

Williamson County and Unfunded Mandates

Fact Sheet

1. Costs of health care, motor fuel, road-building materials, and all other products and services purchased by Williamson County continue to rise steeply.
2. The cost of indigent criminal defense to the county has risen 52.5% from 2012 through 2017, and the state's reimbursement has gone from 10.8% in 2012 to only 16.6% in 2016.
3. Current state funding formulas are not taking into consideration the high cost of providing mental health treatment as an identified need in over 40% of all state juvenile justice referrals. The Williamson County budget for juvenile services has risen 9.5% from 2014 to 2017, primarily to cover the costs of mental health services for youth and families, but assistance from the Texas Juvenile Justice Department has decreased 8.3% in the same period.
4. Currently, there are nearly 120 Williamson County jail inmates with a psychiatric diagnosis, which equates to 20% of the total jail population. According to the sheriff's office, last year's spending for psychotropic medications was around \$137,000 for 20% of the population. \$188,279 was spent yearly on non-psychiatric medication for the other 80%. Wait times for placement of a violent inmate into a mental health facility ranges from several weeks to upwards of 8-10 months. Williamson County taxpayers are on the hook for most of these costs because the State of Texas does not follow a court order to take these inmates within 21 days. In fact, the state appealed this order.