

Strategic Program Area: Milwaukee County Historical Society

Service Provision: Discretionary

How We Do It: Program Budget Summary

Category	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Budget	2024 Budget	2023/2024 Variance
Expenditures	258,105	204,105	354,105	354,105	0
Tax Levy	258,105	204,105	354,105	354,105	0

What We Do With It: Activity Data

Activity	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Target	2024 Target
Attendance-other	0	4,994	6,000	6,400
Attendance-Public (General)	5,476	3,601	5,700	6,000
Attendance-Public (Programming)	12,959	11,081	14,000	14,750
Research Requests	2,510	2,872	3,100	3,350

How Well We Do It: Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Target	2024 Target
Annual Percent Increase in Overall Attendance (all MCHS Operated Facilities)	27%	7%	10%	5%
Annual Percent Increase in Patron Usage of MCHS Resource Material	22%	14%	10%	10%

Strategic Overview:

As a non-profit cultural organization, the Milwaukee County Historical Society (MCHS) 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.

However, arguably the Historical Society’s most significant role is as a service provider to the County, preserving and making accessible important County records. Through the research library, people can access essential vital records including documents that prove relationships or verify citizenship.

For years, MCHS been recognized solely as a cultural organization and record retention services. During that period, the Society began operating Trimborn Farm for the County when the Parks People ended their relationship. Additionally, MCHS amassed more than half of the records it retains for the County (6,000 cubic feet). Fortunately, MCHS was allocated an additional \$150,000 in the 2023 budget to help address records retention needs.

Without Milwaukee County’s support, the ability to collect, preserve, and make available Milwaukee County’s records becomes increasingly difficult. People utilize the records for vital services including securing social security benefits, proving next of kin and obtaining legal identification.

Strategic Implementation:

Milwaukee Historical Society records retention services for Milwaukee County includes preservation, staff capacity, and research facilities through the MCHS research library. In the fall of 2021, the Department of Administrative Services Record Retention Improvement initiative was approved, allowing for the destruction or transfer of thousands of County records stored in commercial third-party storage.

Milwaukee County also supports the museum’s work as a community center that preserves and shares Milwaukee’s history. These activities include serving thousands of students through educational history programs, as well as thousands of others with tours, exhibits, events and more. MCHS also maintains the County-owned Historical Center building and the Benjamin Church House in Estabrook Park. Finally, MCHS and the County continue to work on a management agreement for Trimborn Farm, the County’s historic park in Greendale.