

The logo for the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) is displayed in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The letters are thick and closely spaced, with the 'W' and 'A' being particularly prominent. The background behind the logo is a dark, textured gradient of blue and black.

WISCONSIN COUNTIES ASSOCIATION

The background of the entire page is a complex, abstract geometric pattern. It consists of numerous overlapping, semi-transparent shapes, primarily triangles and diamonds, arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement. The colors transition from warm, golden-brown tones on the left side to cool, teal and blue tones on the right side. The overall effect is a modern, textured, and visually rich background.

2021-2022  
**LEGISLATIVE  
AGENDA**



State Leaders,

As we approach the 2021-2022 Wisconsin Legislative Session, counties continue to serve on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. From providing public health and emergency services to improving and maintaining critical transportation infrastructure, counties have successfully prioritized the continuity of local services for citizens and businesses alike.

Maintaining county services during this time has not been without its challenges. Rising unbudgeted public health costs, declining local revenues, and increased demands for local assistance has necessitated decisive action and innovative approaches to local budgeting and service delivery. The pandemic has also magnified the importance of Wisconsin's historic state-county partnership.

The state of Wisconsin relies on county government to deliver critical state and local services. While this unique partnership occasionally lends itself to disputes over appropriate funding amounts and service delivery methods, the relationship has proven to be an efficient way to provide public services. As we enter this session, state and county government must continue working in partnership as families and businesses deal with the economic consequences of the worldwide pandemic.

The following pages represent the Wisconsin Counties Association's (WCA) legislative agenda for the 2021-2022 Wisconsin Legislative Session. As the statewide voice of county government, WCA's primary mission is to represent counties in the legislative arena. The policies proposed in this agenda reflect the challenging times we face as both a nation and a state. Enactment of items included in this agenda will help to maintain efficient government operations in both the immediate and long term.

WCA looks forward to working with Governor Evers and the Wisconsin State Legislature over the next two years to ensure our state remains a great place to work, play, and raise a family. On, Wisconsin!

Sincerely,



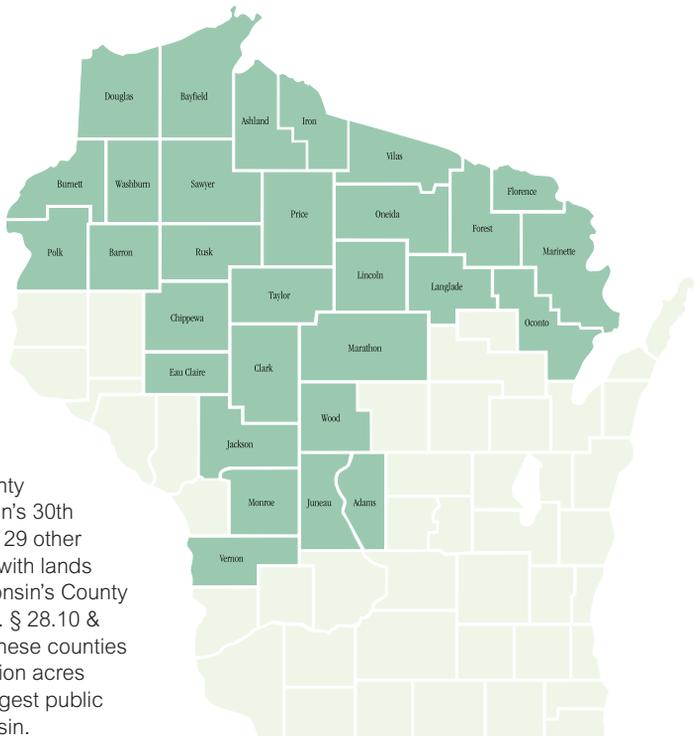
Kyle Christianson  
Director of Government Affairs  
Wisconsin Counties Association

# AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT & LAND USE

- Increase funding for state and county efforts to combat invasive species.
- Restore and support the sustainability of the state's forestry account.
- Support state assistance to county forests to replace revenue losses due to pulp/paper mill closures; seek state assistance to aid counties in identifying and developing new markets for forest products.
- Provide continued funding for recycling programs, Clean Sweep, and medication collection programs.
- Support funding to address the proper use and disposal of PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances).
- Maintain the funding for county land conservation staffing and cost-sharing grants established in the 2019-21 biennial budget, and further increase funds to reflect the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection's statutorily recommended funding level.
- Enact legislation that provides counties with the authority to establish public improvement standards where there is an absence of standards in a town's ordinance or the town's standards are less restrictive.
- 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.

## COUNTY FORESTS

In 2020, Adams County established Wisconsin's 30th county forest, joining 29 other counties in the state with lands enrolled under Wisconsin's County Forest Law (Wis. Stat. § 28.10 & 28.11). Collectively, these counties manage over 2.4 million acres of forest land, the largest public ownership in Wisconsin.



- ▣ Give counties flexibility and autonomy regarding decisions made on shoreland zoning and other land use regulations.
- ▣ 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.
- ▣ Support legislation from the 2019 Speaker’s Task Force on Clean Water relating to conservation funding, clean sweep, POWTS, agriculture, well testing, and county grants.
- ▣ Enact legislation to modify Wisconsin’s livestock siting policy and ensure such legislation provides for increased local control and local cost savings while providing for regulatory certainty and flexibility for the state’s agricultural community.
- ▣ Support long-term reauthorization of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program provided that local participation in the program is sufficiently preserved as determined by stakeholders.

## **COUNTY ORGANIZATION & PERSONNEL**

- ▣ Increase grant dollars for the County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO) Improvement Grant.
- ▣ Support an increase in the competitive bidding threshold from current levels to \$100,000 with the exception of certain highway projects for local units of government, as well as changes in publication requirements which will allow more bids; and ensure all local governments comply with similar bidding thresholds.
- ▣ Seek additional state and federal funding for Cooperative Extension to ensure sufficient staffing for county educators.
- ▣ Require the Wisconsin State Legislature to wait until local governments produce and provide numbers, wards, and district information when redistricting, as well as use local boundaries to create state districts.
- ▣ Allow, through municipal ordinance, county clerks to canvass absentee ballots on the Monday before the election as long as clerks have the proper tabulating machines, security, and other provisions that ensure the integrity of the election.
- ▣ Support providing additional aids to counties for the costs incurred for special elections including, but not limited to, costs for publication of required election notices, printing of absentee ballots and envelopes, designing and printing ballots and poll books, and programming electronic voting machines.
- ▣ Amend Wis. Stat. § 59.10(3)(d) to allow county supervisor terms to continue until a successor is elected and properly seated.

# HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

## Aging

- Seek funding to equalize state payments to Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs).
- Seek enactment of the Caregiver Advise, Record, Enable (CARE) Act in Wisconsin.
- Support free online training and better support for family and volunteer guardians.
- Increase the Medicaid reimbursement rate for adult care providers.
- Seek a state income tax credit for family caregivers.

## Behavioral Health

- Improve the emergency detention system in Wisconsin through the creation of regional crisis stabilization beds.
- Increase funding for crisis services.
- Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for mental health providers.
- Support increased flexibility for providers and consumers in the delivery of mental health services through the use of telehealth.
- Support changes to Ch. 980 (sexually violent persons) that ease county administrative burdens and provide placement flexibility.

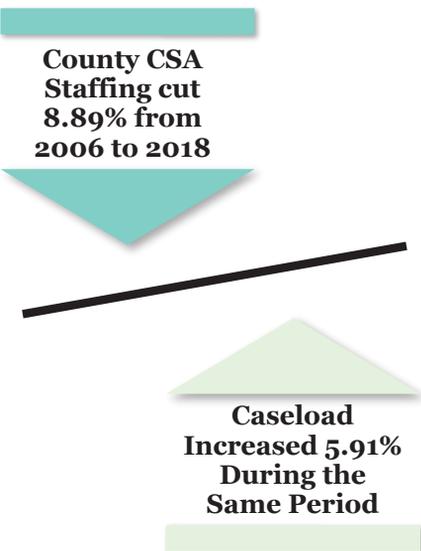
## Child Support

- Increase child support funding to meet increased service demands.

## Child Welfare

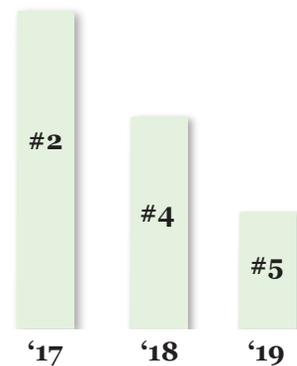
- Increase funding for child welfare services in Wisconsin.
- Provide reimbursement to counties for subsidized guardianships.

## DECREASED COUNTY STAFFING INCREASED CASELOAD



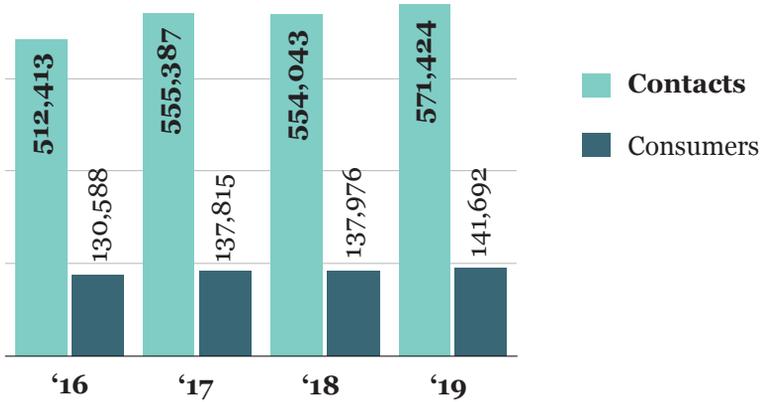
## CURRENT COLLECTIONS

Wisconsin Drops in National Rankings – Federal Funding at Risk



## AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTERS

Increase in Service Demand



### County Nursing Homes

- Seek systemic payment reform, including Medicaid rate increases, to support increased costs and workforce shortages.

### Economic Support

- Increase base funding in the income maintenance administration allocation (IMAA).
- Increase funding for fraud prevention and intervention services.

### Long-Term Support

- Support increased funding to cover county costs associated with the intake, eligibility, and enrollment functions for the Katie Beckett and CLTS programs.
- Support increased funding in the Birth to Three program.
- Provide increased funding for the adult protective services system.

### Youth Justice

- Increase funding allocated to counties for youth justice services to fund all costs associated with bringing 17-year-old first-time juvenile offenders back to the youth justice system.
- Seek funding to support the successful development and operation of secured residential care centers for children and youth (SRCCCY):
  - State funding of start-up costs.
  - Create a mechanism for state assistance to cover the operating deficits of SRCCCYs.
- Modify current law to limit the length of ownership interest in SRCCCYs to the length of state bond payments.

### Public Health

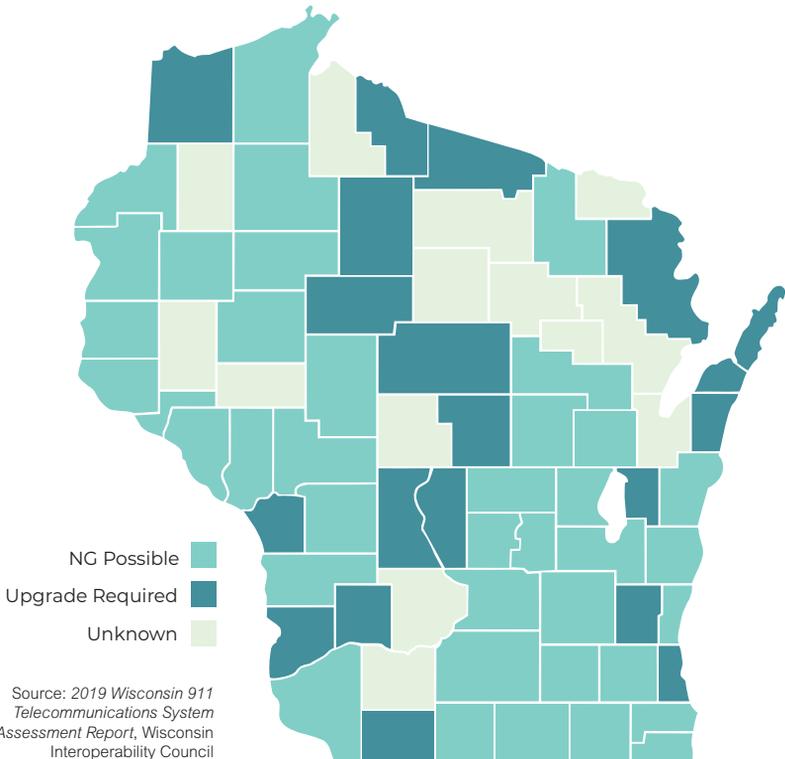
- Seek funding for programs to eliminate/abate lead paint, soil, and pipes including, but not limited to, a statutory provision requiring that lead remediation dollars be used for that dedicated purpose.
- Seek increased funding for communicable disease prevention, suppression, and control.

## JUDICIAL & PUBLIC SAFETY

- 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.
- Increase the annual allocation in the Wisconsin Disaster Fund.
- Eliminate the Department of Corrections' ability to prorate probation and parole payments to jails.
- Support an increase in state funding for the statewide implementation of the Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) Program and Evidence-Based Decision Making (EBDM) practices including assistance in implementing new programs and training for employees.
- Provide funding for the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) grant program created under 2019 Wisconsin Act 26 to assist PSAPs in upgrading technology to Next Generation 911 capable.
- Amend state statutes related to filing fees in probate court. Provide for uniformity in fees charged in probate and fees charged by the clerk of circuit court. In addition, support creation of statutory fees for items not currently subject to a filing fee in the register in probate office.

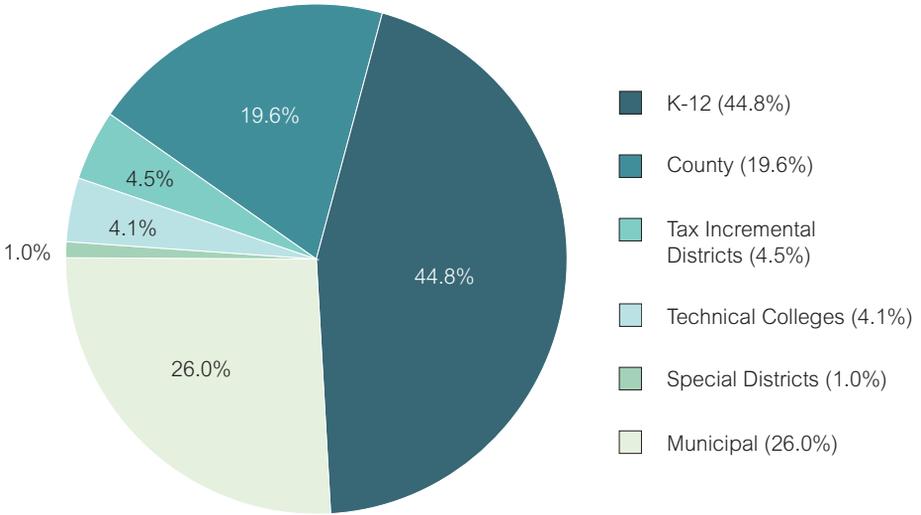
### PSAP NG911 READINESS ASSESSMENT

<i>PSAPs Reporting NG911 Capable CHE/CPE</i>	49
<i>PSAPs Reporting Non-NG Ready CHE/CPE</i>	49
<i>PSAPs unknown</i>	9
<i>Responded</i>	107



## WISCONSIN PROPERTY TAXES

Payable in 2020



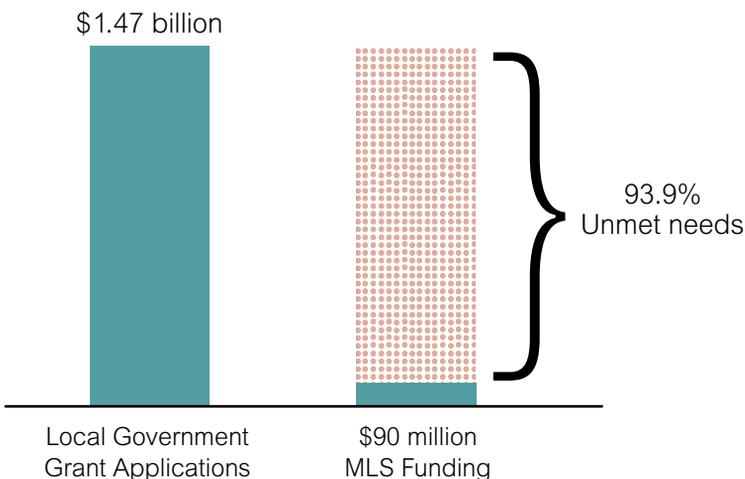
## TAXATION & FINANCE

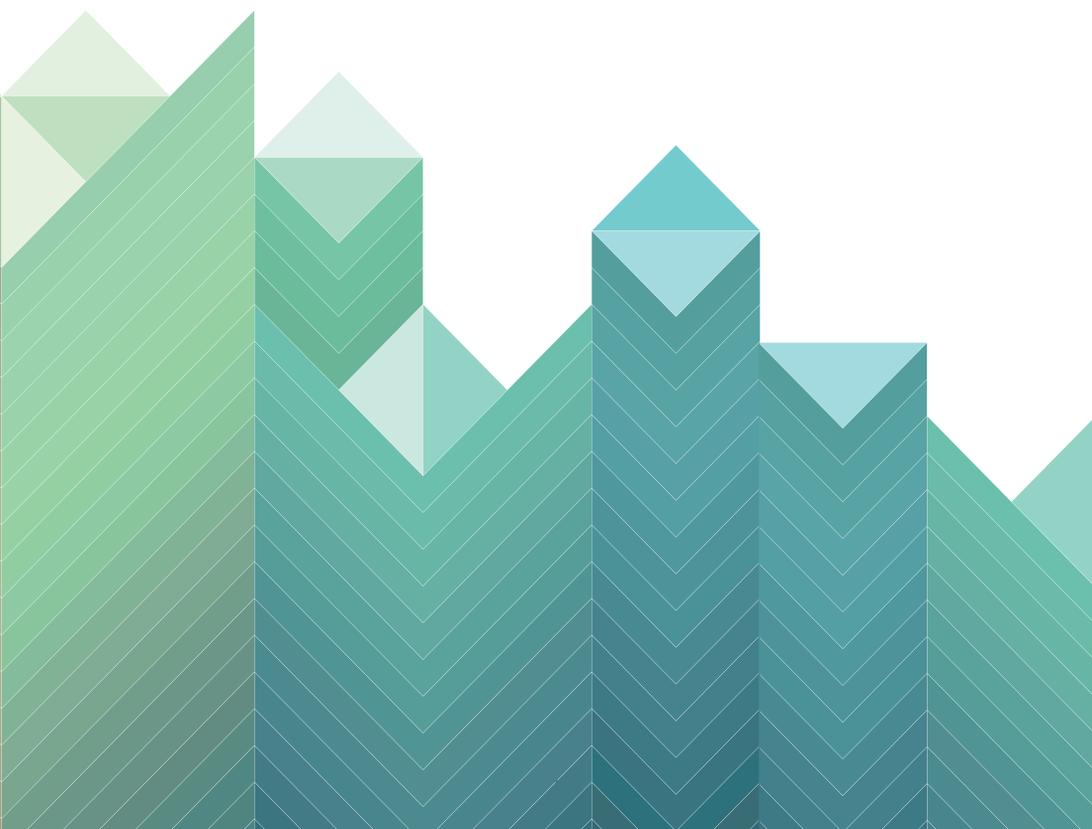
- Amend property assessment requirements to close the “dark store” property assessment loophole and enact legislation overturning the 2008 Wisconsin Supreme Court decision in *Walgreens v. City of Madison*.
- Enact an exemption from levy limits for economic development efforts.
- Provide levy limit flexibility for initiatives that involve the transfer of services from one unit of local government to another by eliminating the statutorily-required property tax adjustments; and, support an incentive program to encourage more local government transferring and sharing of services.
- 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.
- Amend state law to allow counties to engage in short-term general obligation borrowing for operational expenses.
- Clarify state statutes related to county authority to impose a 0.5% county sales tax.
- Support legislation that increases representation in Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) decisions and increases transparency and predictability of Tax Incremental Districts (TID).

# TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC WORKS

- ▣ Build on the long-term funding solutions adopted in the 2019-21 state biennial budget to meet the state’s transportation needs.
- ▣ Continue investment in the maintenance of the County Trunk Highway System by increasing funding for general transportation aid payments to counties to an amount equal to 30% share of costs.
- ▣ Increase funding for mass transit operating aids to reflect the growing costs for counties.
- ▣ Increase state funding levels for the local road and bridge programs.
- ▣ Make additional investments in the Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP).
- ▣ Increase funding for the Specialized Transportation Assistance Program for Counties (Wis. Stat. § 85.21).
- ▣ Enact legislation protecting work zone employees 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.
- ▣ Enact legislation prohibiting the use of cellular devices during the operation of a vehicle with the exception of a “hands-free” device.
- ▣ Enact an amendment to Wis. Stat. § 32.28 such that the condemning authority shall assume responsibility for payment for all legal costs in the circumstance where a jury verdict as approved by the court under Wis. Stat. § 32.05 (11) exceeds the jurisdictional offer or the highest written offer prior to the jurisdictional offer by at least the amount in the offer plus at least 30%.
- ▣ Extend the multimodal local supplemental (MLS) grant program appropriation for local governments approved in the 2019-21 state biennial budget for local road repairs and reclamation of the county trunk highway system.

## WISDOT MULTIMODAL LOCAL SUPPLEMENT GRANT PROGRAM







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