

Strategic Program Area 2: Historical Society

Service Provision: Discretionary

How We Do It: Program Budget Summary					
Category	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Budget	2023 Budget	2023/2022 Variance
Expenditures	\$258,105	\$258,105	\$204,105	\$354,105	\$150,000
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$ 0
Tax Levy	\$258,105	\$258,105	\$204,105	\$354,105	\$150,000

What We Do With It: Activity Data				
Activity	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Target	2023 Target
Attendance-Public (General)	2,964	5,476	9,000	6,300
Attendance-Public (Programming)	22,980	12,959	5,000	14,900
Attendance-Other	134	0	4,000	0
Research Requests	2,007	2,510	5,000	3,750

How Well We Do It: Performance Measures				
Performance Measure	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Target	2023 Target
Annual % Increase in Patron Usage of MCHS Resource Material	-53%	22%	5%**	10%
Annual % Increase in Overall Attendance (for all MCHS Operated Facilities)	38%	-27%	5%**	10%

Attendance numbers are continuing to be varied given COVID restrictions and changes in users/attendance. Hours will increase as of Aug 1, 2023 to be open another full day a week

Strategic Overview:

The Milwaukee County Historical Society is a non-profit organization that collects, preserves, and shares Milwaukee County history with the public. The Society serves thousands of people each year through exhibits, the research library, three historic sites, and educational programs. As part of the research library, the Society carries out record retention services for Milwaukee County.

The Society’s service to Milwaukee County government is two-fold; as a service provider for record retention and making records publicly available, and as a county cultural institution offering a museum, historic sites, and additional programs and events for people to learn about Milwaukee’s history. However, to-date, the Society has been recognized for funding solely as a cultural organization and record retention services do not receive County funding.

For many years the County’s cultural contribution of \$204,105 to the Milwaukee County Historical Society has been flat or decreased. In addition, it is the lowest contribution among all the County cultural organizations. Given annual increases in operation costs, this stagnant or decreasing contribution has lost significant value over the last two decades.

CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS (1900) BUDGET

Department: **Cultural Contributions**

UNIT NO. 1900

FUND: **General — 0001**

During that period, the Society began operating Trimborn Farm for the County when the Parks People ended their relationship. Additionally, more than half of the records we retain for the County (6,000 cubic feet) have been amassed in this time period. Therefore, the Society's responsibility has increased but it must rely on the same annual contribution, which covers less of the cost of County record retention each year. Consequently, storage infrastructure and records management best practices suffer as the funds are not sufficient to maintain the status quo, much less improve care and facilities.

To support the annual costs of being the public repository for Milwaukee County's records, the Society proposes that in addition to the cultural contribution, Milwaukee County should provide an annual contribution toward record retention services. The amount requested for 2023 retention services would be \$150,000. Meanwhile, the cultural contribution would continue to support the museum's work as a community center that preserves and shares Milwaukee's history. These activities include serving thousands of students through history educational programs, plus thousands of other people with tours, historic sites, exhibits, events, and more. At the same time, the records retention service fee would support the County-related storage, preservation, staff capacity, and research facilities through the MCHS research library.

It is important to note that the Department of Administrative Services Record Retention Improvement initiative was approved in Fall 2021, which allows for the destruction or transfer of thousands of County records stored in commercial third-party storage. This would save the County approximately \$150,000 a year. However, pertinent historical records cannot be transferred to the Society unless it has the funds and capacity to store them. Thus, the Society proposes that the County transfers this annual storage cost savings to MCHS for record retention services for 2023 funding. This would allow for the Society to maintain staff capacity and services for 2023 while providing time for the Society and County to work on a permanent service agreement

Without Milwaukee County's support, the ability to collect, preserve, and make available Milwaukee County's records will soon be impossible. Currently, funds must be privately raised to cover the cost of caring for County records, which has become increasingly difficult. The public, Milwaukee County's residents, will be adversely impacted if their records are not available. People use these records for vital services such as to obtain social security benefits, prove next of kin, or to obtain a legal ID.