

Innovation Grant Program Milwaukee County Applications

March 2026



Background

- The Innovation Grant Program (Wis. Stat. § 79.038) was created by 2023 Wisconsin Act 12, modified under 2025 Wisconsin Act 15, and administered by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR).
- A county, municipality, or tribe [Transferor] can apply for an innovation grant to support the **transfer of an allowable service** to another county, municipality, tribe, nonprofit organization, or private entity [Transferee].
- Purpose is to generate long-term cost savings for local governments by transferring services.
- Reference: [DOR Innovation Grants](#)



Eligibility

Eligible services include:

- Public safety, including law enforcement (not jails)
- Fire protection
- Emergency services
- Communications
- Public works
- Information technology
- Administration, including staffing, payroll, and human resources
- Economic development and tourism
- Public health
- Housing, planning, and zoning
- Parks and recreation



Grant Awards

- **Annual amount is equal to 25% of the total costs of providing the service** in the calendar year immediately preceding the transfer (baseline year).
- Number of annual payments received is based on the date of the first grant payment (earliest is 6/30/26) **and** the duration of the service transfer or contract years.
- To remain eligible each year, the total post-consolidation costs of the transferred service **cannot exceed 115%** of the total costs in the **baseline year**.



Service Transfer Identification Process

- Office of Strategy, Budget, & Performance staff:
 - Reviewed the administrative rule that was promulgated by DOR in spring of 2025 and amended in July 2025; and
 - Met with all administrative departments and elected offices that manage services that were eligible under the program to assess potential opportunities.



Milwaukee County Service Transfers

- Transfer of operations of Charles Allis Museum to the Charles Allis and Villa Terrace Museums, Inc **and** Transfer of operations of Villa Terrace Decorative Arts Museum to Villa Terrace Museum and Gardens, LTD.
 - 85% Milwaukee County; 15% Transferees (divided equally)
- Transfer of operations of Marcus Center for the Performing Arts to Marcus Center for the Performing Arts.
 - 85% Milwaukee County; 15% Transferee
- Transfer of operations of the Wil-o-Way facilities and programming at the Grant and Underwood locations to Easter Seals Southeast Wisconsin.
 - 80% Milwaukee County; 20% Transferee

Service Transfer Details

Project/Application		Annual Grant Payment	Number of Payments Based on Length of Agreement	Total Grant Payments	Percent Award Retained by Milwaukee County	Net Grant Payment Amounts Retained by Milwaukee County
1.	Charles Allis Museum & Villa Terrace Decorative Arts Museum	\$72,463	3	\$217,389	85%	\$184,779
2.	Marcus Center for the Performing Arts	\$135,676	5	\$678,380	85%	\$576,623
3.	Wil-o-Way	\$135,846	4	\$543,382	80%	\$434,707
		\$343,984	-	\$1,439,150	-	\$1,196,109

Next Steps

- Upon authorization by the Board of Supervisors to apply for the grants and enter into associated agreements, DAS will advance the agreements for signatures, following the County contract process.
- SBP will submit the innovation grant applications in the DOR online portal per the March 31, 2026 deadline.



Questions





**MILWAUKEE
COUNTY**