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Milwaukee County Exec. Crowley: Launches revamped Balancing Act Tool to encourage public input in 2023 budget process

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MILWAUKEE, WI – Milwaukee County today launched a revamped version of the Balancing Act, an interactive online tool simulating the process to balance the 2023 budget. The new version of the tool is focused on giving residents a simple, interactive way to provide input on the upcoming 2023 Milwaukee County budget. Balancing Act has been used for past County budgets, the new tool provides users more details on the County's expenditure categories and revenue options available to the County – as well as their impacts on County residents.

"Our annual budget shapes the priorities of Milwaukee County and directs how services like public transportation, housing resources, and mental & behavioral health are distributed to residents in all parts of the County," **said County Executive David Crowley.** "Intentionally finding ways to include the voice of the public in this process is key to making sure our priorities reflect the needs of the people who live here. We want residents to use the tool and identify whether they'd increase, decrease, or maintain spending for the services that affect them the most."

Users will analyze the $1.2 billion operating budget and determine ways to close the County's estimated $12.6 million annual structural budget gap. Milwaukee County's structural deficit has compounded over the years, due in part to the imbalance of revenue the County receives from the state and state-imposed caps to raise revenue locally. Without adequate support from the state or the option to use new tools to generate necessary funding going forward, Milwaukee County's ability to

maintain facilities, preserve community assets and provide high-quality services will be decimated.

Since 2010, the County has cut expenditures by about $30 million each year, realized efficiencies, and streamlined services. Despite these efforts, costs of services continue to outpace revenues and it is estimated that the county will face a gap of over $300 million over the next 20 years. Cuts year after year are unsustainable and have severely limited our ability to invest in our neighborhoods, in our services, and in the people of Milwaukee County.

Residents will have until August 26 to submit feedback on via the Balancing Act tool found here.

“Balancing Act is just the start of our efforts to get residents involved in the budget process and share their priorities for the next budget,” **concluded Crowley**. **“**In the coming weeks, Milwaukee County will announce Budget Open House events to be scheduled later this year. I look forward to joining residents, listening to their budget priorities, and answering their questions about the upcoming budget.”