



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
*Milwaukee County*  
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October 1, 2014

While we have improved the fiscal health of Milwaukee County each of the past three years, we still have a long way to go to get to the sustainable place we need to be. The 2015 Recommended Budget presented fiscal challenges and difficult choices, as I have in years past, I am facing these issues head on. The 2015 Recommended Budget continues to strengthen our fiscal position to the million residents we serve and the 4,000 employees. This \$1.3 billion budget takes significant steps to update the County's infrastructure, realign services models and centralize various functions that are currently spread out across the County.

We spent months working to create a budget that is fair to taxpayers and the men and women who provide Milwaukee County services. Despite facing a \$32 million deficit, this budget does not raise taxes or significantly increase fees, it invests in mental health care, keeps bus fares flat, improves county roads and bridges, continues serving our veterans and greatly increases funding for public safety.

For our employees, I am proud that we once again avoid furlough days and will offer a complete benefits package that is competitive with other functional organizations and businesses in the city, county, state and country. The budget also provides new learning and development opportunities for employees.

Below are a number of highlights of my Recommended Budget.

Chris

## Improving Milwaukee County's Fiscal Picture

Over the three previous budgets, Milwaukee County's fiscal outlook has significantly improved. In 2011, the Public Policy Forum looked at Milwaukee County's fiscal trend and predicted that by 2014 the County would be facing an \$86 million deficit. Instead, thanks to tough decisions we made, we passed a budget in 2014 that did not raise taxes and cut tens of millions of dollars from the structural deficit. That's the good news, the bad news is that, despite the significant improvements made over the past few years, Milwaukee County still faces a long-term fiscal imbalance. The Office of the Comptroller has estimated that over the five-year period from 2015 to 2019, the annual structural deficit will increase from \$32 million in 2015 to \$94 million if no sustainable, long-term decisions are made to the County's current operations.

There are many items included in the 2015 Recommended Budget designed to specifically address this fiscal imbalance:

- **Providing Services Differently:** Working with the private sector, non-profit service providers or other municipalities can result in significant long-term savings for the County. The 2015 Recommended Budget includes new service models in Behavioral Health, Facilities Management, the Zoo, the Office of the Sheriff, and other areas.
- **Reducing the County's Footprint:** The 2015 Recommended Budget includes a significant reduction in its outstanding maintenance requirements and operating costs by reducing infrastructure that is outdated and expensive to maintain by:
  - Closing and demolishing the City Campus facility, which is significantly inefficient as office space, expensive to maintain and has significant capital needs.
  - If approved by the County Board, demolishing the Estabrook Dam, which is the most environmentally-protective option that also eliminates ongoing maintenance costs and future infrastructure costs.
  - If approved by the County Board, selling O'Donnell parking garage to Northwestern Mutual, who will invest millions of dollars in upgrades and maintain access to the public.
- **Increasing Operating Efficiency:** The 2015 Recommended Budget includes a significant change to how the County provides many of its internal administrative functions, with the goal of providing significant time and cost savings in the long-term. These efforts include:
  - Centralization of information technology procurement and maintenance to ensure standardization and better vendor management.
  - Centralization of the procurement process with a new paperless, online e-procurement system that will enable all County employees to purchase from preferred vendors at standardized, and often lower, prices.
  - Ongoing utilization of Continuous Improvement processes that adopt lean-management principles.
  - Strengthened financial management policies that will direct large, unanticipated one-time revenues to projects that enhance efficiency, drive economic development, and build debt reserves for the future pre-payment of debt obligations.
- **Increasing Benefit Cost Sharing:** Fringe benefits, mainly health insurance and pension, continue to represent a major cost driver for the County. The 2015 Recommended Budget continues cost sharing of health care costs between the employees and the County by increasing premiums and deductibles to compare with similar sized public and private sector organizations. The goal of cost sharing is to keep employees and retirees accountable for their health care utilization, while not increasing the burden of health care costs on County services.

- **Building Reserves:** The 2015 Recommended Budget builds debt service reserve to nearly \$13 million, the highest level in recent history. Rating agencies judge the soundness of the County's finances, and one important aspect of stability is the level of reserves. A high credit rating can help the County reduce its debt service costs, which in turn will help make resources available for operating County programs.
- **Utilizing One-Time Revenues Properly:** The use of one-time, non-recurring revenues to finance ongoing, long-term operations is not sustainable. The 2015 Recommended Budget continues to implement sound financial policies regarding the use of one-time revenues by requiring that they be directed towards economic development initiatives, to projects that enhance efficiency through the Innovation Fund, and towards the Debt Service Reserve for the future defeasance of debt.

## Public Safety Improvements

The 2015 Recommended Budget once again takes a number of steps to improve public safety across Milwaukee County, including:

- \$3.9 million more in tax levy for the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office.
- The creation of a new "Violent Crime Task Force" in the District Attorney's Office.
- Forty-one (41) new Correctional Officers at the House of Correction.
- Consolidation of dispersed emergency management services into the Office of Emergency Management, a new division that improves emergency management functions across Milwaukee County.

### **Sheriff's Office**

The Recommended Budget provides the Sheriff's Office the fiscal flexibility to support additional deputies in mandated service areas, while focusing the Department on its core mission of serving a fully-incorporated county. The \$3.9 million increase in tax levy is one of the single biggest increases in 2015 to any department, division or office Countywide.

The budget also:

- Features more than \$1.8 million in capital projects including an in squad car camera system and iris scan enrollment and reading system.
- Transitions the Parks Patrol to the municipalities, which already cover most calls and are in geographic locations to optimize response time and effort. As it has in years past, the idea to shift Parks Patrols to the local police agencies who can better handle the task has strong support from city and village leaders and law enforcement agencies countywide.
- Allows for a possible transition of coverage at the County Grounds in Wauwatosa to the Wauwatosa Police Department, who have a higher capacity to investigate incidents in the area.

### **Violent Crime Task Force**

The 2015 Recommended Budget includes the creation of a new "Violent Crime Task Force" in the District Attorney's Office and also expands the DA's "Witness Protection Unit." The additions are the results of working with the District Attorney's Office to address specific gaps in the criminal justice system.

The “*Violent Crime Task Force*” will expand investigations into violent crimes that are referred to the DA’s Office. Prosecutors believe this unit will be particularly helpful for investigating non-fatal shootings and other violent crimes, with the goal of preventing fatal shootings and other violent crime.

The additions in the “*Witness Protection Unit*” will provide a more comprehensive program to better ensure the safety of witnesses who are often key to the successful prosecution of criminal cases.

### **Enhance and Expand Programming at the House of Correction**

Since moving under the administration in 2013, the HOC has undergone significant improvements. The HOC has added dozens of programs for inmates, including job training, GED classes and drug and alcohol treatment. Study after study shows that inmates who take part in education and training behind bars are far less likely to reoffend and end up back in custody.

The HOC, in the last year, has implemented a robust work program. Instead of sitting in their cells all day as they used to, inmates are now working. Eligible inmates are cleaning up parks, highways and festival grounds and working with the Hunger Task Force at its community farm. The HOC has also vastly expanded their print shop to include silk screening for county departments and non-profit agencies. They are also expanding their recycling program with the goal of being one of the main recycling agencies in the County.

These new and expanded programs gives inmate important work experience, allows them to be productive members of society, and saves significant tax dollars. In 2014 the programs are estimated to save more than \$200,000.

The 2015 Recommended Budget adds 41 new Correctional Officers to the HOC. The new CO positions will reduce the reliance on overtime, a significant cost burden on the department, and allow the HOC to expand programming.

### **Office of Emergency Management**

The 2015 Recommended Budget puts Milwaukee County in line with best practices across the state and country by creating the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). As it is in other governments like Brown, Dane and Waukesha Counties, the OEM will be a single organization that is part of the administration. This change will increase coordination of key services within Milwaukee County, as well as between the County and local governments. Currently, Milwaukee County’s emergency services are fragmented across three departments and divisions.

The functions included in the new Office are:

- Emergency Management and Preparedness, currently in the Office of the Sheriff
- Emergency Communications & Dispatch, in the Office of the Sheriff
- Emergency Medical Services, in the Department of Health & Human Services
- Radio Communications, in the Department of Administrative Services

## **Continuing Mental Health Care Improvements**

The 2015 Recommended Budget includes \$1.6 million more for the Behavioral Health Division and programmatic changes that will continue to build community capacity and improve service across Milwaukee County. The additions were approved by the Mental Health Board in August.

As in his previous three budgets, County Executive Abele's proposed budget continues to redesign the mental health system in Milwaukee County to be increasingly community-based, person-centered, trauma-informed, and recovery-oriented.

The budget continues efforts to reduce admissions to the Psychiatric Crisis Service (PCS) Emergency Room, particularly involuntary admissions/emergency detentions. From 2010-2013 there was a 23% reduction in emergency detentions and a 32% reduction of inpatient admissions. These reductions are a result of:

- Increased use of community-based crisis services such as the Crisis Mobile Team and the Crisis Assessment & Response Team (CART).
- Partnership with the Milwaukee Police Department.
- The addition of two crisis resource centers in the community.
- A redesigned access clinic that provides medication and therapy referral to the uninsured.

Additional highlights include:

- Investments in community-based mental health services, including expanded care coordination to support service delivery, as well as re-entry to the community for individuals who are frequent clients.
- Complete closure of long-term care facilities and transition to community-based services. Hilltop closure is planned for the end of 2014 and Rehab-Central at the end of 2015.
- Adjusted staffing models to improve coverage, increase support for higher acuity patients, and reduce overtime, a significant burden on the department.
- Continued creation of a culture of quality and safety using Joint Commission expectations and pursue Joint Commission accreditation by mid-year 2015.
- Addition of a six-person quality assurance team to support focus on quality.
- Completed implementation of the Electronic Medical Records system.

## Upgrading Milwaukee County Infrastructure

The 2015 Recommended Capital Budget includes more than \$78 million in capital investments in the County's infrastructure, including \$15.8 million in cash financing. The cash financing plan for 2015 is about \$5 million above the County's stated goal of financing 20% of projects with cash. By continuing to expand the use of cash financing, the County can address deferred maintenance without incurring more long-term debt.

The 2015 Recommended Capital Budget continues to emphasize improving safety in County facilities and managing long-term costs by eliminating outdated assets and technology. Highlights include:

- \$10.1 million in funding to improve the condition of County highways and bridges.
- \$3.8 million in funding to demolish the City Campus office building and make it ready for re-development.
- \$8.7 million for improvements to infrastructure in the County parks including:
  - If approved by the County Board, \$1.7 million is provided for demolishing the Estabrook Dam, which is the most environmentally-protective option that also eliminates ongoing maintenance costs and future infrastructure costs.

- \$3.8 million to complete the reconstruction of a heavily-utilized section of the Menomonee River Parkway in Wauwatosa.
- \$830,000 to improve the Oak Leaf Trail in Grant Park.
- \$550,000 to repair the historic suspension bridge in Hoyt Park.
- \$1.8 million to purchase election machines for each municipality, a partnership that will save the County millions of dollars in programming costs.
- \$4.2 million to make improvements to the War Memorial Center and Art Museum.
- \$2 million to finish upgrading the County's public safety radio system in cooperation with Waukesha County to a new digital format.
- \$4.8 million to continue the bus replacement program in the transit system.
- \$2.8 million to continue to improve the County's outdated information technology systems, including planning funds for a project that would transition several applications off obsolete mainframe technology as well as funds to improve the County's disaster recovery capabilities.

## Department on Aging Continues Award Winning Programs

The Milwaukee County Department on Aging (MCDA) continues to provide strong direction to ensure relevant, innovative, and robust opportunities are available for our 153,000 seniors. MCDA has exceeded its established performance goals, created unique and invaluable partnerships throughout the county, state, and nation, and creatively brought in funding for current and new programming and services.

From 2013 to date, MCDA has received a combined twelve awards and honors for its superior efforts to create a community where older adults can live independently. Amidst challenging financial times across county, state, and federal budgets, MDSA successfully brought in \$500,000 in supplemental funds to guarantee there was no disruption in programs and services, build capacity, and promote departmental growth.

The 2015 Recommended Budget provides funding and strategic measures to maintain and enhance current services, programs and opportunities for Milwaukee County older adults.

Highlights include:

- Creation of a dementia-capable department and dementia-friendly community where older adults and their caregivers have services and resources that are germane to their needs.
- Engaging older adults and the community in the re-modernization of the Milwaukee County Senior Dining Program to stay consistent with current and future needs of seniors.
- Formation of a systems approach inclusive of a coordinated community response to addressing abuse in later life.
- Continuance of partnership development with Milwaukee County seniors and upward of 50 agencies such as the State of Wisconsin, AARP, UW-Madison, UW-Milwaukee, Interfaith Older Adult Programs, Pastors United, and local Public Health departments that assist MCDA with leveraging its financial and human capital resources.

## Expanding Housing Initiatives

The 2015 Recommended Budget increases funding for safety net housing services and supportive housing. The budget also creates a model program to serve individuals with severe alcohol addictions.

Highlights include:

- Expand Community Housing Placement services by adding a second Community Intervention Specialist. This position is designed to assist those being discharged from the House of Correction, homeless shelters, and other community support facilities in securing safe housing. The current Community Intervention Specialist is receiving NAMI's Advocate of the Year award.
- Increase Supportive Housing Units from 491 to 529. Supportive housing units offer individuals affordable homes and easy access to the supports and services they need to stay housed, safe and healthy.
- Create a **Harm Reduction Housing** model to assist individuals with severe alcohol addictions who have not been successfully served in current treatment models or housing. This model, used successfully in New York, Chicago, Minneapolis and Seattle, is expected to reduce detox admissions, emergency room visits, and jail bookings.
- Expansion of case management services in the **Safe Haven** program. The current four locations have been serving more and more homeless individuals coming directly from the streets, rather than being referred by shelters.
- Provide on-site peer support and housing support services at Mercy House Lakefront's new development on Milwaukee's east side, which is expected to be completed in November of 2015.

## Support for Veterans

As he has since taking office, County Executive Abele is expanding resources for veterans in Milwaukee County and across the state. The 2015 Recommended Budget continues support for the Purple Heart Pass Program. To date, 400 veterans have taken advantage of the free program. The budget also continues to support the Veterans Job Fairs organized by the Milwaukee County Veterans Service Office. The job fairs are continuing to grow, with a record number of employers attending the event in October.

Other highlights include:

- Create resource center for veterans to allow them easy and supportive access to the internet and other applications by adding computer workstation kiosks in the County Veterans Department office.
- Continue funding \$30,000 for the Needy Veteran's Fund, which provide emergency financial aid to veterans and their families.
- Significant investment in capital projects at the War Memorial Center.

## Strengthening Transit

For the fourth straight year, County Executive Abele is introducing a budget that improves the County's transit system. Once again, his budget does not include any bus fare increases or increases in the daily paratransit fare. The budget adds more than one million route miles and includes funding for a feasibility study to convert buses and facilities to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), a cleaner fuel source.

## Improving Milwaukee County Zoo

The 2015 Recommended Budget includes a proposal to improve the Milwaukee County Zoo and ensure a stable revenue stream. The Zoo is recommending to partner with Service Systems Associates, or SSA, to run the Zoo's concessions, merchandise and catering operations for five years.

SSA has 31 zoo partners in 16 different states which served approximately 25 million guests in 2012. Some of the zoos include: Louisville Zoo, Dallas Zoo, Denver Zoo, Detroit Zoo, Honolulu Zoo, Houston Zoo, Los Angeles Zoo, Minnesota Zoo, Zoo Miami, Zoo Boise and Utah's Hogle Zoo.

Under the proposed contract, SSA would spend at least \$3 million of their own money to improve buildings at the zoo. The County would still own the buildings. SSA is also guaranteeing a minimum payment to the County every year that will increase as sales increase (projected \$1.7 million in 2015, rising to \$2.1 million by 2019) and SSA will spend \$150,000 of their own money to market the Milwaukee County Zoo.

SSA has guaranteed to hire all full-time food and retail Zoo staff and offer eco-friendly and fair-trade products. 2015 commitments for rentals with outside vendors will be honored and people will still be allowed to bring their own food into the Zoo.

## Increasing Child Support Services

The Child Support Services Department is one of the many success stories at Milwaukee County since County Executive Abele took office in 2011. In 2012, 2013 and 2014 Child Support Services set performance records across the department. In 2013 they were named the *Wisconsin Child Support Department of the Year*.

The 2015 Recommended Budget provides funding to build on that success while also addressing a continuing decrease in state funding. The budget continues the partnership between Child Support and the District Attorney's Office. This partnership started in 2014 and has seen significant success, including the arrest of a man who owes \$250,000 for the care of his children. That case gained international attention and immediately created a deterrent effect. In the days after the story broke, the department saw an increase in parents who owed money to their children coming forward to get in good standing.

Highlights include:

- Continuing to operate our highly successful Pathways to Responsible Fatherhood Grant, which helps provide key supportive services to 1,750 low income dads in the Milwaukee area every year. The Child Support Services Department received a \$1.8 million grant to continue this award-winning fatherhood program. They are the **only** child support agency in the country to receive the grant for 2014-2015.
- Restructuring the Department to move the call center to the Wisconsin Support Collection Trust Fund to handle routine calls, allowing the Department to:
  - Avoid a \$1 million upgrade to its phone answering system.
  - Redeploy several employees from the call center to value added work to improve service and reduce wait times.
  - Improve customer service.

## Enhancing Intergovernmental Cooperation

The 2015 Recommended Budget includes a number of intergovernmental agreements that enhance countywide and regional cooperation and create more sustainable programs. Highlights include:

- Countywide election machines. This project is part of an innovative agreement that will save costs at both the County and municipal levels. The County will purchase election machines for each municipality and the municipalities will reimburse the County for 30% of the election machine costs. As part of the agreement, the City of Milwaukee's election commission will provide programming services for the County and all 18 municipalities. This initiative is expected to save over \$3 million over the next 12 years.
- \$2 million to finish upgrading the County's public safety radio system in cooperation with Waukesha County to a new digital format. This intergovernmental initiative saved \$500,000 in capital costs and will save \$1.5 to \$2 million in operating cost over the life of the system.
- Nearly \$1 million to offset municipal costs in assuming Park Patrol duties in County parks with another \$500,000 available for patrolling County grounds.
- A savings of more than \$13.5 million over two years through a collaborative RFP for medical and prescription administrative costs with the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee Public Schools.

## Matching County Footprint to Current Workforce and Mission

The 2015 Recommended Budget includes a significant reduction in its outstanding maintenance requirements by reducing infrastructure that is outdated and expensive to maintain. Highlights include:

- \$3.8 million to close and demolish the City Campus facility, which is inefficient as office space, expensive to maintain and has significant capital needs. This move will result in future operating cost savings of over \$400,000 annually and \$28 million in future capital costs by relocating staff out of City Campus and demolishing the building to allow redevelopment of site. County staff will continue to work with partners at the City of Milwaukee and in the community to redevelop the land.
- If approved by the County Board, \$1.7 million is provided for demolishing the Estabrook Dam, which is the most environmentally-protective option that also eliminates ongoing maintenance costs and future infrastructure costs.
- \$700K for long-range space planning for County facility needs, focusing on the Safety Building and County Grounds.
- If approved by the County Board, sell O'Donnell parking garage to Northwestern Mutual, who will invest millions of dollars in upgrades and maintain access to the public.

## Increasing Efficiency across the County

The 2015 Recommended Budget takes a number of steps to increase efficiency and centralize administrative functions, particularly in Information Technology (IT) and the Procurement Division. The County currently has a decentralized process for the procurement and management of IT, meaning funds for purchases of hardware, software, consulting, or other IT-related items are provided to individual departments. Departments may utilize these funds to purchase any IT-related items, so long as they stay within their expenditure budgets. As a result, departments do not need to work proactively

with the Information Management Services Division (DAS-IMSD) to ensure IT purchases are compatible with other County systems or the most cost-effective option.

The current decentralized structure has led to significant issues, including:

- Over 50 % of IT spend is decentralized across departments. These technology assets are managed in isolation of other similar assets.
- Milwaukee County has over 10,000 software applications and / or versions to support its 4,000 employees.
- The County prints over 32 million pages from its copiers each year due to a high number of personal printers.

Beginning in 2015, IMSD will be responsible for purchasing and managing technology for the County. Departments will continue to be “Business Owners” working in partnership with IMSD.

Another major initiative to drive efficiency in 2015 is the launch of an E-Procurement system. The new paperless, online “E-Procurement” system will enable all County employees to purchase from preferred vendors at standardized – and often lower -- prices.

The new system is estimated to save \$450,000 in 2015 and \$1 million by 2016.

Long term, this project will provide:

- Greater visibility into County spending.
- Price leverage for high volume purchases.
- Compliance with County policies.
- More straightforward and easier processing.

Other efficiency highlights include:

- Ongoing utilization of Continuous Improvement processes that adopt lean-management principles. Already, the first two initiatives are moving into the implement stage:
  - The Human Resources hiring team is implementing changes to the hiring process that will result in a 25% reduction in wasted time.
  - The Procurement team and County Stakeholders, have identified productivity improvement that will result in a 36% reduction in waste in the process of purchasing goods and services.
- Creation of a Business Office in DAS that will consolidate accounting, budget, grant management and other administrative support for the Department. The Office is funded by centralization of these functions from within the Department and does not result in any net new positions.
- Adding a grant writer position to help departments seek and acquire additional funding. This person will help increase the County’s access to new revenue streams.
- Strengthened financial management policies that will direct one-time revenues to projects that enhance efficiency, drive economic development, and build debt reserves for the future pre-payment of debt obligations.

## Expanding Employee Training and Leadership Development

The 2015 Recommended Budget includes two major initiatives to provide additional training for employees:

- A new cloud-based, online Learning Management System will provide employees access to all of the County's internal training opportunities, plus thousands of online training courses. Employees will have the ability to develop and track their own learning plans.
- Managers will be able to monitor all compliance training and required certifications as well as track and report on learning activity across the organization. To learn more about this new tool, visit: <http://www.cornerstoneondemand.com/learning>.
- A new leadership program, Leadership Excellence, will help high-potential County managers lead change, improve employee engagement, and build a workforce focused on results.

## Managing and Reducing County Risk

The 2015 Recommended Budget migrates the in-house administration of workers' compensation claims handling to a third party administrator for more efficient claims adjusting. The budget also enhances risk management programs throughout the County by conducting comprehensive exposure assessments and targeting loss prevention and safety training efforts to minimize claim drivers.

## Cultural Facility Match Funding

Milwaukee County is home to numerous world class cultural facilities, including museums and art venues. Many of the County-owned cultural buildings, however, have significant deferred maintenance, as outlined in the Public Policy Forum's 2013 report, "[Pulling Back the Curtain: Assessing the needs of major arts, cultural, recreational, and entertainment assets in Milwaukee County.](#)"

The 2015 Recommended Budget begins a process to address these needs by working towards formal agreements with institutions that we do not currently have and requiring matching county funds dollar-for-dollar with funds raised by the cultural facilities. Also, as we are asking county staff and departments to reduce spending, county-supported institutions will see a 5% decrease in the 2015 operating budget allocated by the County.