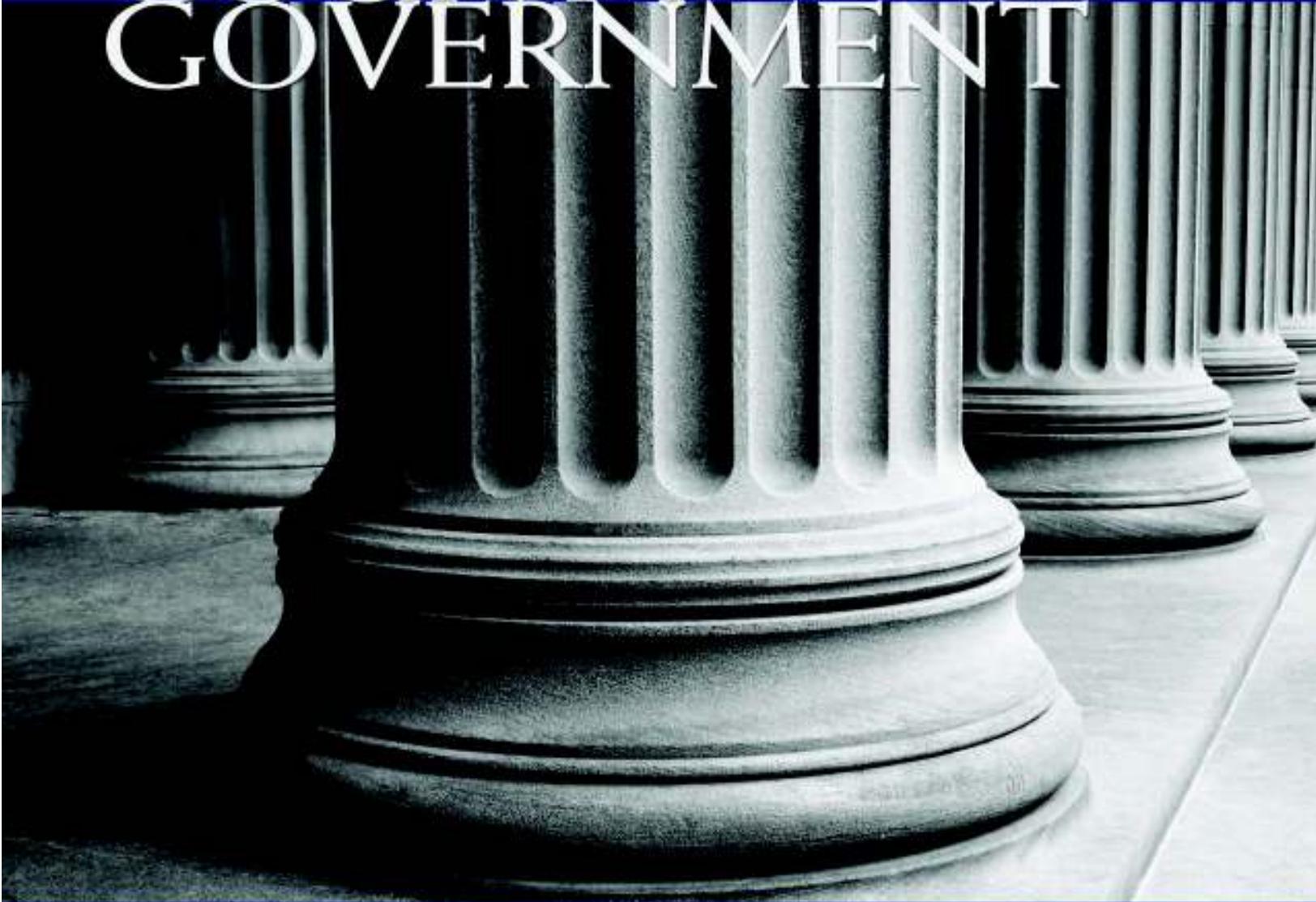


# COUNTY GOVERNMENT



HISTORY  
SERVICES  
FUNDING

WISCONSIN COUNTIES ASSOCIATION



## INTRODUCTION

The Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) is once again pleased to provide you with this publication outlining the history of, services provided by, and funding sources for county government. This document was initially prepared for use by the county representatives that served on the Governor's Blue-Ribbon Commission on State-Local Partnerships for the 21st Century to educate other commission members on the vital role county governments play in the provision of services across Wisconsin.

County governments play a multi-faceted role in the state-local relationship. That role has been recreated throughout time by the influence of our founding fathers, the court system, and in modern times, by our state Legislature. The role of counties continues to evolve and will continue to change as the state-local partnership is re-examined.

Due to the popularity of this publication, WCA has updated the information and is reprinting it for use by county officials across the state. We hope this document will prove useful to our newly elected county officials in Wisconsin and all citizens of this state who benefit from the services provided by Wisconsin's 72 counties.

# HISTORY

## A Historical Timeline of County Government

- 1783 Treaty of Paris transfers control of area to U.S.
- 1787 Northwest Ordinance approved. This provides for the creation of five states in the Northwest Territory (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin).
- 1800 Ohio becomes a state. Wisconsin is attached to the Indiana Territory (part of St. Clair County).
- 1805 Michigan Territory is separated from the Indiana Territory.
- 1809 Indiana becomes a state. Wisconsin is attached to the Illinois Territory.
- 1818 Illinois becomes a state. Wisconsin loses 60 miles of southern border (including the Chicago area). Wisconsin is attached to the Michigan Territory. Due to the distance between Wisconsin and Detroit, the territorial capital, three counties are organized in Wisconsin: Brown County in the east, Crawford County in the west and Michilimackinac County in the north (included the U.P.). These counties perform administrative functions for the territorial government.
- 1823 Counties are made Judicial Districts by Congress and the first court proceeding is held in Brown County in 1824.
- 1829 The population increases in Southwest Wisconsin due to the growth in lead mining. The increased population leads to the creation of a fourth county— Iowa County.
- 1834 Westward migration of Yankees (natives or inhabitants of New England) through the Erie Canal leads to population growth along Lake Michigan. Milwaukee County becomes the fifth county.
- 1836 The Wisconsin Territory is created. The area includes the region that is now the states of Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota and parts of the Dakotas. Fifteen new counties are created within the territory: Calumet, Dane, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Grant, Green, Jefferson, Manitowoc, Marquette, Portage, Racine, Rock, Sheboygan, Walworth and Washington. From April 20, 1836, the date the Wisconsin Territory was created, through 1901, the number of counties grew from 6 to 71.
- 1961 The reservation of the Menominee Indians of Wisconsin, located in Oconto and Shawano Counties, becomes Wisconsin's 72nd county— Menominee County.

## Government Functions Performed by Counties Before Statehood (1848)

Counties performed administrative services for the territorial government including the provision of sheriffs, judges, assessors, tax collectors and court clerks.

## Wisconsin's Statehood Efforts

- 1840 The first attempt at statehood fails by popular vote (92 yes, 499 no).
- 1842 The second attempt at statehood fails by popular vote (619 yes, 1821 no).
- 1843 The third attempt at statehood is defeated in territorial council.
- 1845 The fourth attempt at statehood is defeated in the House of Representatives.
- 1846 A bill is passed by Congress to "enable people of Wisconsin to form a constitution and state government, and for the admission of such state into the Union." The bill is signed by President Polk on August 10. Popular vote for statehood passes (12,334 yes, 2,387 no). Based on this "enabling act," the people of the territory called a constitutional convention in Madison to draft a fundamental law for governing the state.
- 1847 The first proposal for a constitution is submitted to the people on April 6. The voters reject it on a 14,119 to 20,231 vote.
- 1848 A second convention submits its draft on March 13 and is ratified by a vote of 16,799 to 6,384. Wisconsin becomes the 30th state in the Union on May 29.

# HISTORY

## The Constitutional Debate Affecting Counties

### Type of County Government (Size & Function)

The New York Constitution (supervisor) and Pennsylvania Constitution (commissioner) systems of county government both existed in the Wisconsin Territory. The debate between these forms of county government continued until 1870.

- ❑ Pennsylvania Constitution: Commissioner form of county government— calls for a small board elected from precincts to represent the interests of the county at-large. The county serves as the provider of local government services.
- ❑ New York Constitution: Supervisor form of county government— the board of supervisors specifically represents towns and incorporated places. Further, the county provides state administrative services while towns and municipalities serve as the provider of local government services.

## Wisconsin's Constitutional Solution

### Type of County Government

The framers of the Wisconsin Constitution required the Legislature to “establish but one system of town and county government, which shall be as nearly uniform as practicable” (Article IV, Section 23). The meaning of this ‘uniformity’ requirement was not settled until 1870. After a series of court decisions, the supervisor system prevailed. While the court did not expect all counties to be exactly the same, the court expected “practical uniformity void of needless diversity.”

In 1885, the Legislature determined that it was impractical to treat Milwaukee County the same as all other counties. Their action allowed Milwaukee County to elect supervisors from Assembly districts (a practice maintained until 1980). Almost 75 years later, the Legislature established a third category of counties, “counties having one town,” to deal with Menominee County. Menominee was to use the town board, plus one at-large delegate, to serve as the county board. In 1972, a constitutional amendment deleted the uniformity requirement for counties.

### Provision of Services

When Wisconsin became a state in 1848, the new state constitution contained several specific provisions for county government.

- Article IV, Section 22: “The Legislature may confer upon the boards of supervisors of the several counties of the state such powers of a local, legislative and administrative character as they shall from time to time prescribe.”
- Article VI, Section 4 identifies county officers, as well as the conditions of their election, removal and terms of office. The constitutionally specified officers are sheriffs, coroners, registers of deeds, district attorneys, judges and clerks of circuit court.

Counties are viewed as agents of the state because they are required to carry out or enforce certain state laws. For example, county sheriffs apprehend violators of state laws, county clerks manage state elections, and registers of deeds keep certain state records (birth and death certificates, marriage licenses and property deeds).

## Recent Developments

### 1970s

Counties are given narrow power to control several elements of county board functioning. This is commonly referred to as “self-organizing.”

Counties are permitted to pass ordinances declaring themselves self-organized for the purpose of setting board offices and compensation, establishing staggered supervisory terms and filling vacancies in supervisory districts.

### 1980s

Counties are granted “administrative home rule,” giving them greater control over organizing their administrative departments.

The Legislature granted counties authority to address and fund local issues in metropolitan areas without specific state enabling laws (*Wis. Stats.* 59.03(2)). This home rule authority has allowed county government to expand gradually as a regional government in areas such as recycling, water quality management, transportation planning and zoning review, but only in cases where a municipality or group of municipalities have requested the county do so on their behalf through voluntary agreements.

## Today

Counties do not have constitutional home rule authority as cities and villages do. This means that while cities and villages can basically undertake anything that is not expressly prohibited by state statute or the constitution, counties can only undertake a function that is expressly allowed for or mandated by state statute or the constitution. Counties' main function continues to be the administrative arm of state government.

## Executive and Administrative Options

Prior to 1960, Wisconsin county boards functioned as both the legislative branch and the executive branch. However, as county government became more complex and the population became more urbanized, the statutes were amended to permit the creation of a separate, elected position of county executive to administer and monitor county departments and exercise other specified powers. This position was first mandated for Milwaukee County in 1960. In 1969, the authority to create an executive position was extended to all counties, regardless of size (*Wis. Stats. 59.17*). County executives are elected in the general nonpartisan election on the first Tuesday in April and serve four-year terms.

In the 1985-87 State Biennial Budget, language was inserted to recognize the position of appointed county administrator. The county administrator is responsible for the annual budget, providing oversight to county department heads and reports to the county board (*Wis. Stats. 59.18*). Wisconsin currently has 11 elected county executives and 22 appointed administrators. This legislation also created *Wis. Stats. 59.19*, which requires all counties that do not choose to create either an administrator or an executive position to designate an administrative coordinator. The administrative coordinator is "responsible for

coordinating all administrative and management functions of the county government not otherwise vested by law in boards or commissions, or in elected officers." In addition, the administrative coordinator is the contact person for official correspondence between the county and departments or agencies of the state of Wisconsin. Thirty-nine counties have selected this form of administration.

## Other Elected Officials

Under state law, county residents elect certain other county officials. These are the clerk, treasurer, sheriff, clerk of circuit court, register of deeds, coroner (unless a medical examiner is appointed), elected surveyor (may be appointed) and district attorney. These officials are elected in partisan, general elections which are held on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November in even-numbered years. All constitutional officers are elected to four-year terms.

## Comparison of Options

Topic	Executive <i>Sec. 59.17, Wis. Stats.</i>	Administrator <i>Sec. 59.18, Wis. Stats.</i>	Administrative Coordinator <i>Sec. 59.19, Wis. Stats.</i>
<b>How Created</b>	Board resolution, petition and/or referendum	Board resolution, petition and/or referendum	Board resolution or ordinance
<b>How Chosen</b>	Spring election every four years (nonpartisan)	Appointed by majority vote of board	Appointed by majority vote of county board
<b>Qualifications</b>	U.S. citizen, 18 years of age, county resident	Training, experience, education	Elected or appointed county official. Other qualifications set by board.
<b>Source of Powers</b>	State statutes	State statutes	Limited state statutes & resolution/ordinance
<b>Removal</b>	By Governor for cause	By board majority	By board majority
<b>Budget Authority</b>	Prepares & presents to board	Prepares & presents to board	Only as authorized by board
<b>Veto Board Actions</b>	Yes	No	No
<b>Dept. Heads</b>	Appoints (subject to board confirmation). Removes at pleasure.	Appoints (subject to board confirmation). Removes at pleasure.	No authority unless granted by board
<b>Advisory Committees/ Administrative Boards</b>	Appoints & removes (subject to board confirmation unless waived or made under civil service)	Appoints & removes (subject to board confirmation unless waived or made under civil service)	No authority unless granted by board
<b>Coordinate Depts.</b>	Yes	Yes	Only management functions not assigned depts. by ordinance or law

# SERVICES

## COUNTY CLERK

### Election Administration

Register county candidates  
Prepare and publish election ads  
Print ballots  
Program election tabulation equipment  
Maintain voter registration for relying municipalities  
under Statewide Voter Registration System  
Tabulate and report election results  
Conduct Boards of Canvass and recounts  
Train and assist local units of government  
and school districts

### Services to the County Board

Prepare agendas and minutes  
Take minutes of meetings  
Publish official proceedings  
Ensure compliance with open meetings law  
Maintain records

### Licenses & Permits

Issue marriage licenses and compile indexes  
Distribute dog licenses and administer dog  
license fee accounts  
Issue conservation licenses  
Process passport applications  
Issue hayrack and sleigh ride permits  
Issue pawnbroker and secondhand dealer licenses  
Issue temporary vehicle license plates and  
registration renewals  
Issue work permits for minors

### Financial Functions

Budgeting  
Property tax apportionment  
Borrowing  
General accounting

### Other Statutory Duties

Zoning matters  
Farmland preservation  
Library reimbursement requirements  
Wood cutting notices  
Probate claim notices  
Miscellaneous highway department records  
Contracts, leases and agreements  
Miscellaneous filings  
Claims against the county

## COUNTY TREASURER

Receipt and deposit of all money  
Reconcile bank accounts  
Imprint signatures and mail disbursements  
Certify and maintain lottery credit file for both real and  
personal property  
Administer the ag-use conversion fee  
Invest excess funds/investment programs  
Process personal property chargebacks  
Maintain at least 15 years of all tax information  
Property tax collection  
Maintain record of all paid and delinquent taxes  
Prepare and mail delinquent tax notices  
Tax deeds or assist county clerk with the same  
Issue tax certificates  
Treasurer for drainage districts  
Report and publish unclaimed funds  
Report and pay to DNR managed forest land and private forest  
crop settlement  
Print tax sale book  
Prepare and file sales and use tax reports  
Prepare and/or assist municipal staff with January and  
February tax settlements  
Provide settlement information to the state by March 15  
Forward fines and forfeitures, court fees, real estate transfer fees  
and WLIP recording fees to the appropriate state department  
Prepare and distribute August settlement for all taxing  
jurisdictions  
Distribute National Forest income to municipalities

## CULTURE, RECREATION, EDUCATION,

### County libraries

Encourage citizens to be knowledgeable about and  
actively involved in all levels of their government  
Assist citizens in obtaining information in various formats  
on various topics  
Inform citizens of all aspects of issues relating to social,  
political and economic concerns  
Provide community centers to support discussion among citizens  
Support the development of general library services for all ages  
Support life-long learning for all county residents

### Cooperative Extension (a division of UW-Extension)

Provide wide-ranging educational programs on topics including:

- ◆ 4-H, youth development, youth skills, youth leadership
- ◆ Agriculture, natural resources, agribusiness and horticulture
- ◆ Community, economic development, natural resources
- ◆ Family, nutrition education, finances, parenting

**HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

**Human Services**

Juvenile Justice

- Intake
- Assessment
- Court-ordered supervision
- Case management
- Foster care
- Group care
- Residential treatment
- Restitution
- Public service
- Juvenile detention

Child Protective Services

- Intake
- Investigation
- Court-ordered supervision
- Case management
- Foster care
- Termination of parental rights
- Pre-adoption planning
- Shelter care

Mental/Behavioral Health

- Outpatient counseling
- Emergency detentions
- Court commitment

- Case management
- Community Based Residential Facilities (CBRF) placement
- Intoxicated driver program
- Community support program
- Comprehensive community services
- Detoxification
- State institutional placements
- Alcohol & Other Drug Abuse (AODA) assessment funding and counseling
- AODA primary prevention services

Adult and Disability Services

- Intake and assessment
- Guardianships
- Case management
- Personal care
- Home care
- Adult family home
- Community-Based Residential Facilities
- Day services
- Court-ordered protective services
- Elder abuse services
- Elderly and disabled transportation
- Aging and Disability Resource Centers

Economic Support

- Food Stamps
- Medical Assistance
- General Relief
- Energy assistance
- Wisconsin Works
- MA transportation
- Burials
- Child care

**Public Health**

- Childhood and/or adult immunizations
- Communicable disease follow-up
- Women Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition services
- Well-child and well-baby programs
- Prenatal care coordination
- Tobacco education and cessation classes
- Community assessments
- Health education
- Bioterrorism planning and response efforts
- Restaurant and hotel inspections (food and recreational licensing program, retail ag. program)
- Lead poisoning screening and education
- Public health nursing
- Sanitarians – human health hazards
- Public health policy development and enforcement
- Oral health care
- Injury prevention program
- Chronic disease prevention
- School nursing
- Reproductive health

**HOUSING**

Other services

- Arts
- Beaches
- Campgrounds
- Economic development
- Regional Planning Commissions
- Fairs and exhibits
- Golf courses
- Historical societies
- Museums
- Parks
- Public housing
- Recreation facilities
- Recreational trails
- Two-year UW-system
- Appoint members to Wisconsin Technical College District Boards
- Zoos

**Child Support**

- Establishment of paternity
- Establishment and enforcement of court-ordered child support and medical support obligations
- Establishment and enforcement of support orders when children are placed out of the home

**Nursing Homes**

- Provide 24-hour skilled nursing care with an emphasis on serving residents with special care needs and/or financial needs
- Provide a range of services including long-term care, end-of-life care, dementia care and/or short-term rehabilitative care
- Medical Assistance is the primary payer source with deficits certified by the state and used to claim federal matching funds for the state's Medicaid Trust Fund deficit

**HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES (CONT.)**

**Aging**

- Provide access to information, services and opportunities provided through the aging unit
- Provide a visible access point of contact for individuals to obtain accurate and comprehensive information about public and private community resources which can meet the needs of older adults
- Benefit specialist services
- Organize and administer congregate programs— nutrition, senior centers, adult day care, respite
- Provide information to the public about the aging experience and about resources for and within the aging population
- Assist in representing the needs, views and concerns of older individuals and assist older individuals in expressing their views
- Advocate on behalf of older individuals to assist in enabling them to meet their basic needs
- Aging and Disability Resource Centers



**CIRCUIT COURTS**

Clerk of Circuit Court

- Collection of fees, fines and forfeitures
- Court administration
- Custodian of court records— civil, family, criminal and miscellaneous
- Jury management
- Court finances

District Attorney

- Collect and prosecute worthless check cases
- Prosecute all criminal cases— misdemeanors and felonies
- Prosecute all DNR cases
- Prosecute juvenile delinquency cases and children in need of protection and services (CHIPS) cases
- Prosecute termination of parental rights cases
- Prosecute traffic cases from county sheriff's department and Wisconsin state patrol
- Provide crime victim and witness services
- Represent the county in the prosecution of county ordinance violations
- Payment of witness fees, including expert witness fees

Register in Probate

- Custodians of the record
- Court Finances
- Court Administration
- Collection of Fees

Circuit Court Commissioner

- Handle probate, guardianship and mental commitment proceedings
- Hear small claims trials
- Conduct initial appearances and set bail on traffic and ordinance civil cases, misdemeanors and felonies
- Conduct preliminary hearings in felony matters to determine whether the case shall proceed
- Handle juvenile hearings that are not open to the public

Family Court Commissioner

- Grant divorces to parties who have appropriate written agreements.
- Conduct court hearings and render decisions on issues in family court cases (except a final, contested divorce trial, which must be held before a judge), including:

- Paternity, custody and placement of children
- Support for children, including responsibility for health insurance, medical expenses and other related financial issues
- Assignment of tax dependency exemptions between the parents
- Use of and division of property
- Responsibility for payment of debts
- Maintenance (alimony)

Administrative responsibilities to ensure efficient yet fair administration of justice.

Other services

- Court reporters
- Courtroom security
- Guardians ad litem
- Indigent counsel
- Judicial assistants
- Law clerks
- Law library
- Mediation



# SERVICES

Soil and water resource management  
Tree planter maintenance  
Watershed programs  
Wildlife damage claim and abatement program  
Wildlife habitat preservation

## Land Information, Planning, Zoning

Boards of Adjustment  
Farmland preservation program  
General zoning, shoreland zoning and floodplain zoning  
Global positioning systems  
Land division and subdivision review and approval  
Land-use planning  
Large livestock siting  
Mapping  
Non-metallic mining reclamation  
Private sewage system monitoring  
Remonumentation  
Wisconsin Land Information Program  
Comprehensive planning  
Telecommunication tower siting  
Airport zoning

## Sanitation/Solid Waste/Recycling

Animal wastewater control  
Compost  
Collection services, transporting and solid waste disposal  
Household hazardous waste including pharmaceuticals via clean sweep program  
Long-term care/closure of landfills  
Operate a port authority  
Operate an incinerator program to reduce waste  
Own and operate county landfills & construction of landfills  
Own county landfills and contract out for service  
Private sewage system monitoring  
Provide collection services  
Provide a yard waste composting collection site  
Recycling, Comprehensive  
Serve as the responsible unit for recycling programs and services, or contract out a portion of these responsibilities  
Tank cleanup/removal

## Surveyor

Remonumentation of section corners  
Maintenance of section corners  
File surveys and maintain survey records  
GPS surveys  
Subdivision plat review  
Certified survey map review  
Conduct surveys for other county departments

## Forestry

Coordinate county ATV trail program  
Coordinate countywide snowmobile program  
Conduct sales of county tax-delinquent lands  
Develop and maintain county park, wayside and beach facilities  
Develop and maintain county campground facilities  
Develop and maintain cross-country ski trails  
Establishment of forest compartments and stands  
Forest Lands Reconnaissance  
Implement forest certification standards  
Maintain lake and river accesses throughout the county  
Oversee and maintain horse trails  
Oversee and coordinate maintenance and development of mountain bike trails  
Promote soil and water stewardship by following Best Management Practices (BMPs) for water quality  
Recreation  
Timber sale establishment, administration and bid process  
Tree planting on county forest lands  
Wildlife habitat development and maintenance on county forest lands  
Work with Ice Age Trail Foundation  
Provide nature and hiking trails  
Invasive species monitoring and control

## LAND SERVICES

### Land Conservation

Provide cost-sharing, technical and planning programs  
Distribute and allocate funds for conservation activities  
Actively solicit public participation in planning and evaluation of soil and water conservation programs  
Adopt and administer soil and water conservation standards  
Nutrient management planning  
Agriculture runoff control  
Groundwater, lakefront and river protection  
Urban storm water runoff management  
Forestry projects  
Invasive species awareness and control  
Prepare work plans  
Farmland preservation program  
Household hazardous waste programs  
Implementation of shoreland preservation programs  
Large livestock siting  
Non-metallic mining reclamation  
Pollution prevention programs  
Preservation of open space

**REGISTER OF DEEDS**

- Record, index, archive and maintain all instruments authorized by law, collect statutory fees and submit a portion to the state for the Land Information Program
  - File federal tax liens
  - Mapping
  - Issue copies of recorded records upon demand and collect required fee
  - Record, index, archive and maintain military discharge papers and issue certified copies as requested by the veteran or veteran service officer
  - Record/file and maintain vital records (birth, marriage and death), issue certified copies, collect statutory fees and submit portion to the Children’s Trust Fund
  - Submit the state’s portion of the real estate transfer fee to the Department of Revenue
  - Record/file and keep permanent records of all certified survey maps, subdivision plats, condominium plats, county plats and transportation project plats as required by *Wisconsin State Statutes*
- Sheriff

**PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES**

- Coordinate accident reduction project
- Dive rescue
- Dog handlers
- Drug and crime prevention
- Holding of state prisoners
- Prisoner law library
- School liaison officers
- Tactical teams
- Transport of adult prisoners
- Transport of juvenile prisoners
- Water patrol
- Keep and preserve the peace
- Conduct criminal investigations
- Provide traffic enforcement
- Respond to citizen calls for service, emergency and non-emergency
- Maintain and operate the county jail
- Attend upon the circuit courts
- Serve and execute all processes, writs, subpoenas and orders from the courts issued or made by lawful authority and delivered to the sheriff

Public Service Answering Points

- Answer 911 calls
- Answer non-emergency calls
- Record phone and radio conversations

- Dispatch appropriate services (police, fire, EMS)
- Operate state TIME system for police
- Operate Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system
- Work with GIS information
- Use electronic investigation to assist police
- Maintain and verify warrant records
- Provide public education

Emergency Management

- Administer state and federal grants (EMPG, EPCRA, Homeland Security Grants, etc.)
- Prepare and administer the department’s budget
- Develop public education programs
- Develop training programs for emergency response personnel
- Develop tabletop, functional and full-scale exercises to test the response capabilities of local responders
- Maintain emergency communications systems (i.e., outdoor warning sirens)
- Keep an inventory of public and private resources that would be available during a disaster
- Provide mitigation preparedness, response

- and recovery activities for the county and its municipalities
- Establish, maintain and operate the county’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

Coroner/Medical Examiner

- Complete reports of inquests and investigations
- Initiate an investigation if foul play is suspected and contact the appropriate agencies
- Interact with next of kin of deceased, including notification of death and follow-up information with law enforcement personnel, attorneys and physicians
- Interview witnesses
- Obtain lab samples for testing or screening by a laboratory
- Order medicolegal autopsies
- Record facts and conclusions concerning a death and testify regarding such information if requested
- Sign death certificates, cremation permits and any other necessary paperwork
- Airport operation and maintenance



## TRANSPORTATION

Assistance to rail and harbor infrastructure  
Bridge and culvert installation/maintenance  
Docks and harbors  
Guard rail installation and repair  
Highway and street maintenance for local roads  
Installation and removal of snow fence, application of salt and sand  
Litter and trash pick-up  
Maintain and repair park and ride lots  
Maintain several waysides of the state trunk highway system  
Mass transit  
Own and maintain bike trails  
Patching, crack filling and seal coating of pavement  
Parking facilities  
Pavement resurfacing and marking  
Planning and engineering  
Plowing, de-icing, shoveling and hauling snow  
Road construction  
Shoulder maintenance  
Street lighting  
Transportation services for elderly and disabled  
Vegetation control  
Signing  
Traffic control

## VETERANS SERVICES

Advise persons living in the service officer's county who served in the U.S. armed forces regarding any benefits to which they may be entitled, and assist in any complaint or problem arising out of such service and render to veterans and their dependents all possible assistance  
Cooperate with federal and state agencies that serve or grant aids and benefits to former military personnel and their dependents  
Furnish information about veteran's burial places within the county  
Disability compensation and/or pension benefits through Veterans Affairs (VA)  
Apply for G.I. Bill education benefits for veterans  
Vocational rehabilitation for disabled veterans  
Assist with federal and state home loans, personal loans and home improvement loans  
Provide burial benefits (i.e. cemeteries, markers, burial flags, funeral honors, etc.)  
Provide dependent and survivor benefits (i.e. healthcare, education, pensions, etc.)  
Enrollment of veterans into VA medical system  
Register discharge papers/DD-214's with county  
Transportation to and from medical care  
Help determine eligibility and complete paperwork for veteran's homes and long-term care  
Provide and/or refer veterans to appropriate federal, state and non-governmental emergency financial aid  
Assist homeless veterans  
Assist with applications for Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) benefits

# FUNDING

## County and Municipal Aid– Shared Revenue

In general, shared revenue is unrestricted aid paid to counties and municipalities by the state. Shared revenue funding can be utilized for any activity approved by the local governing body.

Wisconsin's practice of sharing state taxes with local governments dates back to 1911 when a share of the new state income tax was earmarked for local governments to compensate them for property tax exemptions that were enacted at the same time. Through a number of law changes in the early 1970s, the shared revenue program evolved.

Prior to 1994, unrestricted aids were paid to local governmental units under the shared revenue program. In 2004, the county and municipal aid program was created.

Payments under the program are made on the fourth Monday in July (15%) and the third Monday in November (85%). Prior to 2004, the shared revenue program consisted of four components: utility aid, aidable revenues, per capita and minimum/maximum. Currently, payments to each county and municipality are set at the same amounts that were received in 2004. Only the utility aid component remains operational. Utility aid payments compensate local governments for costs incurred in providing services to public utilities.

## Shared Revenue, County & Municipal Aid Payments 1997-2007 (in millions)

Year	County Payment	Percent Change
1997	\$189.1	-
1998	\$189.1	0.0%
1999	\$189.1	0.0%
2000	\$189.7	0.3%
2001	\$189.7	0.0%
2002	\$191.6	1.0%
2003	\$193.5	1.0%
2004	\$174.3	-9.9%
2005	\$174.4	0.1%
2006	\$176.8	1.4%
2007	\$176.6	-0.1%
1997-2007	-	-6.6%

Source: Legislative Fiscal Bureau

## Funding Health & Human Services

Community aids is the major state funding source counties utilize to help fund their human services responsibilities.

### Eligible Community Aids Services

(Source: Legislative Fiscal Bureau)

Child care	Community support	Inpatient and institutional care
Supportive home care services	Work-related and day services	◆ Juvenile correctional institution services
Specialized transportation and escort services	◆ Nonmedical day care services	◆ Detoxification— hospital setting
Community living/support services	Supported employment services	◆ Inpatient
◆ Adult day care	Community residential services	◆ Child caring institution services
◆ Respite care	◆ Adoptions	◆ DD center/nursing home
◆ Housing/energy assistance	◆ Adult family home care	Institution for Mental Disease (IMD) services
◆ Daily living skills training	◆ Foster home care	Community prevention, access and outreach
◆ Interpreter services and adaptive equipment	◆ Group home care	◆ Recreation/alternative activities
◆ Family support	◆ Shelter care	◆ Community prevention, organization and awareness
◆ Congregate meals	◆ Detoxification— social setting	◆ Outreach
◆ Home-delivered meals	◆ Community-based residential facility care	◆ Information and referral
◆ Family planning	Community treatment services	◆ Advocacy and defense resources
◆ Protective payment/guardianship	◆ Juvenile probation and supervision	◆ Health screening and accessibility
◆ Case management	◆ Juvenile reintegration and aftercare	
Investigations and assessments	◆ Restitution	
◆ Court intake and studies	◆ Crisis intervention	
◆ Intake assessment	◆ Counseling/therapeutic resources	
	◆ Medical day treatment	

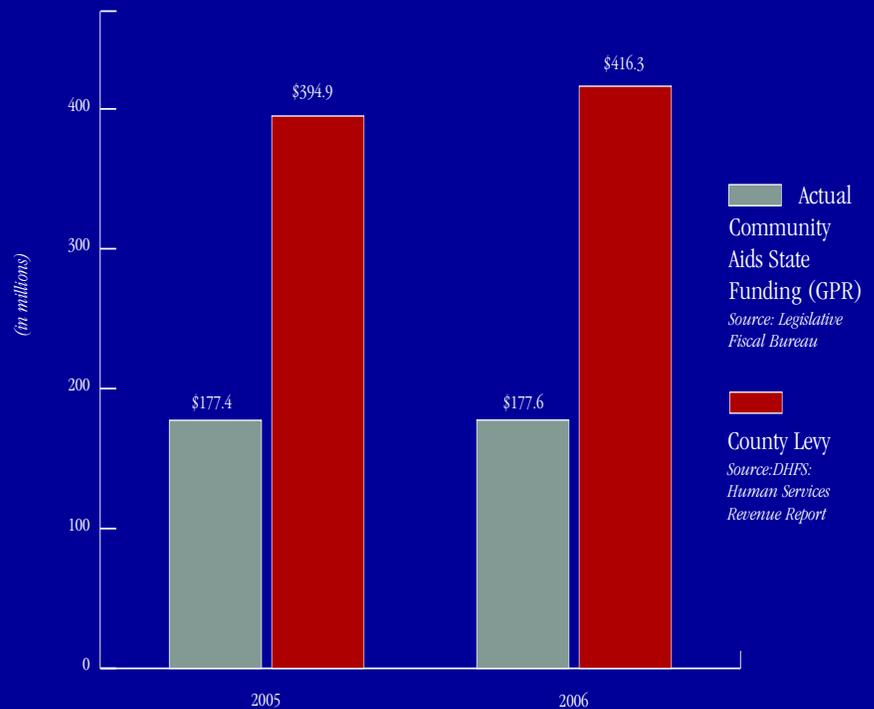
## Funding Health & Human Services

### Examples of statutory mandates (in part):

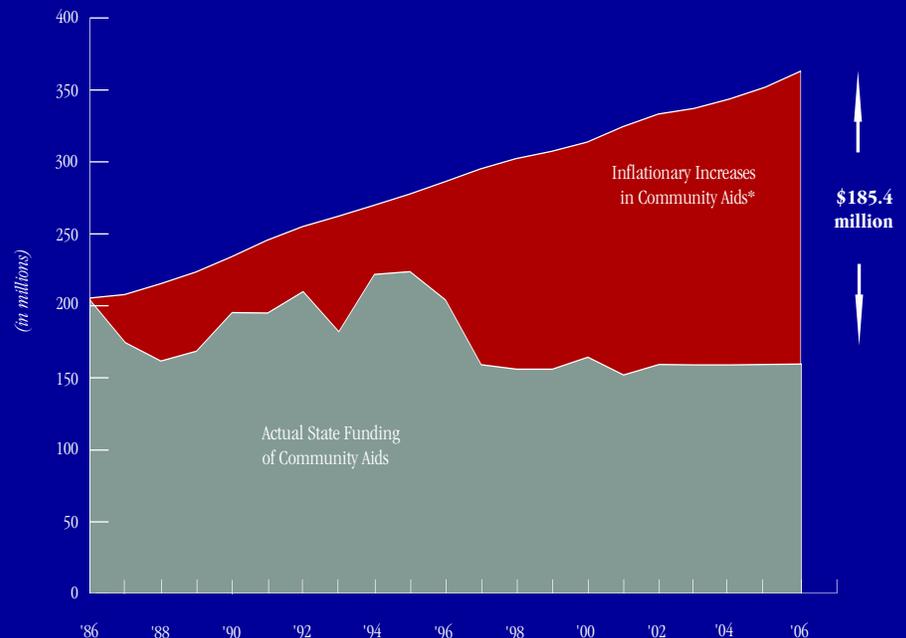
51.42(1)(b) COUNTY LIABILITY. The county board of supervisors has the primary responsibility for the well-being, treatment and care of the mentally ill, developmentally disabled, alcoholic and other drug-dependent citizens residing within its county and for ensuring that those individuals in need of such emergency services found within its county receive immediate emergency services.

46.031 (2g) CONTRACT. (a) The department shall annually submit to the county board of supervisors in a county with a single-county department or the county boards of supervisors in counties with a multi-county department a proposed written contract containing the allocation of funds and such administrative requirements as necessary. The contract as approved may contain conditions of participation consistent with federal and state law. The contract may also include provisions necessary to ensure uniform cost accounting of services. Any changes to the proposed contract shall be mutually agreed upon. The county board of supervisors in counties with a single-county department or the county boards of supervisors in counties with a multi-county department shall approve the contract before January 1 of the year in which it takes effect unless the department grants an extension.

## Community Aids State (GPR) Funding & County Levy



## Community Aids 1986-2006



This chart depicts what community aids funding would look like if there was an inflationary increase each year. The bottom or gray portion of the chart shows actual state funding of community aids, while the top or red section shows community aids increased by inflation from 1986 to 2006. If community aids funding had kept pace with inflation, there would have been \$185.4 million more available funding for the program in 2006.

\* The funding levels were adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index for the Midwest urban area.

### Juvenile Justice Funding

Youth Aids is the major state funding source counties utilize to help them fund their juvenile justice activities.

Under current law, counties have the primary financial responsibility for juvenile delinquents.

Youth Aids was implemented statewide in January 1981. Youth Aids was designed to assist counties in covering the costs of both in-home and out-of-home placements for juveniles found delinquent.

The Youth Aids program was created to reduce the number of individuals in the state's Juvenile Correctional Institutions (JCIs) by eliminating any fiscal incentive for counties to place juveniles in these institutions. (In other words, the state JCIs would charge the county for each juvenile sent to the JCI by a state judge.)

Generally, a circuit court judge orders either an in-home disposition or an out-of-home disposition.

In-home dispositions range from attending weekly therapy sessions to electronic monitoring devices. All juveniles with in-home dispositions remain under the direct supervision of their counties of residence, and county officials are responsible for making decisions about their treatment.

Out-of-home dispositions include foster homes, treatment foster homes, group homes, residential care centers and JCIs.

The pie chart below shows a comparison of state and county funding of the juvenile justice program from 1995 to 2005.

### Funding the State Court System

The Wisconsin court system was established when Wisconsin became a state in 1848 by Article VII of the Wisconsin Constitution.

The state was divided into five judicial districts, with five judges who were required to meet once a year in Madison as a Supreme Court.

In 1903, the Supreme Court was expanded to seven members and the Constitution was amended to require separate "probate courts" and allowed the Legislature to establish inferior courts.

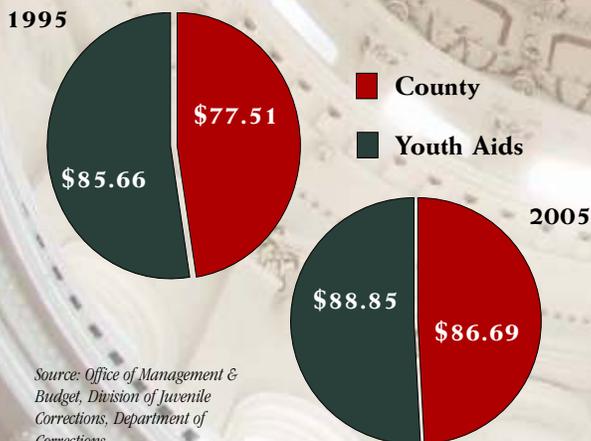
In 1962, the court system was reorganized into a two-tiered system with circuit courts and county courts. There were 26 judicial circuits and county courts had at least one judge in each county.

In 1977, the Constitution was amended to eliminate the requirement of one probate court in each county and the Legislature passed the "Court Reorganization Act." The "Court Reorganization Act" merged circuit and county courts into one trial court system.

As a result of the reorganization, the 26 circuit courts were expanded to the current 69, and existing circuit and county judges became judges in the circuit in which their chambers were located.

#### Comparison of State/County Funding of Juvenile Justice from 1995 to 2005

(in millions)



Source: Office of Management & Budget, Division of Juvenile Corrections, Department of Corrections

#### Circuit Court Expenditures & Revenues State (FY 05-06) & County (CY 2005)

Source: Legislative Fiscal Bureau



All matters pending before the county court were transferred to the circuit court.

The act also phased out four existing judgeships and phased in 13 additional judgeships for a total of 190 circuit court judges in 1980.

Fifty-one more judgeships have been created since 1980 for a total of 241 circuit court judges statewide. Eight new judgeships were created in the 2007-2008 Legislative Session. Five counties have start-up dates in 2008: Barron,

Chippewa, Dodge, Juneau and St. Croix. Judgeships will start in Green and Kenosha counties in 2009 and in Monroe County in 2010. Wisconsin will have 249 circuit court judges when the eight new judges assume office. While the circuit courts are under the control of the state, a large portion of the court system is still funded by counties. State funds are used to pay the salaries of the judges, official court reporters and reserve judges. By law, counties are responsible for all other operating costs.

## County Transportation Funding

Wisconsin has over 114,141 miles of roads. Local governments have jurisdiction over 102,358 miles, or 89.6%, of those road miles. Counties, cities, towns and villages work to carry out many different state and federal transportation programs.

When looking at average daily traffic, the state roads consist of approximately 60% and local governments consist of approximately 40%. Wisconsin funds its transportation system almost exclusively through user fees— mostly the gas tax and registration fees.

Counties receive funding from the state for transportation through various programs including General Transportation Aids (GTA), Local Transportation Facility Improvement Assistance, Local Bridge Assistance and Mass Transit. County funding for transportation is derived from state aid, the property tax and special assessments.

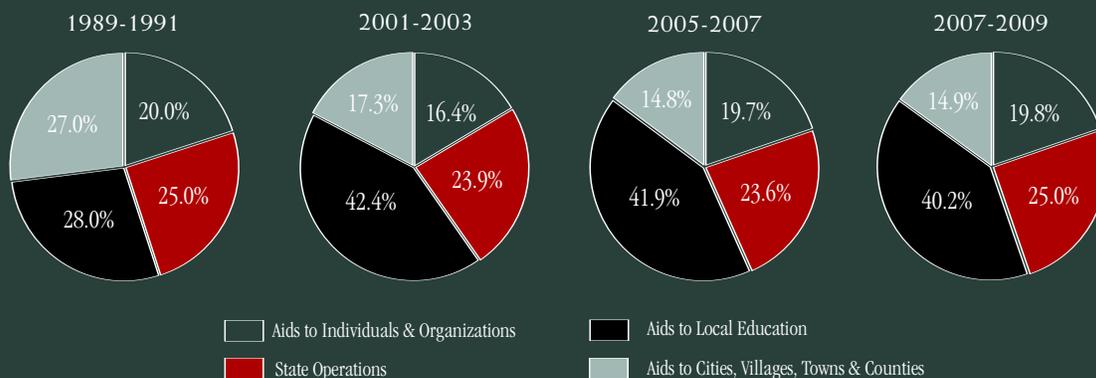
GTA is the largest funding source paid to local governments. In calendar year 2008, \$400,071,000 was appropriated to local governments, \$96,492,900 for counties, which is the equivalent of about 24% cost sharing. GTA helps offset the cost of county and municipal road construction, maintenance, traffic and other transportation-related costs. These funds are distributed based on a six-year spending average of a statutorily set rate-per-mile.

Another source of money for local governments is Local Transportation Facility Improvement Assistance. This includes the Surface Transportation Rural Program (STP-Rural), the Surface Transportation Urban Program (STP-Urban) and the Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP). Local governments will receive annual federal funds totaling \$94,497,580 in the STP-Urban and \$29,375,120 in the STP-Rural program for 2009-2012. LRIP funding for 2006-2007 was \$46,708,900 from state segregated funds, with a minimum of \$46,708,900 in local matching dollars.

Local governments will also receive \$66,250,196 in annual funds under the Local Bridge Improvement Assistance program for the 2009-2012 program cycle, with \$53,000,157 coming from federal funds and \$13,250,039 coming from state funds. This program helps rehabilitate and replace the most seriously deficient existing local bridges on Wisconsin's local highway system.

Finally, in the area of mass transit, qualifying local governments can receive funding through the State Urban Mass Transit Operating Assistance Program. Eligible applicants for this program include municipalities and counties with populations greater than 2,500. Eligible public transportation services include buses, shared-ride taxicabs and rail. The state budgeted \$102,647,400 for this program in 2007.

## State Budget Distribution of Resources 1989 - 2009





## Employee Benefit Services to Wisconsin Counties and Other Local Units of Government

- ▶ Group Health, Dental and Vision Plans
- ▶ Self-Insurance Programs
- ▶ Health Care Provider Networks
- ▶ Employee Benefit Design Assistance

**For More Information Contact Kim Hurtz  
of Aegis Corporation at 1.800.236.6885.**



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