

Strategic Program Area: Milwaukee County Historical Society

Service Provision: Discretionary

How We Do It: Program Budget Summary

Category	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	2026 Budget	2025/2026 Variance
Expenditures	354,105	354,105	354,105	354,105	0
Tax Levy	354,105	354,105	354,105	354,105	0

What We Do With It: Activity Data

Activity	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Target	2026 Target
Attendance-other	2,602	2,756	5,000	5,000
Attendance-Public (General)	3,431	4,297	5,000	5,000
Attendance-Public (Programming)	16,499	14,509	16,000	15,000
Research Requests	3,190	3,476	3,200	3,500

How Well We Do It: Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Target	2026 Target
Annual Percent Increase in Overall Attendance (all MCHS Operated Facilities)	14%	-3%	10%	5%
Annual Percent Increase in Patron Usage of MCHS Resource Material	11%	9%	10%	5%

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, community programs, three historic sites, and educational programs.

The Historical Society plays a significant role as a service provider to the County by preserving and making important County records accessible. Through the research library, people can access essential vital records, including documents that prove relationships or verify citizenship, and thus improve access to key benefits. Currently, MCHS holds well over 12,000 cubic feet of County records and continues to transfer records from departments, keeping them out of commercial storage and accessible to the public. Finally, in addition to its role as third party repository for County records, MCHS manages and programs Trimborn Farm for Milwaukee County Parks hosting events and field trips throughout the year.

Strategic Implementation:

Maintaining the funding from 2025 in the 2026 budget will support the annual costs of record retention services for Milwaukee County, which include preservation, staff capacity, and research facilities through the MCHS research library. MCHS is working to relieve the County's backlog of records stored with a commercial vendor, thus saving the County significant storage expenses. These offsetting costs allow the County to serve its constituents by moving inaccessible records away from commercial storage to MCHS, which can make them accessible to both County employees and the public.

The cultural contribution continues 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 local history based educational programs, plus thousands of other people with tours, exhibits, events, and more. MCHS also maintains the County-owned Historical Center building, Trimborn Farm, and the Benjamin Church House in Estabrook Park.

Additional Program Details:

In addition to the above services, MCHS is working with the County on two significant cost and capacity saving measures. First, MCHS is collaborating with Economic Development on a Request for Proposal to bring in an outside entity to manage and maintain Trimborn Farm. If successful, this will reduce capital expenditures to maintain the historic buildings and reduce the workload for County Parks to maintain the grounds.

Second, MCHS is negotiating a lease with the Department of Administrative Services to use the under-utilized building at 10930 Lapham Street as its offsite storage facility. This will save the County significant utility and maintenance costs while also speeding up the process of transferring historic County records from commercial storage, ultimately saving the County over \$150,000 each year.