on their own. Counties will have to advocate for fiscal relief themselves and find partners who value the broad set of services we provide to support us in that advocacy.
What is your initial proposal to solve this problem?	This proposal is to seek a solution in the 2027 session that provides fiscal relief to politically and economically diverse counties. Rather than propose a specific solution in July, this proposal is for CCI to dedicate ample bandwidth to defining solutions that meet our needs. Those solutions could involve new county authorities, voter options, statewide referred measures, or state budget investments.
Please provide sample language for this solution.	Sample language is not available at this time, due to the diversity of potential solutions
Are there any solutions that do not require state-level legislation? Has your county explored these alternatives?	The solutions available to counties without new legislation remain largely confined to proposing increases in sales and property taxes or continuing to reduce staff and the services they provide, delay capital projects and reduce or eliminate programs.
Has CCI or any other organizations sought a solution to this problem before?	Many specific solutions have been proposed and debated over the years. Some have passed, such as the lodging tax efforts (both to reallocate and to increase the % to 6%) , but did not adequately address the needs of politically and economically diverse counties. In sum, these solutions do not bring in the level of funding necessary for counties to keep up with our statutory duties or the expectations of our constituents. Others have either not met the threshold to become CCI priorities or did not pass in legislature, such as the proposal to divert some of the Keep Colorado Wild funds to counties for road work. What each failed proposal has lacked is robust stakeholding with potential supporters to identify what has both support at CCI and a path through the legislature.
What possible organization(s) would support your proposed solution?	Organizations that would support our proposed solutions are those who value and advocate for issues that county governments address. Because County Governments have such a diverse array of services and expertise, the potential list of supporters could be quite large.
What possible organization(s) would oppose your proposed solution?	Organizations who may oppose a solution include those who may have to pay into a new revenue solution and those who lack confidence in county government as a credible partner in serving Coloradans. There may be organizations in Colorado who oppose more revenue tools for counties because of competition for limited dollars.

Have you spoken with any legislators about your proposed solution? If so, what was their response?	Many legislators have engaged in both support of and in opposition to county fiscal enhancement. A solution that has a path through the legislature and the support of CCI can find legislative champions. If counties are able to do our jobs to the extent needed and required, it not only helps the State but advances our shared mission to serve Coloradans as they deserve
What are the financial implications of this problem to your county?	Clear Creek County is just one example of the financial implications of this problem. We have delayed crucial capital projects that will only become more costly with time, cancelled market evaluations of compensation and reduced staffing levels across the organization.
Are there any financial implications to this solution either?	A solution would allow Clear Creek to catch up on our capital, compensation and staffing needs, resulting in better services to our residents and better quality of life in our communities. The right solution will enable politically and economically diverse counties to do the same.
What are the financial implications of this problem to any other impacted parties?	Many parties who rely on counties suffer under this environment. Departments from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Colorado Department of Human Service to Colorado State Patrol and the Division of Fire Prevention and Control rely on strong county governments to accomplish their missions. Without robust county engagement, these entities incur increased administrative costs and deterioration of their mission.
What are the financial implications of this solution to any other impacted parties? <i>Please consider any relevant Colorado State Departments.</i>	Solutions would need to be designed such that the financial impact of divisions such as the Department of Revenue would be zero or close to zero in order to pass in the current fiscal environment.
Staff Feedback	<u>Risk/Difficulties:</u> <u>Time Commitment:</u>