

WISCONSIN COUNTIES ASSOCIATION



2019-2020
LEGISLATIVE
AGENDA



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INTRODUCTION

The Wisconsin Counties Association’s (WCA) legislative agenda is approved by the board of directors and published every two years in preparation for the upcoming legislative session. This document outlines the association’s priorities for the legislative session.

While many of these items require additional state investment, those investments pay dividends. Counties are committed to using state resources to improve the state’s economy and infrastructure for the betterment of Wisconsin citizens, businesses, and the state itself.

The legislative agenda items are organized by WCA issue area and can be found on the pages indicated below.

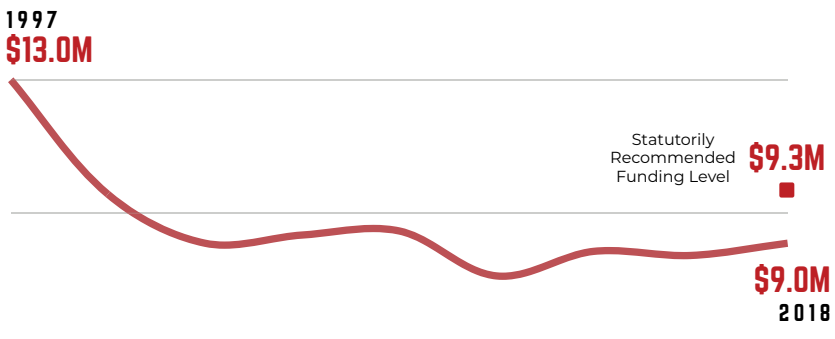
- ▼ AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT & LAND USE. 4
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AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT & LAND USE

- ▼ Increase funding for state and county efforts to combat invasive species.
- ▼ Enact comprehensive groundwater quantity legislation that balances the need to protect groundwater from contamination and overuse while respecting the needs of the agricultural economy.
- ▼ Ensure that counties have input with the Department of Natural Resources in establishing groundwater quantity criteria that are appropriate in each county and reflect decisions made at the local level.
- ▼ Restore and support the sustainability of the state’s forestry account.
- ▼ Provide continued funding for recycling programs, Clean Sweep, and medication collection programs.
- ▼ Maintain the funding for county land conservation staffing and cost-sharing grants established in the 2017-19 biennial budget, and further increase funds to reflect the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection’s statutorily recommended funding level of \$9.3 million annually.
- ▼ Enact legislation that provides counties with the authority to establish public improvement standards for a new plat where there is an absence of standards in a town’s ordinance.
- ▼ Implement the WCA Shoreland Zoning Task Force’s recommendations regarding recent statutory changes made to county shoreland zoning regulation.
- ▼ Exempt from state tipping fees the residuals from a “waste to energy” facility in a similar fashion that non-recyclable materials left over from the sorting process in a Material Recovery Facility are exempted under Wisconsin state law.

COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION FUNDING

State Staffing Grants to Counties 1997-2018
(In Millions of Dollars)



Source: Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Aging

- ▼ Increase funding for the elderly and disabled transportation program (Wis. Stat. §85.21).
- ▼ Seek enactment of the Caregiver Advise, Record, Enable (CARE) Act in Wisconsin.
- ▼ Seek a state income tax credit for family caregivers.
- ▼ Seek state funding to support the implementation of healthy aging programs across the state.
- ▼ Support state funding to ensure access to dementia care specialists statewide.

Behavioral Health

- ▼ Support 100% funding (state/federal) for crisis continuum services.

Child Support

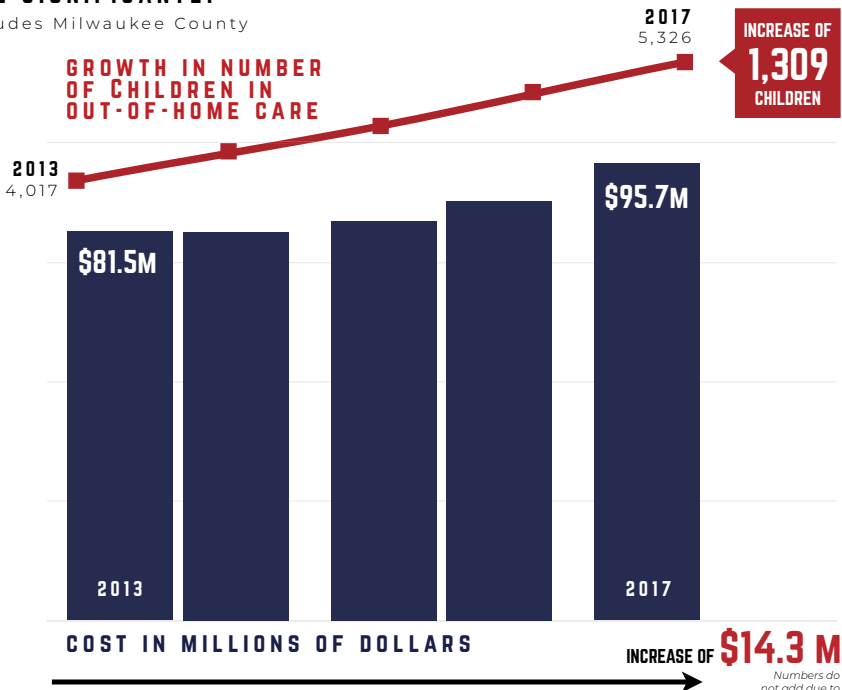
- ▼ Streamline the paternity establishment process in Wisconsin by allowing local child support agencies to assist participants through the paternity establishment process (administrative paternity).
- ▼ Seek an additional \$1.5 million GPR annually (and its corresponding federal match) for county child support enforcement activities.

Child Welfare

- ▼ Significantly increase the children and family aids allocation to reflect increased workloads, caseloads, and out-of-home placement costs.

OUT-OF-HOME CARE PLACEMENTS & COSTS RISE SIGNIFICANTLY

Excludes Milwaukee County

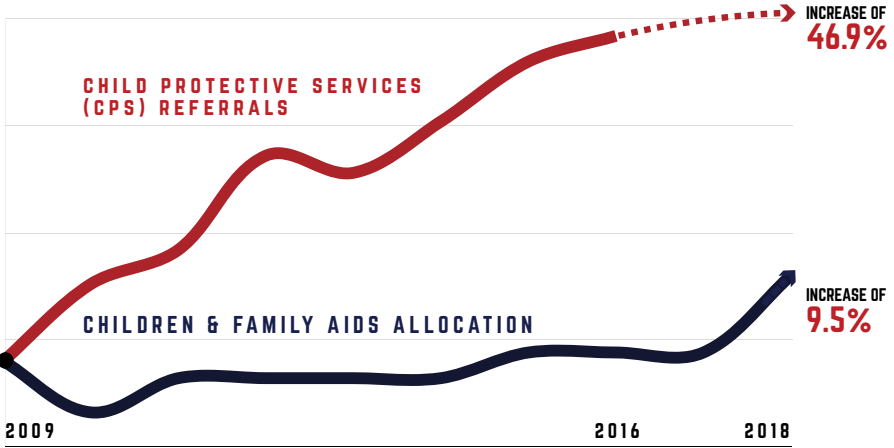


*Cost data includes RCCs, group homes, treatment foster care, foster care & subsidized guardianships

Source: Wisconsin Department of Children & Families (DCF) Out-of-Home Care Reports and ad hoc reports.

CPS REFERRALS RISE AS STATE FUNDING REMAINS STAGNANT

Growth in CPS Referrals vs. Growth in Children & Family Aids Allocation



Source: Wisconsin Department of Children & Families, "Wisconsin Child Abuse & Neglect Annual Report"
 *CPS referrals after 2016, shown here as the red dashed line, are estimates.

County Nursing Homes

- ▼ Exempt county government-owned Institutes for Mental Disease (IMD) and state-only licensed facilities from the provider bed assessment (bed tax).
- ▼ Seek the following Medical Assistance rate increases (fee for service) for skilled nursing facilities in the 2019-21 biennium:
 - ▶ Fund the Nursing Facility Direct Care – Nursing Target at the median.
 - *Estimated 2019-21 Biennial Cost: \$32.5 million GPR*
 - ▶ Increase the Nursing Facility Direct Care – Other Target by \$5 per resident day.
 - *Estimated 2019-21 Cost: \$16.2 million GPR*
 - ▶ Increase the Support Services Target by \$5 per resident day.
 - *Estimated 2019-21 Cost: \$16.2 million GPR*
 - ▶ Increase funding for four nursing facility labor regions to the Statewide Direct Care Target (Rural Counties; Brown/Kewaunee/Oconto Counties; Eau Claire/Chippewa Counties; and Fond du Lac County).
 - *Estimated 2019-21 Cost: \$3.6 million GPR*
 - ▶ Provide a 4.5% inflationary increase in the 2nd year of the biennium (2020-21).
 - *Estimated 2019-21 Cost: \$14.7 million GPR*
 - ▶ Include a budget provision to protect LTC funding – if the SNF-FFS Medicaid actual spending is less than the amount authorized by the 2019-21 biennial budget act, the difference shall be added to the authorized nursing facility funding increase approved for the subsequent fiscal year.
- ▼ Seek the following Medical Assistance rate increase for Family Care: a 3% rate increase in each year of the 2019-21 state biennial budget.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES (CONT)

Income Maintenance (IM)

- ▼ Increase funding in the income maintenance administration allocation to: 1) cover the costs associated with an increased workload; 2) allow counties to complete the work required of them in a timely manner; 3) move toward a more equitable share of costs between counties and the state.
- ▼ Continue to support IM consortia fraud detection and prevention efforts by allocating an additional \$1 million GPR annually in the fraud prevention and investigation program (FPIP).

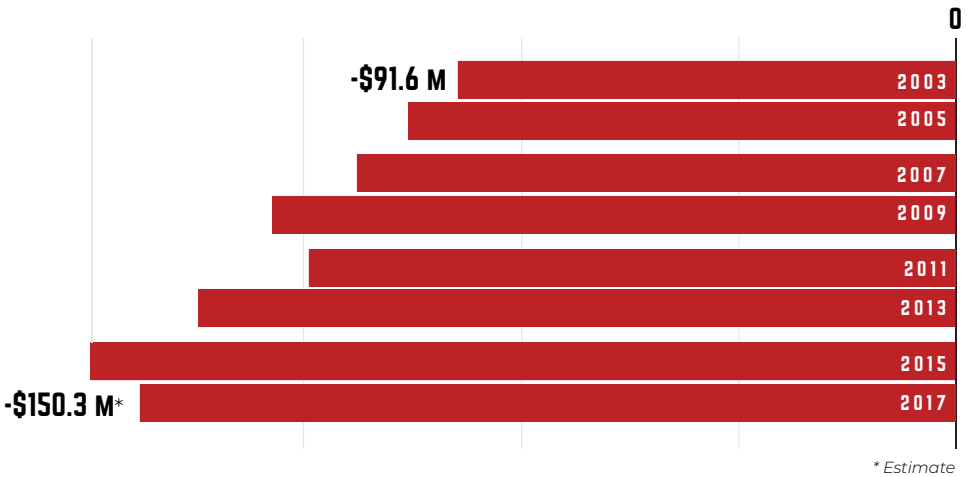
Juvenile Justice

- ▼ Increase funding allocated to counties for juvenile justice services to fund all costs associated with bringing 17-year-old first time, non-violent juvenile offenders back to the juvenile justice system. Support bringing 17-year-old first time, non-violent juvenile offenders back to the juvenile justice system only if fully funded.
- ▼ Seek approval from the state and federal governments to allow secure detention facilities and secured residential care centers for children and youth (SRCCCY) to access Medicaid funding for the provision of treatment and services within the facilities.
- ▼ Seek necessary legislative changes to ensure a successful transition from state juvenile correctional institutions to SRCCCYs.

JUDICIAL & PUBLIC SAFETY

- ▼ Increase state funding to support county efforts to implement Treatment Alternatives & Diversion (TAD) and Evidence Based Decision Making (EBDM) practices on a statewide basis.
- ▼ Develop and fund a grant program to assist Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) in the upgrade and maintenance of technology to be Next Generation 911 capable.
- ▼ Provide protective status to county jailers if additional Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) contributions and duty disability costs are the responsibility of individual jailers.

COUNTY FUNDING OF CIRCUIT COURT COSTS GROWING GAP BETWEEN COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT REVENUES & EXPENDITURES

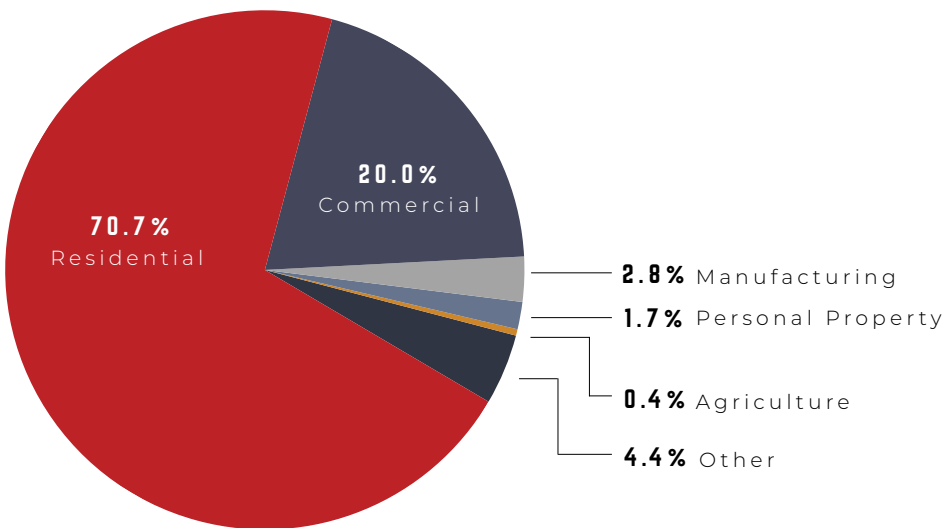


- ▼ Return a greater portion of the court support services fee to counties through increases in court support services, guardian ad litem, and court interpreter payments.
- ▼ Eliminate the Department of Corrections' ability to prorate probation and parole payments to jails.
- ▼ Enact statewide legislation prohibiting the enactment of local ordinances restricting the residency of sex offenders.
- ▼ Increase the annual allocation in the Wisconsin Disaster Fund.
- ▼ Support additional assistant district attorney positions statewide.
- ▼ Statutorily require a \$70 per hour rate for court-appointed attorneys paid by counties. Increase the hourly rate paid by the State Public Defender from \$40 to \$70 per hour.

TAXATION & FINANCE

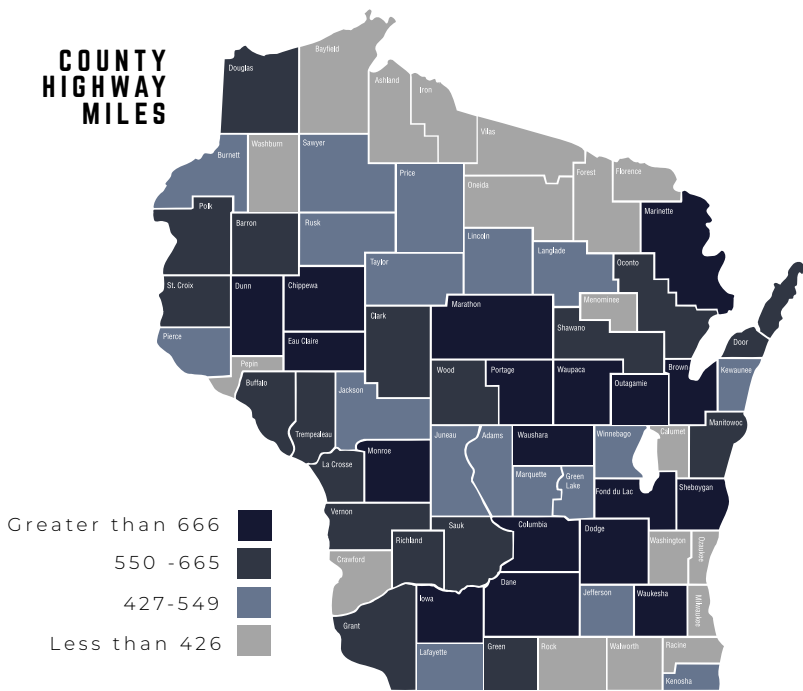
- ▼ Amend property assessment requirements to close the “dark store” property assessment loophole and enact legislation overturning the 2008 Wisconsin Supreme Court decision in *Walgreens v. City of Madison*.
- ▼ Clarify property tax due dates by specifying that payments mailed to the proper official are considered to be received on time if postmarked on or before the due date. Clarify that if the property tax due date is a Saturday or Sunday, the five-day “grace” period ends on the following Friday.
- ▼ Enact an exemption from levy limits for economic development efforts.
- ▼ Provide levy limit flexibility for initiatives that involve the transfer of services from one unit of local government to another by providing annual levy limit adjustments at the rate of inflation for 10 years following the service transfer.
- ▼ Amend Wis. Stat. § 59.25(3)(i) to eliminate the calendar restriction on county treasurers paying town treasurers from the third Monday of March until 10 days after the annual town meeting.
- ▼ Modify the current annual levy limit adjustment from the change in property values due to “net new construction” to the change in property values due to “new construction.”
- ▼ Seek an increase in the shared revenue appropriation to reflect the growing costs of providing state-mandated services.

HOMEOWNERS PAY MORE THAN 2/3 OF THE PROPERTY TAX IN WISCONSIN*



*Equalized Property Value by Type, 2018

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue



TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC WORKS

- Adopt long term funding solutions to meet the state’s transportation needs.
- Invest in the maintenance of the County Trunk Highway system by increasing funding for general transportation aid payments to counties.
- Increase funding for mass transit operating aids to reflect the growing costs for counties.
- Increase state funding levels for the local bridge program.
- Make additional investments in the Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP).
- Increase funding for the Specialized Transportation Assistance Program for Counties formed by Wis. Stat. § 85.21.
- Enact legislation protecting employees in work zones by changing flagger reporting requirements in work zones so that flaggers may report work zone traffic infractions and citations may be issued as a result.
- Enact legislation establishing Automated Speed Enforcement in work zones.
- Enact legislation adding work zone safety information to the state’s required curriculum for drivers’ education.
- Fully implement the federal swap program and explore local program administration of the Surface Transportation Program (STP) at the county level.



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