

County Executive Crowley: Applauds collaborative process on 2023 budget

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MILWAUKEE, WI - Today, Milwaukee County passed the \$1.2 billion 2023 operating budget which addresses acute community needs through targeted investments and takes steps forward in becoming the healthiest county in the state by continuing to advance the strategic plan to achieve racial equity.

“Budgets are about priorities, and I applaud the County Board for their work in helping pass a budget that prioritizes public health, public safety, mental health, substance abuse, youth services, parks – and our County’s fiscal future,” **said County Executive David Crowley**. “I’m proud to say that despite the challenges we faced, the 2023 Budget is a product of a collaborative process that remains a reflection of our shared values and our organizational vision of achieving race and health equity.”

The \$1.176 billion 2023 operating budget addresses acute needs with targeted investments in the County’s vision and strategic focus areas. Highlights of the budget include:

Investing in Equity

- \$21 million investment in adult behavioral health services
- Increasing total Credible Messengers to \$1.7 million
- Expanding Children’s Long-Term Support program budget to \$32.4 million
- Largest increase in Parks Dept. funding since 1989, including 17 new full-time positions

Bridging the Gap

- Funding Center for Forensic Science and Protective Medicine, jointly with State of Wisconsin
- Increasing programmatic funding for the Community Reintegration Center (CRC, formerly the House of Correction)
- Creates 9 new positions in CRC to expand support in areas of psychiatric social work, community outreach, quality assurance, administration, and operations.
- No major service cuts despite annual structural budget deficit

Creating Intentional Inclusion

- Increasing compensation and vacation days to improve recruitment and retention; adding funding to increase diversity in County government through recruitment
- Reimagine Community Business Development Partners as the Office of Economic Inclusion
- Creates two more positions in Office of Equity to increase County's presence and visibility in hard-to-reach communities.

"This budget is grounded in the financial realities we face and makes small sacrifices to close deficits and protect the continuation of critical services in 2023. These were tough decisions for us all to make, but it is indicative of the many tough decisions that may lie ahead if a new revenue stream is not introduced to close our annual structural deficit," **continued Crowley**. "As other communities throughout Wisconsin have passed budgets this year, we've seen elected officials in those communities sound the alarm on the need for additional revenue to meet the needs of their residents."

A [recent study done by the Wisconsin Policy Forum](#) found that 104 referendum questions on ballots this fall asked voters to allow a school district, town, city, village, or county to exceed state limits on local property taxes. According to the study, "In approving them, voters authorized at least an additional \$11.4 million in municipal and county property taxes for services such as public safety." The report also notes that 21 out of 23 municipal referendums were seeking an increase in property taxes to pay for public safety services like police, fire and emergency medical services.

[Milwaukee County continues to be leader in the MoveForwardMKE coalition, a](#)

[partnership between the business community, state legislators, municipal governments, and community groups, to advocate at the state level for a local option sales tax increase to decrease property taxes, address legacy costs, and preserve critical local services.](#)

Even with a 1 percent increase in the sales tax, the County would maintain one of the lowest sales taxes in the nation for a community our size and generate \$180 million in additional revenue – matching the scale of the problem at the lowest cost to taxpayers with no budgetary impacts on the state budget.

Learn more about the MoveForwardMKE Coalition [here](#).