

# Gov. Evers: Excerpts from Gov. Evers' 2023-25 Budget Message

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today released excerpts from his 2023-25 Biennial Budget Message set to be delivered live in the Assembly Chambers tonight at 7 p.m. CT. The governor's speech will be livestreamed on his [YouTube channel](#) and [Facebook page](#).

After delivering his 2023 State of the State address last month, Gov. Evers tonight will build upon the governor's plans to maintain the economy's momentum, bolster the state's workforce, build safe, reliable infrastructure, and invest in kids, schools, and communities.

Excerpts from the governor's address as prepared for delivery are available below....

Wisconsin, as I share our agenda for our next two years together, we begin this biennium in the best fiscal position we've ever been in our 175-year statehood.

This is a breakthrough budget, one that has rarely—if ever—come along in our state's history. And with this opportunity comes responsibility—today, we carry the weight of posterity.

While we must find ways to save where we can, we have a duty to invest in needs that have long been neglected. While we cannot afford to be careless or reckless, we have a duty to protect the future we've worked hard to build together. While we must continue to stay well within our means, we have a duty to create prosperity that will define our state for generations.

Tonight, I'm proud to report that our 2023-25 biennial budget balances these important obligations.

My plan to cut your taxes is a good example. I promised cutting taxes would be part of our agenda to help working families afford rising costs—and it is. And I'm proposing we do it responsibly by targeting relief to working Wisconsinites who need help affording rising costs.

So, I'm delivering on my promise of a 10-percent, middle-class tax cut and providing \$1.2 billion in tax relief for working families.

Under my plan, if you're a single filer making less than \$100,000 or a married-joint filer making less than \$150,000, the cornerstone of my tax plan will cut your taxes by 10 percent. That's real, sustainable relief that will keep income taxes low now and into the future without causing devastating cuts to priorities like public schools and public safety.

And here's who else we can help if we can get this done: seniors living on fixed incomes that haven't kept up with rising costs; working families with kids to help afford child care and reduce child poverty; families providing care and assistance to an aging relative; and veterans and surviving spouses paying rent. My plan provides tax relief to help you, too.

Giving working families a little extra breathing room is just one key part of our plan to bolster the middle class, maintain our economy's momentum, reduce barriers to work, and address our state's workforce challenges. But we have a lot of work to do together to keep building our economy from the ground up.

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Part of ensuring our infrastructure is ready for a 21st Century workforce and economy is building upon our work over the last four years to improve over 5,800 miles of roads and nearly 1,600 bridges. I'm also proposing the highest level of funding ever into aid that goes directly toward helping local counties and communities repair and maintain our roads to do just that.

We're also investing in key projects across the state, from the Ray Nitschke Memorial Bridge in Green Bay to the Blatnik Bridge in Superior. And we're expanding transportation alternatives in our small communities, building out our electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and re-engineering roads to improve safety and help prevent reckless driving.

These investments will be critical for bringing our infrastructure into this century. At the same time, we're still balancing these investments with prudent decisions to prepare for future economic uncertainty. So, we're going to use a portion of our state's surplus not to create more ongoing expenses but to reduce them. We're going to pay down \$380 million in state debt in transportation revenue bonds. That means we'll spend less of your hard-earned tax dollars in the future paying on debt and interest so we can stay focused on fixing the darn roads.

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We have to continue harnessing local innovators and ingenuity to maintain our economic momentum and retain and recruit talented workers to build a workforce for the future. And building an economy from the ground up starts with investing in our Main Streets, our communities, and our local partners.

So, I announced last month we're continuing our successful Main Street Bounceback program—and that's great news. This program has already helped revitalize our Main Streets and move more than 8,500 businesses into vacant storefronts across our state.

But I also recognize that, when it comes to bolstering our workforce, no two communities' needs are alike. There's no one-size-fits-all solution to our state's workforce challenges. We trust our local innovators, communities, business, and economic development partners know best what they need to support a strong, successful workforce and bring new workers to their area. They might need more high-quality child care providers, they might need more clinics and accessible healthcare, or to expand job training in high-demand industries—we must meet those unique needs, whatever they may be.

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Our local partners have always played a critical role in our work to build an economy and workforce for the future. But let's be frank: work at the local level over the last decade hasn't been helped by the fact that the state has asked our local partners to do more with less. Whether it's expanding affordable housing, repairing streets, ensuring clean parks and water, safety services like EMS, police, and fire, or supporting local libraries and public health, so much of the hard work in this state happens at the local level. And it's time for the state to do its part.

Last month, I pledged my support for a budget provision to send 20 percent of the state's sales tax revenue back to our local communities for shared revenue. And I'm excited to share that provision is in the budget I'm introducing tonight, providing more than half a billion dollars more per year in new resources to invest in key priorities like public safety. We have to get this done, folks.

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The state has to start being a partner in—not an obstacle to—our local communities' success. The way we've been funding our local governments isn't sustainable. We need to change that.

I'm also here to tell you that the way we're funding our schools isn't sustainable, either. We need to change that, too. Budgets reflect our priorities, which is why every budget I've ever built began with doing what's best for our kids. This one is no different.

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Let's make sure every kid in Wisconsin has access to school-based mental health services through our "Get Kids Ahead" initiative. It's the Year of Mental Health, folks. I know we can get this done.

Here's another easy step we can take: let's make sure kids aren't hungry—yes, ever, but especially at school. My plan is simple: fully fund universal school breakfasts and lunches so that every kid can be focused on their schoolwork and not when or whether they'll eat next.

These are basic steps we can take to help improve outcomes for our kids so they can come to class coursework-ready. Coupled with our investments and initiatives to bolster our educator pipeline to keep class sizes small and improve financial literacy, math, and reading outcomes across our state, we're going to make sure our kids are ready for success.

And we're also going to make sure our kids have the skills and tools they need to join the 21st Century workforce we're working to build together. So, I'm going to deliver on my pledge to improve access to computer science education in Wisconsin with a \$10 million investment to bolster computer science education across our state, including requiring high schools to provide this critical instruction.

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Listen, I know the people in this building might not agree with me on the periphery of every policy all of the time—that's democracy. But I also believe we should be able to pass common-sense proposals that already have broad, bipartisan support—especially those we know will help us retain and recruit a talented workforce. And here's what else I know: we cannot afford to stand still while other states are willing to take bold, urgent action to compete for new workers, and that includes competing for Wisconsin's own homegrown talent.

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I promise you this: in this budget, there's more that unites us than divides us. These aren't Republican or Democratic priorities—they're Wisconsin priorities, areas where we should be able to find common ground.

Expanding high-speed internet. Improving healthcare access. Reducing child care costs. Keeping communities safe. Building more housing. Addressing PFAS and water contaminants. Funding our schools. Improving mental health. Fixing roads and bridges. Bolstering our current and future workforce. Maintaining our economy's momentum. ...These concepts aren't controversial, at least not to the folks who spend more of their time outside of the Capitol building than inside of it.

So, as we shoulder the weight of posterity, let's not allow our work together to be hindered by partisanship. As you consider this breakthrough budget, let's not just dismiss ideas because they're proposed by a person or a party you happen to dislike. And as we balance this historic opportunity with our historic responsibility, let's give these priorities deliberation and debate that's worthy of the traditions and the people of this state.

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An online version of this release is available [here](#).