

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: 8/15/2025

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Jeremy Lucas, Policy Director, Office of Strategy, Budget & Performance

Subject: 2025-2027 Wisconsin State Budget Update

File Type: Informational Report

REQUEST

From the Policy Director on behalf of the Office of Government Affairs providing an informational report on the results of activities regarding the 2025-2027 Wisconsin State Budget.

BACKGROUND

Historically Milwaukee County's advocacy has been centered around increases in funding that support the state mandated services that the county provides. The 2025-27 Wisconsin State budget was no different and state aid increases were sought for multiple health and human services programs, court operations, transportation programs, district attorneys, adult protective services and costs for youth justice. Additionally, Milwaukee County continued to advocate for mandated services unique to Milwaukee like expressway patrol.

Milwaukee County presented the governor with twenty requests (File 25-9). Of those requests, twelve of them were included in the governor's budget. The Joint Finance Committee advanced versions of five of those requests. Including vetoes, six of the requests submitted from the county were approved in the 2025-27 Wisconsin budget.

Investing in Justice – Courthouse Complex

The largest monetary request and top priority from Milwaukee County was state support for the replacement of the current Public Safety Building in the amount of \$250 million. Over 200 businesses, nonprofits, unions, advocacy organizations and partner governments signed a letter supporting the replacement of the public safety building. Due to this broad coalition of support the legislature recognized the urgent need for this project. However, the State has not funded other counties' courthouse projects and legislators did not support funding directly for a courthouse-related project in Milwaukee

County. Their priority was maintaining uniformity. A creative compromise was necessary.

Milwaukee County is the only county mandated to provide highway patrol services through our Sheriff's Office. Highways in all other counties in Wisconsin receive this service, funded by the State, via Wisconsin State Patrol. To support uniformity a solution emerged that wherein the state could support funding Milwaukee County's highway patrol services, to free up local funds with the expectation that they be used for the courthouse replacement project. The adopted budget included increases of \$38 million dollars over the biennium to reimburse costs for expressway patrol. The chart attached to this file includes a listing of requested items and their outcomes in the 2025-2027 Enacted State Budget.

Assistant District Attorneys

Milwaukee County was also able to address a pending reduction in staffing within the District Attorney's office. Over the past decade federal funding and grants that previously support assistant district attorney (ADA) positions has lapsed and not been replaced. Specifically, 12.5 FTE of ADA positions that were funded with state American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds were set to expire in the middle of 2025. The Office of Government Affairs in conjunction with the district attorney were able creatively find a funding source to maintain those position in the 2025-27 budget through a portion of citation revenues collected by the Milwaukee County Sheriff.

Additional Funding Changes

Milwaukee County was also able to participate in statewide coalitions to successfully advocate and receive increases in funding areas that include court operations, general transportation aids, paratransit aids, county conservation funding and the reauthorization of the supplemental local road improvement program.

A continued strategy of focusing on key issues that strengthen the partnership between the State of Wisconsin and Milwaukee County, engages broad coalitions that include peer counties and highlights Milwaukee's importance as an economic asset to the state has been one that heightens the probability of success for our requests.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

3A: Invest "upstream" to address root causes of health disparities

3B: Enhance the County's fiscal health and sustainability

FISCAL EFFECT

The report is informational only and there is no fiscal impact.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

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APPROVED BY:

Joe Lamers, Director – Office of Strategy, Budget & Performance

Attachments:

Milwaukee County 2025-27 Biennial State Budget Outcomes

cc: Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County Clerk