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Court Administrator

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By SH Deputy

July 1, 2011

To: The Honorable Special Master Kathleen Blatz

From: Jeff Spartz, AMC Executive Director

RE: Critical County Services

The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) respectfully requests that several programs be funded based on conclusions in the June 29 ruling granting temporary funding to the state.

The following are programs that are not clearly identified in the order, but we believe fit within the context of services that have already been deemed critical.

**#11: Funding is mandated by the supremacy clause of the U.S. Government.**

- **CCSA Block Grant:** This grant contains \$31 million of federal Title XX funds that the state distributes under agreement with the federal government.
- **Title IVE:** This grant contains funds passed through from the federal government to counties.
- **MFIP Consolidated Fund:** This grant contains \$104 million from the federal TANF program, made available to counties for helping MFIP recipients find work, determine eligibility and administer the cash portion of the MFIP cash assistance program
- **Child Support Enforcement:** These grants are funded in part with federal child support incentive dollars.

**#4: Core functions include matters related to the life, health and safety of Minnesota citizens.**

- **CCSA Block Grant:** At least 40% of these funds are used by counties to prevent children and vulnerable adults from abuse and neglect. Thus, continuation of these dollars is necessary to protect the life and safety of vulnerable citizens.
- **Children's Mental Health Screening and Targeted Case Management Grants and Grants For Adults With Serious and Persistent Mental Illness.** These grants fund work by counties for screening, case management and support services for seriously mentally ill individuals. In addition, the state operated services staff dedicated to work with the adult mental health initiatives should continue to be funded under this rationale.

**#27: Provision of medical services to individuals constitutes a 'critical core function of government that should continue to be funded'.**

- **Children's Mental Health Screening and Targeted Case Management Grants and Grants For Adults With Serious and Persistent Mental Illness:** These grants fund work by counties for screening, case management and support services for seriously mentally ill individuals. Mental health has now been recognized as having parity with other health conditions for purposes of insurance coverage and thus should be funded under this conclusion.

**#27: Maintenance of public safety and immediate public health concerns are recognized as critical core functions of government.**

- **Relative Custody Assistance:** Placement of abused and neglected children with relatives is often the best and safest alternative for children in need of protective services. If clients cannot be placed with these family members, they may be forced to reside in a less safe environment.
- **Local Public Health Block Grant:** Minnesota Statute 145A.04 subd 6 requires city and county boards of health to "make investigations and reports and obey instructions on the control of communicable diseases as the commissioner may direct under section 144.12, 145A.06, subdivision 2, or 145A.07. Boards of health must cooperate so far as practicable to act together to prevent and control epidemic diseases." At the city and county level, the Local Public Health Block Grant is the primary source of funding available for communicable disease prevention, investigation, and response activities. This funding is critical to the communicable disease activities mandated in state law that are designed to protect the public health of Minnesotans.
- **Community Corrections Act Subsidy and County Probation Officer Reimbursement:** AMC supports the court's ruling that community supervision of offenders (probation and parole) is a critical function of state government. This ruling should be clarified to include funds that pass through to counties to provide this service. In Community Corrections Act (CCA) and County Probation Officer (CPO) counties, offenders are supervised by county departments that are substantially funded by the state through the CCA subsidy and CPO reimbursement. 72% of Minnesota's offenders are supervised by a CCA department and another 13% are supervised by a CPO department (source: MN DOC - 2010 Probation Survey). The continuation of those funds during the shutdown is critical to the continued function of community supervision in Minnesota.

**#39: Funds that are lawfully appropriated should be paid on schedule.**

- **County Program Aid (CPA):** The appropriation for County Program Aid can be found in 477A.03, the same section of law as Local Government Aid which was referenced on page 14 #39 of the order. AMC respectfully requests that the \$197,790,575 appropriation found in 477A.03 for CPA be paid on schedule as well.
- **Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT):** Like Local Government Aid and County Program Aid, PILT is a standing appropriation found in 84.51, 97A.061 and 477A.12 and AMC respectfully requests that payments are made as scheduled in current law.

AMC is a voluntary statewide organization that assists the state's 87 counties in providing effective county governance to the people of Minnesota by working closely with the legislative and administrative branches of government and by providing educational programs, training, research and communications for county officials and staff.