

Winnebago County, WI

Budget in Brief



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Your County,
Your Budget:
Transparent, Strategic,
and Accountable

County Board of Supervisors

Tom Egan, Chairperson

Chuck Farrey, Vice-Chairperson

District	Name	District	Name
1	Rachael Dowling	19	Joshua Belville
2	Kristl Laux	20	Timothy Macho
3	Walt Ulbricht	21	John Hinz
4	Jeff Lutz	22	Doug Zellmer
5	Stefanie Holt	23	Brenda Pluchinsky
6	Lucas Reinke	24	Andy Buck
7	Kate Hancock-Cooke	25	Karen Powers
8	Jim Wise	26	Conley Hanson
9	Donald Nussbaum	27	Morris Cox
10	Bryan Stafford	28	Nate Gustafson
11	Tim Paterson	29	George Bureau
12	Maribeth Gabert	30	Chuck Farrey
13	Steve Binder	31	Ralph Harrison
14	Thomas Swan	32	Frank Frassetto
15	Amber Gilbertson	33	Tom Egan
16	Christian Mueller	34	Tim O'Brien
17	Billy Halbur	35	Douglas Nelson
18	James Ponzer	36	Howard Miller

Message from County Executive



It is my privilege to present the 2026 Winnebago County Executive Budget. This budget reflects a commitment to building a transparent, accountable budget that delivers high-quality services to its residents while being fiscally responsible and forward-looking. This budget prioritizes investments in housing, infrastructure needs, efficient government, and fulfilling our mandates in social services to the federal and state government as well as the expectations of our communities.

Our county has been budgeting for deficits and ending up with surpluses creating a stable reserve fund but at the cost of investments in maintenance, economic development, and key staffing positions. This budget gets closer to a balanced budget with a five-year average of turnover savings (actual positions filled), cost-recovery, and internal efficiencies. The structural deficit, the difference between revenues and expenses, has been reduced from \$8,587,512 to \$7,236,065. 29% of the fund balance applied to the deficit were to cover one-time purchases or supporting the Fox Cities Campus. We were allowed an increase of \$884,000 in revenue due to net new construction of 1.43% throughout the county to help cover rising costs, tariffs, wage increases and growing demands.

Despite the stable position we find ourselves in for this budget, we still face \$67 million in deferred maintenance, a courthouse that's out of compliance with security standards, a highway building that's too small for present day equipment, a facilities shop on the south side of Oshkosh far from the buildings its staff services, and deficiencies in our three office buildings. Federal cuts to Medicaid, called BadgerCare in Wisconsin, will cause the county to bear additional costs in 2027 and beyond. Uncertainty about federal grant programs will cause the county to choose maintaining services that now need to be funded with property tax dollars or cutting programs. We will need to continue to pursue cost-recovery sources, find internal efficiencies, and spur economic development to increase net new construction with our limited revenue streams.

This budget prepares Winnebago County for the future with investments in the successful Homeless, Evictions, and Loss Prevention (HELP) Program, investing in our staff with 3% market adjustment and 2% achievable merit pay to help recruit and retain employees, and \$19,209,498 investment in capital infrastructure projects.

A detailed budget can be found on the Winnebago County website under the Finance Department or at <https://www.co.winnebago.wi.us/finance>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dale R. Hef", written in a cursive style.

Winnebago County Executive

Year in Review

2025 Accomplishments in Brief

Year in Review



County 9-1-1 dispatch fielded 51,079 emergency calls, nearly six calls per hour 24/7/365



Land & Water Conservation partnered with local farmers to install \$491,028 in conservation projects



IT Helpdesk cleared 9,510 tickets, answered 1,590 phone calls to keep employees connected in offices & in the field



investment in training staff at Park View Health Center continues successes with 61 CNA training center graduates



Public Health performs ~ 1,100 annual health inspections of restaurants, pools, campgrounds to keep us all safe & healthy



Public Health also deployed a grant-funded program that made 22 homes lead-safe for children and families



County Child Support team professionally and compassionately managed 8,800+ active child support cases

2025 Accomplishments



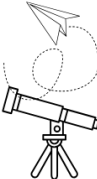
Winnebago County led the state in implementing Act 235 with a cross-team effort from GIS, Corporation Counsel, IT, Sheriff departments



County Veteran Service Office on track to deliver \$67.4 million in veteran services compensation & pension to county veterans in 2025



Winnebago County switched to Next Generation 911, allowing emergency responders to communicate/coordinate better than ever



Economic impact study, \$297 million generated at county-owned Wittman Field through EAA's AirVenture, 80,000+ annual aircraft operations

Acquired responsibility for Fox Cities campus & Wisconsin's second largest planetarium, Barlow Planetarium, following UWO FCC closure

Strategic Plan

In the Spring of 2025, the Winnebago County Board passed a strategic plan consisting of 5 pillars with associated goals. This budget was prepared through the lens of the 5 pillars: Transportation, Housing, Economic Development, Efficient Government, and Quality of Life.

2025 - 2029 Strategic Plan



Winnebago County Wisconsin



- Ensure Housing for All
- Cultivate Community Support
- Streamline Development



- County-wide Connectivity
- Maintain Existing systems
- Future-ready Infrastructure



- Position County as Leader
- Strengthen Business Ecosystem



- Transparent & Engaged
- Modernize Service Delivery
- Leadership & Governance



- Recreation & Open Space
- Water Conservation
- Arts & Culture

Quick Budget Facts

Property Tax Revenue	\$74,078,808
All Other Revenue Sources	\$152,760,037
Total Revenue	\$226,838,845
Wages + Benefits	\$114,850,688
Operating Expenses	\$120,039,541
Travel	\$1,117,091
Capital Outlay*	\$2,368,593
Total Expenditures	\$238,375,913

*Equipment purchases of \$5,000 to \$100,000

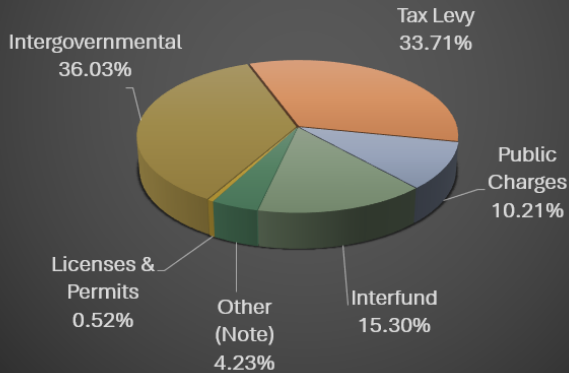
Top 10 Departments by Expenses

Departments	Proposed 2026 Expenses	% of Budget	Total %
Human Services	\$59,237,049	24.85%	24.85%
Sheriff	\$32,043,180	13.44%	38.29%
Highway	\$21,857,173	9.17%	47.46%
Park View Health Center	\$21,258,107	8.92%	56.38%
Self-Funded Health Ins	\$20,780,274	8.72%	65.10%
Solid Waste	\$12,571,949	5.27%	70.37%
Debt Service	\$9,062,201	3.80%	74.14%
Facilities & Property Mgmt	\$7,425,112	3.11%	77.29%
Public Health	\$7,256,440	3.04%	80.33%
Airport	\$ 4,884,998	2.05%	82.38%
All others	\$41,999,430	17.68%	100%

Revenue and Expenditure Assumptions

2026 Revenue Assumptions

Winnebago County
Where The Funds Come From



NOTE: " Other" category consists of other taxes, interest on investments, and other miscellaneous revenues such as rental, nonoperating grants, and sale of property and equipment.

↑ **New Property Tax Revenue from New Construction**
1.43% or \$884,000

↑ **Intergovernmental State Aid (Grants)**
3.18% or \$2.5M

↑ **Public Charges (ex. Boat Launch Fee)**
6.56% or \$1.4M

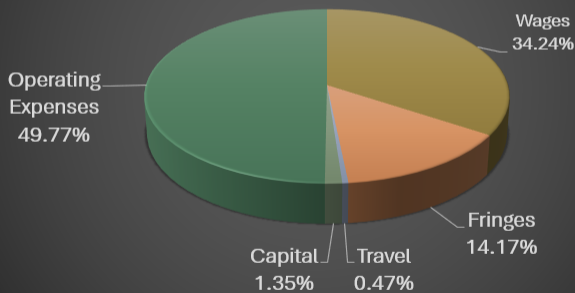
↑ **Interfund Revenue (Charges for Services Between Departments)**
16.75% or \$5.5M

↑ **Licenses & Permits**
.27% of \$3K

↑ **Other**
3.86% or \$352K

2026 Expenditure Assumptions

Winnebago County
Where The Funds Go



↑ **Wages: 3% Market Adjustment 2% Merit**
5.95% or \$4.7M

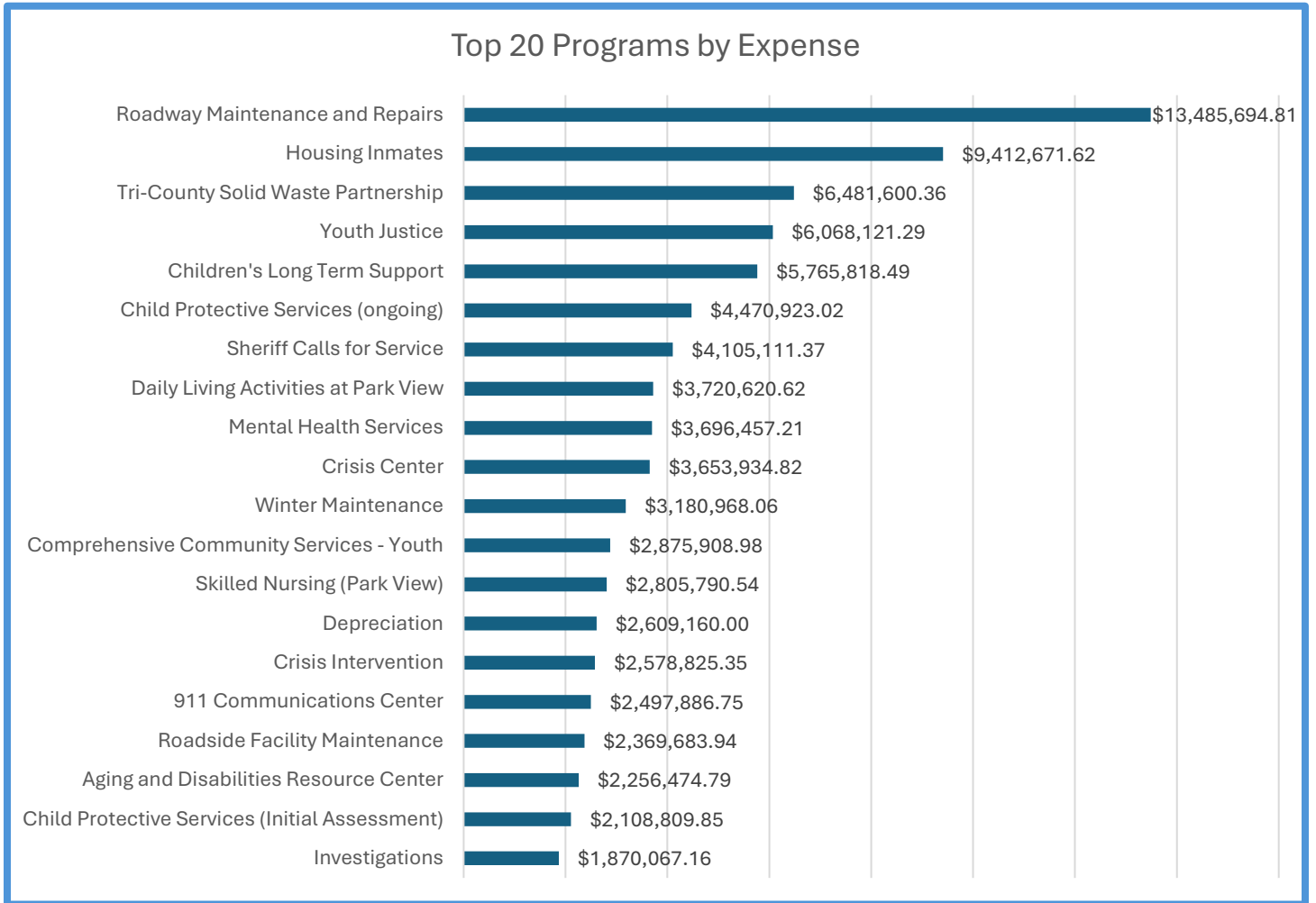
↑ **Fringe (Health Insurance, Retirement, Other Benefits)**
.11% or \$36K

↑ **Travel**
3.9% or \$42K

↓ **Capital Outlay (\$5k to \$100k Equipment)**
-23.7% or \$735K

↑ **Operating Expenses**
4.93% or \$5.6M

Top 20 Programs by Expense



2026 Position Changes

This budget has a net increase of 26.2 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions across the county.

- 32.2 new FTEs are being added to the Table of Organization.
 - 8.2 FTE of that is funded by grants and program revenue.
 - 5 positions are moving the project positions in the HELP program to permanent positions and have a negligible impact on the budget year-to-year.
 - 6 address growing demands at the jail.
 - 5 positions are added to facilities for custodial and maintenance services reducing contracted janitorial services.
 - 32.5% of new position costs are funded by intergovernmental revenue such as grants.
- 5 positions are being eliminated in this budget saving the county \$431,775.
- 7 positions are being reclassified into 6 positions with a net savings of \$9,072.

<i>Table of Organization New Positions</i>		
Title	Department	FTE Incr
Contract and Procurement Administrator	Administration	1
Paralegal	Corporation Counsel	1
Deputy County Clerk	County Clerk	1
Facilities Assistant	Facilities	4
Facilities Specialist	Facilities	1
Crisis Center Specialist	Human Services	0.2
Drop-In Center Specialist	Human Services	1
Administrative Associate III	Human Services	1
Long Term Services Case Manager	Human Services	1
Homeless Prevention Specialist (HELP)	Human Services	5
Program Supervisor (HELP)	Human Services	1
Social Work Specialist (State Funded CLTS)	Human Services	6
Parks Caretaker	Parks	1
Community Health Strategist	Public Health	1
Public Health Analyst	Public Health	1
Deputy - Corrections (effective 07/01/2026)	Sheriff	6

Key 2026 Budget Initiatives

To further strengthen the County's workforce, the 2026 budget includes a 3% market adjustment and 2% achievable merit pay increase for employees. This is paired with a new student loan benefit service designed to increase savings or lower costs for county staff with student loan debt, supports recruitment and retention efforts.

The county is making expanded investments in capital improvement projects including repairs to the Highway building, Oshkosh Human Services fire alarm system, new phone system, resurfacing Park View's parking lot, Butte des Morts boat landing improvements, Solid Waste infrastructure and future planning needs.

This budget proposes to make the Homeless, Evictions, and Loss Prevention (HELP) program permanent by moving the staff from project positions to regular employees. This program was initially grant-funded and has been highly successful with buy-in and support from community partners in keeping people from being evicted and living in their homes and prevent people from becoming homeless.

Recognizing the impact of external economic pressures, the budget incorporates the anticipated 3% tariff increase that will have an impact across multiple departments.

This budget calls for efficiencies in vehicle usage with an increase in leased vehicle pilot program and pooling certain vehicles to reduce expenditures, increase usage of existing fleet, and deliver services across more of the county.

With four high-volume elections scheduled in 2026, resources are allocated to ensure smooth administration and adequate ballots are prepared for municipalities.



Key 2026 Budget Initiatives

Expanded demands on the Corporation Counsel's office, and the absorption of attorneys from Child Support without additional support staff, has burdened existing staff and stretched expertise. This budget adds one Paralegal as well as additional contractual services funding to support specialized legal expertise from outside counsel.

Public safety remains a priority. The Sheriff's Office budget reflects increased jail population management, including the addition of 6 Deputies in the second half of 2026 in this budget.

This budget emphasizes efficient delivery of services. In addition to pooling vehicles, several positions were considered for operational efficiency, leadership development, and fiscal balance. A long unfilled Administrative Associate in Child Support is being eliminated. Two positions in the Sheriff's office are being combined for operational efficiency. The budget invests in a Contract and Procurement Administrator to enhance standardization in procurement. Additional facilities staff are added to reduce dependence on contracted janitorial services.

This budget focuses on enhanced cost-recovery for services with adjustments in several budgets to enhance revenues while reducing dependence on property tax dollars.

This budget includes expenses and revenues at the Fox Cities Campus including the Barlow Planetarium, Communications Arts Center, and Fieldhouse to preserve the cultural legacy of the campus while we work towards the redevelopment of the property.



This budget commits more resources to cybersecurity for things the federal government used to pay for. Without this critical investment, the county could face vulnerabilities. If the federal government continues to abdicate its responsibilities and obligations to local governments, these costs will continue to go up.

Capital Improvement Program

The 2026 Capital Improvement Program calls for investing \$19,209,498 local dollars (7% increase) to go along with \$9,560,395 from other sources for a total capital improvement investment of \$28,769,893 which is a 57% increase over 2025. A recent Facilities Condition Assessment revealed that we are facing \$67 million in deferred maintenance and have several buildings that no longer suit the needs of our departments. The costs to maintain aging, second-hand buildings are mounting and this budget is more aggressive towards improving the conditions of our buildings, enhancing our recreational offerings in our Parks system, maintaining our transportation networks, and preparing for the next phase of our Solid Waste programs.

This chart shows the allocation of local dollars by department in the 2026 Capital Improvement Plan.

