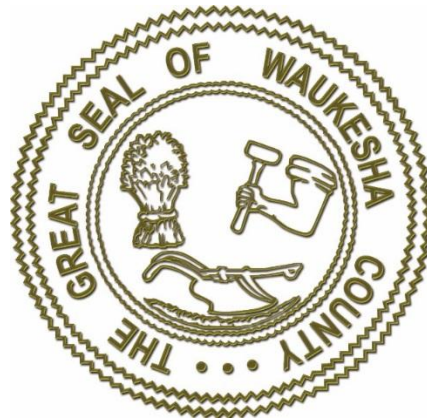


Waukesha County Office of Corporation Counsel

Strategic Plan

2026 - 2028



“The Waukesha County Office of Corporation Counsel strives to provide efficient and effective legal services to our internal and external clients in order to satisfy their legal needs, guide effective policy decisions and protect the County’s most vulnerable citizens.”

Erik G. Weidig
Corporation Counsel

Table of Contents

 [Jump to Strategic Objectives](#)

Table of Contents

Readers Guide: How to Read the Strategic Plan	3-4
Executive Summary	5-7
Mission Statement & Standards of Service Excellence	5
County Pillars & Department Statement of Purpose	6
Overview & Strategic Objectives	7
Strategic Objectives	8
Objective 1	8
Objective 2	9
Objective 3	10
Objective 4	11
Appendices	12-39
Appendix A: Environmental Scan	12

Reader's Guide: How to Read the Strategic Plan

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Thanks for reading Waukesha County Office of Corporation Counsel's Strategic Plan.

This plan provides an overview of what the Office of Corporation Counsel aims to achieve over the next three years and how this Department intends to meet those goals.

Note: Consider this Strategic Plan a high-level look at problem-solving initiatives. As such, a reader may not encounter data on all departmental activities (as found in an Operational Plan). We [welcome your questions and feedback](#) any time!

What's an Objective?

In this Strategic Plan, an Objective is a milestone to be reached. It must be **specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound** (aka **SMART**).

Each objective appears in two places: In a list that shows all of our goals in one place, and on its own page (example below, right).

Owner: The member of our team that is accountable for this Objective.

Feel free to contact Waukesha County to discuss any objective – just ask for the person listed here. We do the very same!

Strategy: What must be accomplished in order to achieve our objective?

A company that sells fruit snacks may set an objective to "increase sales." One of their strategies is to pioneer new points of sale beyond supermarkets and vending machines, like commercial air travel, pizza delivery, and pro sporting events.

Like each Objective, a Strategy has an **owner** who guides efforts for its completion and success. Find this in the center column.

In the right-hand column, please find the **timeframe** for each strategy. This represents each strategy's deadline.

Performance measures:

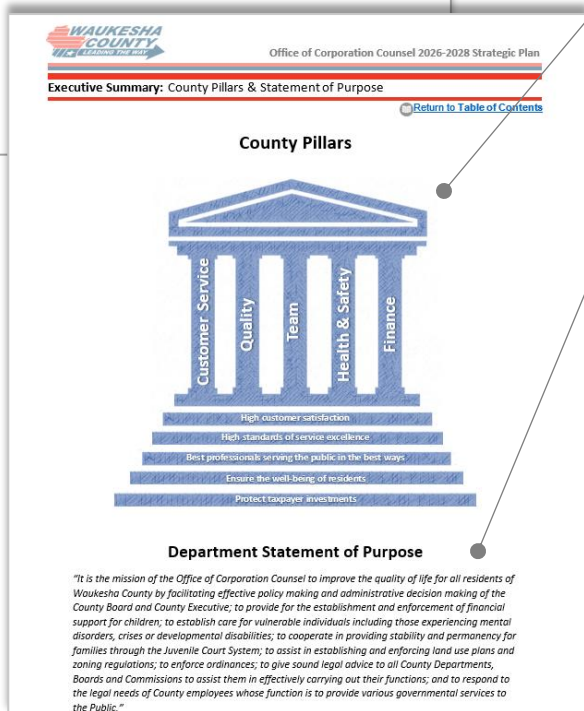
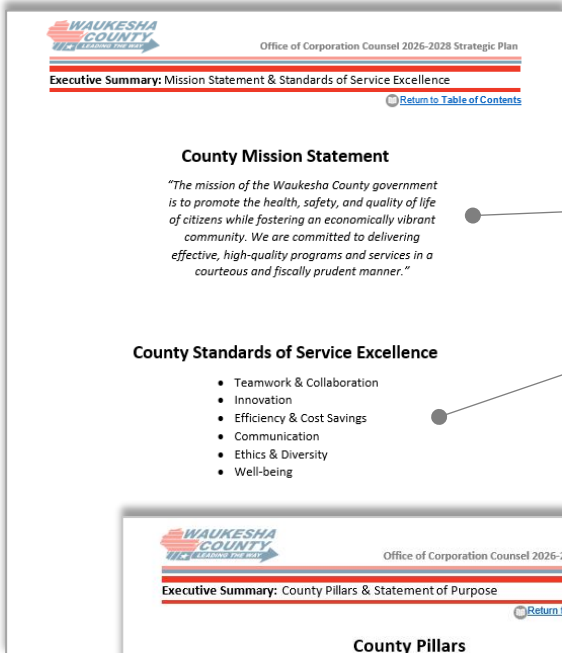
A graphic or image show the progress and status of each Objective's success.

The screenshot shows a page titled "County Pillar: Health & Safety" with a "Return to Strategic Objectives" link. It features "Objective 1: By December 31, 2028, educate internal clients and the public about available resources for mental health treatment through three outreach initiatives." The owner is listed as "Principal Assistant Corporation Counsel and Mental Health Team of Legal Services". The performance measure is "Tracking the successful completion of 3 outreach initiatives." Below this is a table with three columns: Strategy, Strategy Details, Owner, and Timeframe.

Strategy	Strategy Details	Owner	Timeframe
Increase public understanding and access to the 3-party petition process under Chapter 51	Provide online access to fillable screening forms and additional educational information, including the legal requirements for 3-party petition.	Corporation Counsel Management Team	December 31, 2026
Increase prosecutors' and judiciary's understanding of Chapters 51/54, and 55 and their intersection with Chapter 971	Provide training to the District Attorney's Office and the Waukesha County judiciary regarding Chapter 971 conversions and the requirements of Chapters 51, 54, and 55	Corporation Counsel Management Team	December 31, 2027
Increase mental health stakeholders' understanding of 3-party petitions	Provide training to Waukesha County law enforcement and Waukesha County Crisis on 3-party petitions at the biannual CIT Training, at least one Waukesha County Police Chiefs Association meeting, and at a Waukesha County Crisis team meeting to increase understanding of what a 3-party petition is, and the legal requirements associated with the	Corporation Counsel Management Team	December 31, 2028

Reader's Guide Continued

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



The origin of each Objective

In each of Waukesha County's Departmental Strategic Plans, a pair of pages bears the principles and promises that guide our Objectives:

- Waukesha County's [Mission Statement](#). The big picture.
- County [Standards of Service Excellence](#), the principles we observe on our path to completing our mission.
- Waukesha County's [Five Pillars of Success](#), our framework for identifying core priorities and establishing program goals.
- Department's [Statement of Purpose](#). Each department completes a Strategic Plan. Each declares its own "mission" here.

How is the objective shaped by the "environmental scan"?

Environmental scan (n): Monitoring of an organization's internal and external environments for detecting early signs of opportunities and threats that may influence its current and future plans.

Find environmental scan data summarized in this document's [Appendix](#) sections.

Executive Summary: Mission Statement & Standards of Service Excellence

 [Return to Table of Contents](#)

County Mission Statement

“The mission of the Waukesha County government is to promote the health, safety, and quality of life of citizens while fostering an economically vibrant community. We are committed to delivering effective, high-quality programs and services in a courteous and fiscally prudent manner.”

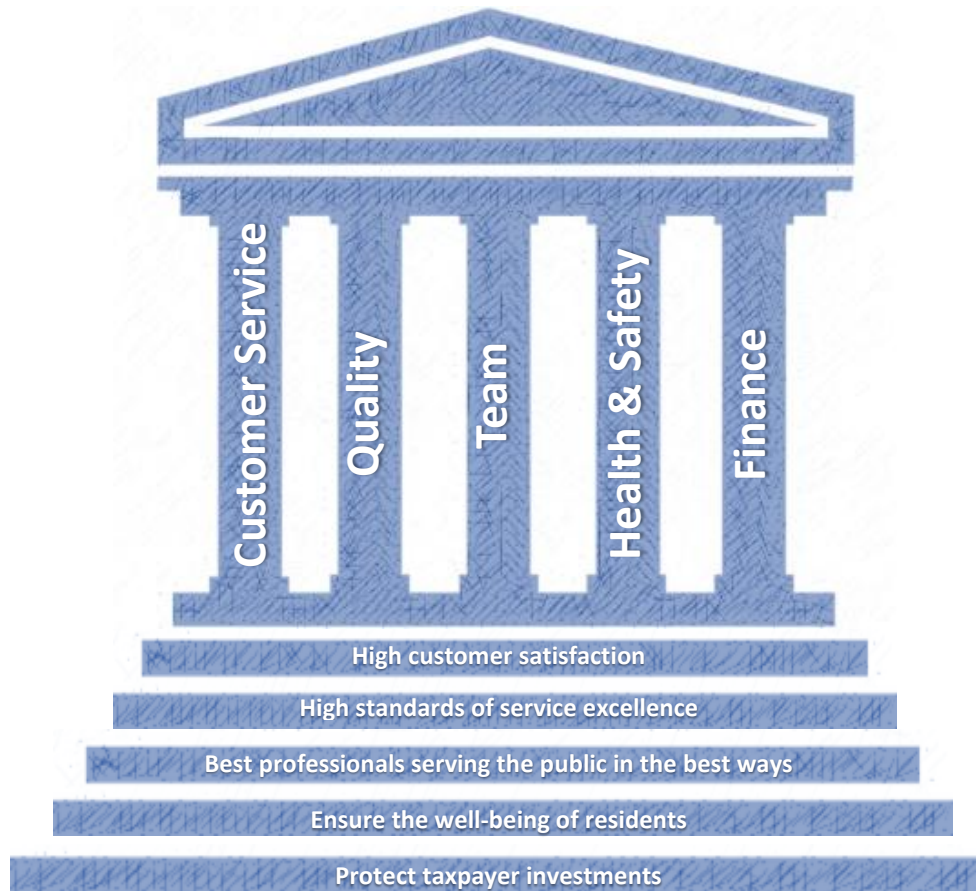
County Standards of Service Excellence

- Teamwork & Collaboration
- Innovation
- Efficiency & Cost Savings
- Communication
- Ethics & Diversity
- Well-being

Executive Summary: County Pillars & Statement of Purpose

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

County Pillars



Department Statement of Purpose

“It is the mission of the Office of Corporation Counsel to improve the quality of life for all residents of Waukesha County by facilitating effective policy making and administrative decision making of the County Board and County Executive; to provide for the establishment and enforcement of financial support for children; to establish care for vulnerable individuals including those experiencing mental disorders, crises or developmental disabilities; to cooperate in providing stability and permanency for families through the Juvenile Court System; to assist in establishing and enforcing land use plans and zoning regulations; to enforce ordinances; to give sound legal advice to all County Departments, Boards and Commissions to assist them in effectively carrying out their functions; and to respond to the legal needs of County employees whose function is to provide various governmental services to the Public.”

Executive Summary: Overview & Strategic Objectives

 [Return to Table of Contents](#)

Strategic Planning Overview

Waukesha County has successfully used strategic planning tools for well over a decade. County Departments hold stakeholder focus groups, conduct environmental scans, and work with departmental strategic planning coordinators to perform major updates to their plans on a three-year basis and provide annual updates as needed.

Through strategic planning, the County has established links between our Standards of Service Excellence, business functions, and measurable program outcomes across all departments which results in an atmosphere of continuous improvement and better service delivery.

To help guide our strategic planning process and identify priorities, the County established a cross-departmental Strategic Planning Executive Committee which holds meetings and trainings with planning coordinators and has worked with outside consultants to provide expert guidance to ensure that each new generation of our strategic plan is better than the last.

Strategic Objectives at a Glance:

- [Objective 1 Mental Health Awareness](#)
- [Objective 2 Employee Appreciation, Satisfaction and Retention](#)
- [Objective 3 Child Support Customer Service Initiative](#)
- [Objective 4 Legal Services Customer Service Initiative](#)

County Pillar: Health & Safety

 [Return to Strategic Objectives](#)

Objective 1: By December 31, 2028, educate internal clients and the public about available resources for mental health treatment through three outreach initiatives.

Owner: Principal Assistant Corporation Counsel and Mental Health Team of Legal Services

Performance Measure: Tracking the successful completion of 3 outreach initiatives.

Strategy	Strategy Details	Owner	Timeframe
Increase public understanding and access to the 3-party petition process under Chapter 51	Provide online access to fillable screening forms and additional educational information, including the legal requirements for 3-party petition.	Corporation Counsel Management Team	December 31, 2026
Increase prosecutors' and judiciary's understanding of Chapters 51, 54, and 55 and their intersection with Chapter 971	Provide training to the District Attorney's Office and the Waukesha County judiciary regarding Chapter 971 conversions and the requirements of Chapters 51, 54, and 55.	Corporation Counsel Management Team	December 31, 2027
Increase mental health stakeholders' understanding of 3-party petitions	Provide training to Waukesha County law enforcement and Waukesha County Crisis on 3-party petitions at the biannual CIT Training, at least one Waukesha County Police Chiefs Association meeting, and at a Waukesha County Crisis team meeting to increase understanding of what a 3-party petition is, and the legal requirements associated with the petition.	Corporation Counsel Management Team	December 31, 2028

[Return to Strategic Objectives](#)

Objective 2: By December 31, 2028, improve appreciation, satisfaction and retention for employees by implementing deliberate techniques designed for these purposes.

Owner: Corporation Counsel, Principal Assistants, Supervisors, Attorneys and Staff

Performance Measure: Number of techniques implemented and data from employee survey

Strategy	Strategy Details	Owner	Timeframe
Adopt more formal onboarding and ongoing training progression for employees	Assign a peer mentor for first year of employment for all new members of department.	Employee’s direct supervisor and peer	Ongoing
Shorten hiring timelines	Post job openings promptly and reduce time-to-fill from 8 weeks to 6 weeks from close of posting date to start date.	Supervisor with open position	Ongoing
Maintain overall satisfaction at 2026 baseline and increase by 2% by 2028	Measure baseline of “I feel appreciated” and “This role is a good fit for my skills/interests” in 2026 and annually thereafter.	Supervisors	December 31, 2028

County Pillar: Customer Service, Quality & Team

 [Return to Strategic Objectives](#)

Objective 3: By December 31, 2028, the Child Support Division will improve customer service by fostering clear, accessible, and consistent communication with child support participants and stakeholders by modernizing informational resources, empowering staff, and conducting annual outreach with judicial partners, local attorneys, and child support participants.

Owner: Child Support Division Manager

Performance Measure: Successful implementation of identified techniques and tracking the number of annual events held.

Strategy	Strategy Details	Owner	Timeframe
Modernize informational resources	The Child Support Division will improve the information and resources available to the county Child Support Division website.	Child Support Division supervisors and staff	December 31, 2026
Optimize call center integration and participant response	Analyze current state of communications between call center, participants, and the division to determine how the division should best respond to participant questions.	Child Support Division manager and supervisors	June 30, 2027
Conduct integrated outreach and legal education	Host annual information sessions for child support participants to educate them on the Child Support Program; Engage the local bar association through legal training sessions to provide updates on statutory changes, administrative process shifts, and evolving division priorities; Attorneys will conduct quarterly Question and Answer Sessions with Child Support Division staff to educate, inform, and address process improvement; Conduct annual outreach with judicial partners to address process, procedure, and any changes in law.	Child Support Division manager, supervisors and attorneys	December 31, 2028

County Pillar: Customer Service & Quality

 [Return to Strategic Objectives](#)

Objective 4: By December 31, 2028, Legal Services will improve customer service to County departments, elected officials and the public by implementing client service standards, centralized intake/triage, and legal matter tracking.

Owner: Principal Assistant

Performance Measure: Ninety percent (90%) of legal service requests from County departments and elected officials will (1) be logged through centralized intake, (2) receive an initial acknowledgment within 1-2 business days, and (3) be triaged/assigned with a documented service standard (priority level + expected next-step timeline) within 3 business days, as measured in LegalFiles.

Strategy	Strategy Details	Owner	Timeframe
Improve responsiveness to new requests	Acknowledge 95% of new requests within 1-2 business days, defined as an email stating “we received your request and assigned it,” measured from the time the request email is received by (a) an attorney, (b) the Corporation Counsel inbox, or (c) the Corporation Counsel Contracts inbox.	Corporation Counsel Management Team	December 31, 2028
Achieve timelier initial legal review	Using calendar year 2026 as the baseline, attorney to respond within 1 week for initial legal review for the top three highest-volume internal request types (to be confirmed from 2026 tracking data).	Corporation Counsel Management Team	December 31, 2026
Attain higher client satisfaction	Increase participation in customer service survey by internal and external clients by 10% over 3 years.	Corporation Counsel Management Team	December 31, 2028

Appendix A: Environmental Scan

 [Return to Table of Contents](#)

COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

Population, Census Data, Demographics

Understanding the trends in growth and change in the population of Waukesha County will allow County Departments to strategically plan by responding to the needs of the population. As of the 2020 Decennial Census, 406,978 people resided in Waukesha County and according to the US Census QuickFacts, the County is estimated to have 417,029 residents as of July 1, 2024. The County is made up of 36 municipalities, including 8 towns, 21 villages, and seven cities. When consideration is given to the number of municipalities that our customers work with, it is also important to deliver services in the most efficient and logical way possible. Economic development is vital for communities in Waukesha County to retain optimum paying jobs, maintain municipal infrastructure and essential services, and maintain and expand quality of life.

General population

- The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) projects the County's population to increase to 424,472 by the end of 2025, to 436,986 by 2030, and 450,620 for 2035. This equates to a 6.16% increase in population between 2025 and 2035 ([VISION 2050 - 2024 Update - Review of Year 2050 Plan Forecasts](#)).
- Projections show that through 2050, Waukesha County will continue to be the third largest county in population in Wisconsin, Milwaukee and Dane will continue to be the first and second largest counties in population.
- Net migration will continue to be the primary source of population increase. The number of births (natural increase) is expected to increase moderately, but the number of deaths is expected to increase substantially because of deaths from the aging population (baby boomers). Wisconsin DOA Projections show that the number of deaths will exceed the number of births between 2030 and 2040, resulting in a negative natural increase in the County ([DOA Population Projections, produced in 2024, based from 2020 Census](#)).
- Waukesha County's share of the regional population is projected to increase from 19.3% (measured in 2010) to 19.89% by 2050, whereas Milwaukee County's share of the regional population is projected to decrease from 45.90% to 35.19%. Racine County's share of population remains between 9-10% and the population projection shows a minor decrease of 0.01% (SEWRPC: <https://www.sewrpc.org/Files/Info-Data/Demographics/2020-Profiles/RacineCounty.pdf>).
- The median age in Waukesha County is approximately 43.5 years old according to the [2023 ACS 1-year estimates \(Census Bureau Tables\)](#), and 43.1 years old according to the 2020 ACS 5-Year estimates ([S0101: AGE AND SEX - Census Bureau Table](#)). The median age has been increasing since 1970 when it was 25.4 years old.

- People 65 years and older made up approximately 14.3% of the population in 2010, 17% in 2015, and 19.6% in 2020. This population is projected to make up 25.4% of the population by 2040.
- The youngest members of the baby boomer generation will reach age 65 by 2030.

Race

- Estimates based on the 2020 Census, approximately 87% of Waukesha County residents are Non-Hispanic White and estimated to be 86.1% as of July 1, 2024.
- The Hispanic or Latino population has increased from 4.1% in 2010 (16,123) to 5.3% (21,664) in 2020 and is estimated to be 5.9% (24,604) as of July 1, 2024.
- The Black or African American population has increased from 1.3% (4,914) in 2010 to 2% (8,175) in 2020 and is estimated to be 2.1% (8,757) as of July 1, 2024.
- The Asian population has increased from 2.7% (10,271) in 2010 to 4.1% (16,759) in 2020 and is estimated to be 4.2% (17,515) as of July 1, 2024.
- The American Indian population has continued to remain steady over the past 20 years. Approximately 0.3% (1,251) of the overall population is American Indian as of July 1, 2024.

Community Analysis: Health and Public Safety

Waukesha County ranks among the healthiest counties in Wisconsin. According to the [County Health Rankings](#) (2025), the County performs better than average—both statewide and nationally—on overall health outcomes and community conditions. However, local data highlights gaps in key health outcomes. Mental health, substance use, and healthy aging stand out due to both the burden reflected in the data and the opportunity for meaningful impact at the community level.

In identifying local public health priorities, the focus was placed on areas where the County can have the most significant impact. Mental health, substance use, and healthy aging were selected as part of the [Public Health Community Health Improvement Plan \(CHIP\)](#), which leverages shared community action to address high-burden issues through local coordination, prevention, and systems-level change.

Data from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services illustrates the interconnected drivers behind Waukesha County's health priorities:

- **Accidents (unintentional injuries)** accounted for 8.5% of all deaths (1,009 deaths). Of these, 57% were due to falls and 23% to accidental drug overdoses, highlighting risks related to both aging and substance use.
- **Alzheimer's disease** accounted for 4.5% of deaths (538 deaths), **Parkinson's disease** for 1.7% (197 deaths), and **nutritional deficiencies** for 1.3% (155 deaths)—all indicators of a growing need for age-friendly systems and supports.
- **Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis** made up 1.4% of deaths (172 deaths), with 75% of these tied to alcoholic liver disease, reinforcing the connection to substance use.
- **Intentional self-harm (suicide)** accounted for 1.3% of deaths (153 deaths), further underscoring the need for mental health and early intervention strategies.

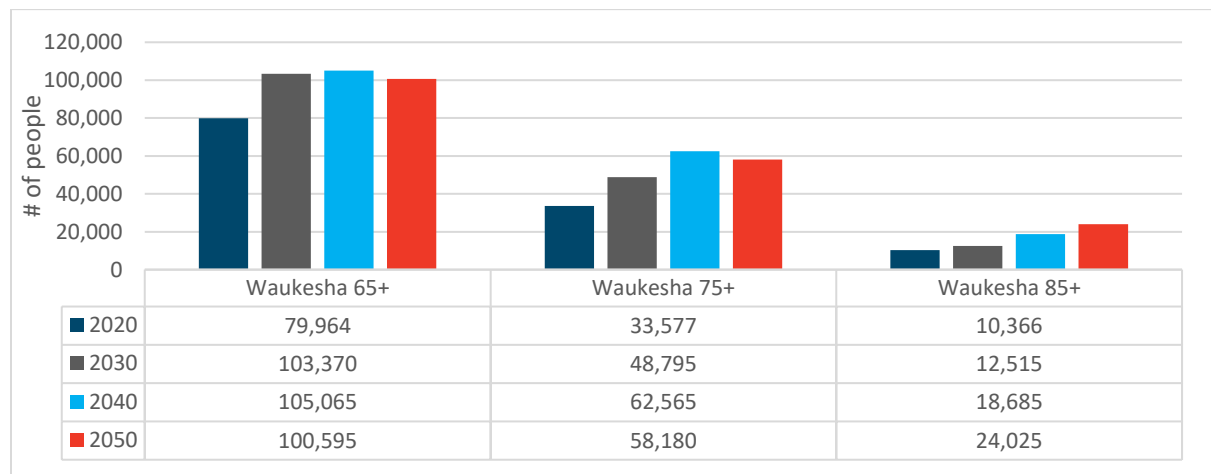
(Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Health Informatics, 2025)

Healthy Aging: An Emerging Priority

Waukesha County is experiencing a rapid demographic shift. As of 2020, nearly 80,000 residents were 65 years old or older. This growth leads to an increased demand for systems that help older adults remain healthy, safe, and connected. It highlights the importance of age-friendly planning that promotes independence and quality of life. (*Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Services Center, 2024*)

- The 65+ population is projected to exceed 100,000.
- The 75+ population will grow by 73% (from 33,577 to 58,180).
- The 85+ population will more than double (from 10,366 to 24,025).

Figure 1 Projected Population by Age Group in Waukesha County



(*Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Services Center, 2024*)

As the population ages, the need for long-term services and support (LTSS) is growing, with national data pointing to the scale and impact of this shift:

- 56% of Americans turning 65 today will need long-term services and supports (LTSS).
- 22% will require LTSS for more than five years.
- Average LTSS costs: \$120,900, with 37% paid out-of-pocket.
- Family caregivers provide an estimated \$204,000 in unpaid care per person.

(*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation [HHS/ASPE], 2022*)

In Waukesha County, fall prevention and social connectedness have surfaced as two leading concerns affecting older adults’ ability to age well safely.

Falls are a leading cause of injury and death among older adults in Waukesha County.

- Falls accounted for 57% of all accidental deaths from 2021-2023, making them a key driver of unintentional injury, the County’s 4th leading cause of death (*Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Health Informatics, 2025*).

- Older adults face the highest rates of fall-related emergency visits and deaths. In Waukesha County, about 1 in 8 adults aged 85+ went to the ER for a fall injury between 2021 and 2023, compared to 1 in 19 aged 75–84 and 1 in 42 aged 65–74 (*Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Health Informatics, 2025*).

Social isolation significantly impacts the health and well-being of older adults, with risks comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes a day, a greater threat than obesity or physical inactivity. (*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2023*)

In Waukesha County:

- 28.1% of adults 65+ live alone (*U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2023*).
- 10% lack internet access; 9% are uncomfortable using technology (*ADRC of Waukesha County Survey, 2023*).
- Only 5 of 37 municipalities have Senior Centers (*Waukesha County Government*).
- Just 17% of residents believe older adults have adequate social support (*Waukesha County Public Health, 2022*).
- Waukesha County has fewer membership organizations per capita than the state average (*University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute & Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2025*).

Together, these trends call for coordinated strategies that enhance mobility, strengthen physical and social environments, mitigate fall-related risks, and foster meaningful connections. By investing in community programs, accessible spaces, and digital inclusion, Waukesha County can better support healthy aging for all residents.

Mental Health: A Growing Crisis

Mental health is a top public health concern in Waukesha County, with youth experiencing some of the most significant challenges. The County has one mental health provider per 320 residents, which is better than the Wisconsin average (1:370) but still below the national benchmark (1:300). Despite this, access to care remains limited (*University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, 2025*). Only 25.8% of residents reported being satisfied with mental health services (*Waukesha County Public Health, 2022*).

Youth mental health has emerged as a critical area of concern, with local data pointing to high levels of distress and significant unmet need (*Tortora, McCoy, & Frederick, 2021*):

- 56% of Waukesha County High School students report anxiety, depression, or self-harm.
- 52% of students said they rarely or never get the help they need.
- 15% of students seriously considered suicide, 12% made a plan, and 7% attempted suicide.

Despite rising need, many young people still face significant challenges accessing mental health support. Common barriers include cost, stigma, insurance limitations, a lack of youth-centered or culturally responsive services, and limited access to school-based support.

Mental health is also shaped by the environments where youth live, learn, and connect. According to the 2021 Waukesha County Youth Risk Behavior Survey (*Tortora, McCoy, & Frederick, 2021*):

- 17.0% of students reported experiencing in-person bullying.

- 16.0% of students reported being bullied online.
- 38% of students said bullying is a problem at their school.
- 11% of students did not feel like they belong at school.
- 17% of students said they did not have a teacher or other adult to talk to about a problem.

These findings underscore the importance of school environments that foster connection, trust, and psychological safety. Improving youth mental health in Waukesha County will require earlier intervention, stronger support systems, and community-wide efforts to reduce stigma, especially within schools and youth-serving spaces.

Substance Use: A Complex and Evolving Landscape

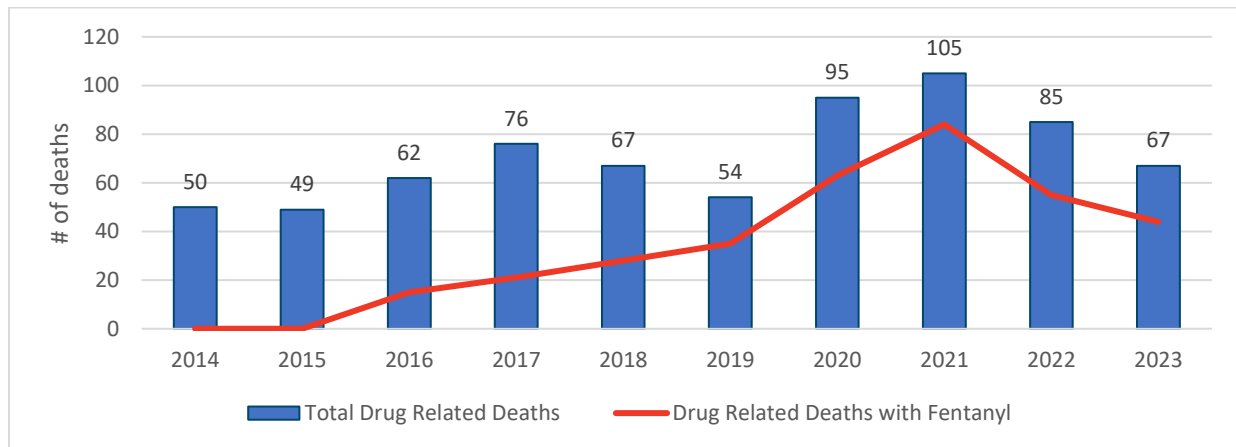
Substance use in Waukesha County is a complex and evolving public health issue. The Community Health Improvement Plan prioritizes opioids, particularly fentanyl, due to their immediate lethality and significant local impact.

On August 1, 2022, Waukesha County declared a [community health crisis](#) after opioid-related deaths nearly doubled from 2019 to 2021. This declaration led to the formation of the Fentanyl Crisis Response Team, focused on reducing overdose deaths. These efforts, combined with declining state and national drug-related death rates, suggest that harm reduction strategies are beginning to make an impact.

Yet the crisis continues to shift. Fentanyl remains the most acute threat, with overdose deaths increasingly driven by potent and unpredictable drug mixtures. In Wisconsin, cocaine deaths involving synthetic opioids increased by 134% from 2019 (182 deaths) to 2021 (426 deaths), and an estimated 40% of counterfeit pills contain a potentially lethal dose of fentanyl (*Wisconsin Department of Health Services, 2024*).

Emerging substances like xylazine—a tranquilizer not reversible with naloxone—further complicate response efforts. These evolving threats underscore the ongoing need for a coordinated approach that spans education, prevention, harm reduction, and strong community partnerships.

Figure 2 Drug Related Deaths in Waukesha County from 2014 - 2023



(Waukesha County Medical Examiner’s Office, 2025)

Beyond Opioids: Alcohol, Tobacco, Vaping, and Marijuana

While opioids remain the most urgent substance-related threat, broader patterns of substance use, particularly alcohol, tobacco, vaping, and marijuana, also present serious and often underestimated public health challenges. These substances are frequently socially accepted or perceived as less harmful, yet they contribute to long-term health risks, especially when use begins early.

Alcohol remains one of the most widely used and socially accepted substances in Waukesha County, yet it contributes to significant harm across the lifespan:

- In Waukesha County, 25% of adults reported binge or heavy drinking (*University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute & Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2025*).
- 27% of motor vehicle crash deaths in the County involved alcohol (*University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, 2025*).
- Binge drinking rates remained statistically unchanged from 2009 to 2020; however, high-use patterns persist, particularly among adults aged 35–44 and those in higher-income households (*ProHealth Care, 2022*).
- Among high school students in Waukesha County (*Tortora, McCoy, & Frederick, 2021*):
 - 23% reported having a drink within the last 30 days.
 - 9% reported binge drinking in the past 30 days.
 - Among students who drank:
 - 41% engaged in binge drinking.
 - 28% had their first drink before age 13—early use often linked to trauma, violence, or abuse.

Tobacco and vaping continue to pose significant public health concern in Waukesha County, despite overall progress in reducing cigarette smoking.

- 12.9% of Waukesha County residents were current smokers from 2017–2021 (*Wisconsin Department of Health Services, 2025*).
- In 2020, 11% of adults reported smoking cigarettes, while 4% reported using electronic vapor products. Among those who smoked or vaped, 55% attempted to quit for at least one day, and 69% of those who saw a healthcare provider were advised to quit (*ProHealth Care, 2022*).
- Vaping remains especially concerning among youth in Waukesha County:
 - 25% of students have tried vaping
 - 11% of students reported use in the past 30 days
 - Local use is likely underreported, complicating prevention and intervention efforts (*Tortora, McCoy, & Frederick, 2021*):

As public support for marijuana continues to grow, with 63% of Wisconsin voters supporting recreational use and 86% supporting medical use, a new and largely unregulated threat has emerged: Delta-8 THC (*ACLU of Wisconsin, 2025*). Derived from hemp and chemically altered to produce a high like traditional marijuana, Delta-8 is psychoactive, widely available, and currently unregulated at the state level in Wisconsin (*Wisconsin Department of Health Services, 2024*).

This regulatory gap means:

- There are no statewide age limits—Delta-8 can legally be purchased by youth.
- Products are sold at gas stations, vape shops, and convenience stores.
- No standard exists for packaging, labeling, or potency.
- Some local municipalities have implemented their own restrictions, but these vary.

Without consistent regulation or enforcement, Delta-8 THC remains a growing concern for youth health and safety in Waukesha County. Figure 3 Delta-8 THC Legality: A State-by-State Guide



(Ty, 2024)

Often sold in forms that mimic candy or vape cartridges, Delta-8 is especially appealing to young people. Among high school students in Waukesha County:

- 17% of students have used marijuana.
- 13% of students who have used marijuana started before age 13.

(Tortora, McCoy, & Frederick, 2021)

Health officials warn that Delta-8 use can result in impaired memory, judgment, and coordination; hallucinations, anxiety, psychosis, and loss of consciousness; as well as dependency, addiction, and withdrawal symptoms (Wisconsin Department of Health Services, 2024).

Tackling substance misuse in Waukesha County requires a coordinated, community-wide response. The lasting impact will depend on strong partnerships among public health, behavioral health, law enforcement, schools, and community organizations working together to deliver prevention, harm reduction, and recovery support.

Waukesha County Deaths

Between 2021 and 2023, there were 11,908 deaths among Waukesha County residents. Heart disease and cancer were the leading causes, accounting for just over 40% of all deaths (*Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Health Informatics, 2025*). While these chronic conditions remain important, they represent long-term health challenges that are typically addressed through broader clinical and healthcare system strategies.

Table 1 Top 15 Causes of Death by Broad Groups in Waukesha County from 2021 - 2023

Rank	Broad Cause	Count	% of Total	Notes
	All Causes	11,908	100%	
1	Diseases of heart	2471	20.8%	
2	Malignant neoplasms	2386	20.0%	Includes several cancers
3	Other causes*	1969	16.5%	
→ 4	Accidents (unintentional injuries)	1009	8.5%	Includes Falls (57%) and Accidental Drug Overdoses (23%)
5	Covid-19	661	5.6%	
→ 6	Cerebrovascular diseases	648	5.4%	
7	Alzheimer's disease	538	4.5%	
→ 8	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	374	3.1%	
9	Diabetes mellitus	249	2.1%	
→ 10	Parkinson's disease	197	1.7%	
→ 11	Chronic liver disease & cirrhosis	172	1.4%	Includes Alcoholic Liver Disease (75%)
12	Nutritional deficiencies	155	1.3%	
13	Intentional self-harm (suicide)	153	1.3%	
14	Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome and nephrosis	141	1.2%	
15	Influenza and pneumonia	128	1.1%	
NA	All Other Broad Causes (Grouped)**	657	5.5%	

NOTES: *Other causes is a defined category in WISH that includes a wide range of less common, residual, and ill-defined causes. It accounted for 16.5% of deaths in Waukesha County from 2021 to 2023.

**All Other Broad Causes (Grouped) is a custom category combining lower-frequency causes not shown individually. Together, these causes accounted for 5.5% of deaths in Waukesha County from 2021 to 2023.

SOURCE: *Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Health Informatics, 2025*

Waukesha County Political and Legislative Issues

County Board

All 25 County Board Supervisors will be up for election in nonpartisan 2-year term races held in April of 2026 and 2028. The County Executive will be up for election in a nonpartisan 4-year term race held in April of 2027. The Sheriff, Clerk of Courts, and Register of Deeds are elected to four-year terms with these positions up for election in November of 2028.

Any significant changes resulting from these elections could impact spending priorities, tax policies, and how services are delivered to residents.

Wisconsin Political Landscape

Wisconsin's political landscape for the next three years (2026-2028) is characterized by partisan division and a series of high-stakes elections. With the announcement that Governor Tony Evers will not be running for re-election next fall, the race for governor in 2026 is wide open for both parties, marking the first open-seat gubernatorial election in the state since 2010. Whoever wins the executive seat will significantly influence the state budget and legislative agenda going forward.

Additionally, the 2026 state legislative races are expected to be more competitive. New legislative district maps, which were redrawn after the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled the old ones unconstitutional, have made several districts more competitive, giving Democrats a stronger chance to challenge the long-standing Republican majorities in both houses of the legislature.

Supreme Court elections scheduled for 2026, 2027, and 2028 will make the court's ideological balance a central political battleground, with potential ramifications for highly contested issues.

Wisconsin State Budget

In July of 2025, Governor Evers signed the state's \$111.1 billion State Budget. Key provisions of the 2025-2027 state budget that support Waukesha County include:

- Increase in funding for Circuit Courts
- 6 additional assistant district attorney positions in Waukesha County
- Increase to General Transportation Aids (GTA) of 3% in the first year of the biennium and an additional 3% in the second year of the biennium
- No significant change in Shared Revenue or state mandate relief

Federal Political Landscape

Increased pressure from President Trump to cut federal spending should result in county departments preparing for potential reductions in federal aid, increased competition for remaining federal funds, and a need to diversify revenue streams. Changes to social safety net programs, that counties administer on behalf of the federal government, could lead to more administrative work, new eligibility requirements, and a reduction in federal dollars.

The political landscape from 2026 to 2028 will be defined by two major elections, midterms in November 2026 setting the stage for the presidential race in 2028.

ECONOMICS: Unemployment/Jobs/Business

Unemployment

- The County's 2024 unemployment rate (2.6%) is lower than the national average (4.1%) and lower than the state's average (3%).

There continues to be a tight labor market that is making recruitment of county employees difficult and is increasing salary demands across many job classifications.

Jobs:

- Job growth is projected to increase from 242,001 in 2017 to 338,000 in 2050. (SEWRPC 2020)
- 32.1% of Waukesha County residents have a bachelor's degree (10.6% above the national average) and 10.1% hold an associate's degree (1.2% above the national average)
- Waukesha County has more individuals 55 years and older than the national average for an area of similar size, with 147,092 compared to 124,551 nationally. Individuals in this age range may consider retiring soon.
- Waukesha County has fewer Millennials than the national average for an area of similar size, with 69,611 individuals compared to 83,832 nationally. Individuals in this age group are typically considered mid-career.
- 93.2% of businesses in Waukesha County have 49 or fewer employees. 6.5% of businesses have between 50 – 499 employees and 0.2% of Waukesha County businesses employ over 500 individuals.
- By 2050 Waukesha County is projected to have 24.4% of the total jobs in the metropolitan statistical area (Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties).

Business Survey

The Waukesha County Business Survey was conducted in cooperation with Waukesha County, the Waukesha County Business Alliance, the Waukesha County Center for Growth, Carroll University and the Waukesha-Ozaukee-Washington (WOW) Workforce Development Board in the winter of 2025. A total of

163 businesses responded to the survey. Respondents included representatives from 35 of Waukesha County's 37 municipalities, a wide range of business sectors, and companies sized from the self-employed to operations with more than 1,000 employees.

Highlights from the survey include:

- 71% of businesses plan to expand their workforce in the next three years, down from 80% on the 2023 survey.
- 73% of manufacturing businesses and over half of all types of businesses report a skilled labor shortage as the top challenge to workforce growth.
- Of those hiring
 - 53% are looking for industry-specific skilled labor
 - 32% are looking for marketing/sales
 - 30% are looking for administrative
 - 26% are looking for engineering
 - 13% are looking for business services (Finance/Legal/HR)
- Top skills organizations are looking to develop in employees include project management, strategic management, and data analytics.
- Companies are preparing for advancements in emerging technologies by
 - Upgrading technology infrastructure (55%)
 - Implementing or upgrading AI-driven tools and technologies (51%)
 - Developing or enhancing cybersecurity or AI strategy (48%)
 - Recruiting or upskilling employees with skills in AI/cyber (48%)
 - Piloting or adopting automation (37%)
- 83% of businesses in Waukesha County are 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the local business climate. Economic uncertainty, workforce availability, tax and regulatory policies factor into broader state and national perceptions.
- 44% of respondents have reached 100% capacity at their existing location which is down from 60% in 2017

Technology

The technology used within County government and among its customers continues to grow. Trends toward cloud, e-commerce, remote work, and end user driven systems enable more functionality and services available to internal and external customers. This "always on – always accessible" expectation requires increased dependence on information technology and the support services to implement/manage systems and mitigate risk.

Continued strategic investment in technology and a focus on system and process effectiveness/efficiency results in productivity and subsequent return on investment. Enhancements to information management, IT security, business continuity and data access will continue to develop. The

increased use and access of data means that IT security is an ever-increasing responsibility, and the need to protect data and follow sound information governance policy is critical.

Investment in IT security, business continuity, and disaster recovery will assist in reducing cyber-attack vectors and help ensure confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information/data. An evolving, multi-tiered approach will provide protection from internal/external threats and keep public trust and brand reputation intact.

The post-pandemic world has accentuated the need to focus on improving the delivery of digital government services through the development of the external website. Enabling anytime, anywhere, and any device alternatives to in-person, paper-based services will provide operational efficiencies and increase constituent satisfaction.

The reality of continuous technological change requires increased employee training. Technology is not a centralized IT responsibility alone. Portions of traditional information technology responsibilities continue to shift to end-users and business-specific subject matter experts act as application administrators. This creates efficiencies and it also requires increased focus on effective end-user solutions and the development of end-user expertise, documentation, and business continuity. The focus on end-user applications and lean IT staffing results in IT expertise in some areas being “one-person deep,” requiring the need for supplemental outside resources and prioritization of core functionality.

The County will continue to invest in people, processes, and application efficiencies to enable IT services and deliver business objectives and goals.

COUNTY FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Housing

Economic development is vital for communities in Waukesha County to retain optimum paying jobs, maintain municipal infrastructure and essential services, and maintain and expand quality of life.

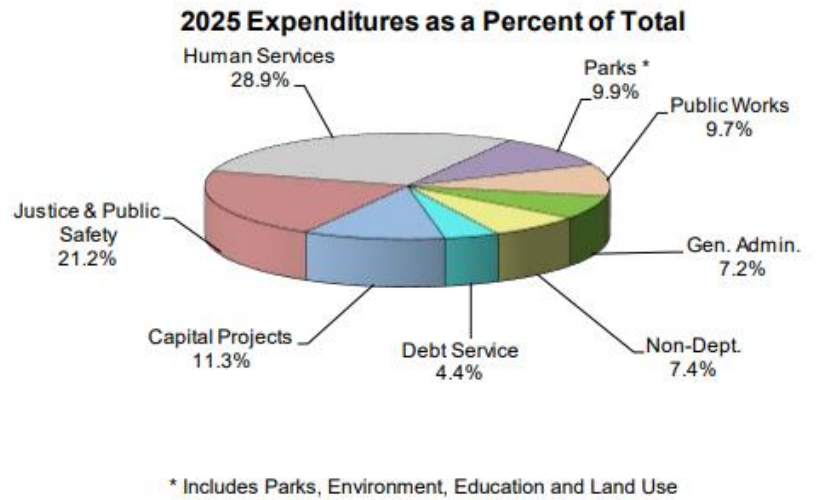
The population in Waukesha County continues to age. As the baby boomer population enters retirement, the county must consider a variety of housing types to accommodate the changing needs of this age group as it relates to household type, income, and location. With the baby boomers leaving the workforce and requiring services, there is also a need to attract a new workforce. The available workforce population, which is younger and more racially diverse than before, requires the same housing considerations as the baby boomers. Locating a variety of housing near job centers helps attract skilled workers to the county and provides a customer base for nearby goods and services, parks, and available public transit. Nationally and locally, there has been an increasing demand for living units located near entertainment venues and workplaces, as millennials and empty nesters look for more dynamic living arrangements within walkable settings.

Household/Family

- In 2024 there were 167,392 households in Waukesha County. The number is expected to increase about 3% every 5 years. The average persons per household is approximately 2.4.
- The county is relatively affluent with a median household income of \$99,168, which is above both the state (\$74,671) and national (\$77,719) median, and the second highest among all counties in Wisconsin, behind St. Croix County just outside of the Twin Cities (\$103,731). Similarly, per capita income in Waukesha County is estimated at \$91,766, which is higher than the state (\$64,976) and the nation (\$69,418), and the second highest among all counties in Wisconsin (behind Ozaukee County at \$104,780). The latest data available is from 2023.
- The county has experienced healthy property value growth in recent years. Following several years of declining property value during the Great Recession, property values began increasing for 2014. From 2014 to 2021, property value growth increased about 4.4% on average annually, with a gradual trend of larger percentage increases over that period. Since then, property values have increased more rapidly, at about 13% for 2022 and 2023, and 8.5% in 2025, driven largely by residential property inflation. (The increase for 2024 was just under 4.0% but was artificially lower due to the state exempting personal property from taxes.) A realistic assumption for future growth would be about 4%-5% but could be higher if residential property inflation continues or could be lower or negative if there's an economic downturn.
- According to the Wisconsin Realtors Association, the median home sale price in 2024 (the last complete year of data) was \$455,650. Statewide home prices rose 4.5% in the past year.
- The county is subject to state-mandated property tax levy limits, with growth in the levy primarily tied to "net new construction." Net new construction consists of the value of new construction (i.e., development) minus demolition and is divided into the previous year's total tax levy base (including tax increment districts) to get the growth factor.
- The county has experienced healthy growth recently; however, the county's tax base is comparatively large so that this growth results in a relatively small net new construction growth factor. Assuming continued property value growth levels like recent years, the net new construction factor is expected to continue to decrease even if high levels of development are maintained.

Waukesha County Budget: Expenditures

The total operating budget (excluding capital projects and debt service) typically increases about 2%-3% and can fluctuate from year-to-year due to state and federal funding awards. The county provides many labor-intensive services, and personnel costs consistently make up about half of total operating budget. The two largest functional areas, Justice & Public Safety and Health & Human Services, consistently comprise about 55%-60% of the operating budget (excluding capital and debt). Debt service costs are expected to increase in future years due to additional borrowing needed for the courthouse project and the increasing cost of maintaining infrastructure. The graph above displays expenditures by functional area, including capital and debt.



External factors will continue to play a key role in significantly impacting future trends and projections including how federal and state funding priorities may likely affect local funding policies and services carried out by local governments provided in different ways. Also, volatility of fuel, energy, and commodity prices, and increasing medical and health insurance costs are likely to have future budget impacts. In addition, internal factors include high costs of jail inmates, Emergency Preparedness 9-1-1 dispatch communications, and future debt service payments as a result of infrastructure projects, including the project to expand and modernize the courthouse and funding of major highway projects.

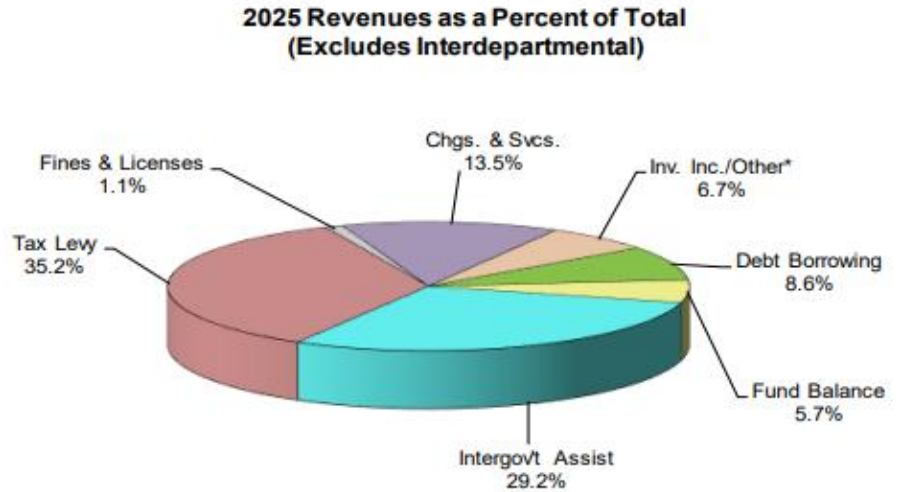
The county typically assumes slower growth in revenues, due to state-mandated levy limits and minimal increases in ongoing state/federal aid to help cover mandated services, resulting in forecasted gaps between revenues and expenditures. Typically, the gap has been between \$3 million and \$5 million but is forecast at about \$6 million for 2026.

Waukesha County Budget: Revenues

Intergovernmental assistance and tax levy comprise the majority of county revenues. The share of total budgeted revenues coming from the property tax has declined from 42% in the 2018 budget to 35.2% in the 2025 budget, mostly due to state-mandated levy limits.

The county carries out several programs on behalf of the state and federal government (mostly in Justice & Public Safety and Health & Human Services), so about a quarter of the total revenue budget is typically from

state and federal revenue sources, though growth in these revenue sources is often minimal and insufficient to keep up with the increasing cost of mandated services. Also, the county attempts to maintain a diversified and stable revenue stream, which includes a reliance on user fees where costs can be directly related to the level of service provided and recovered through charges to individuals and organizations that directly benefit from those services. The county’s budget philosophy is to review and adjust user fees where allowable to cover increasing program costs, reducing reliance on tax levy. User fees/charges for service, for example, made up about 13.5% in the 2025 budget.



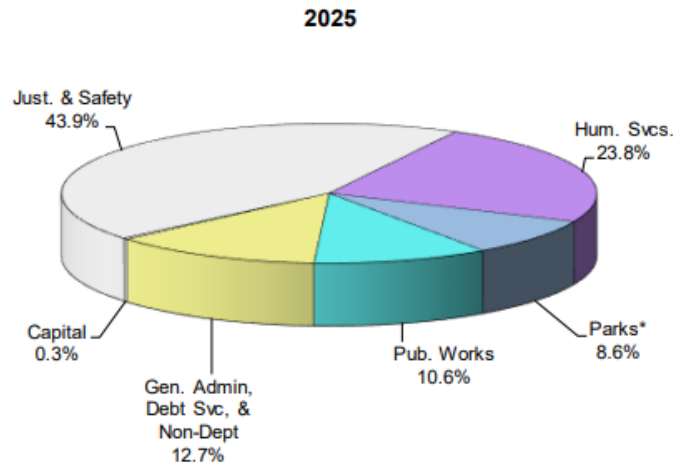
American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding will officially end on December 31, 2026, eliminating the county’s allocation from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds program.

Other external factors that may affect estimated future revenue trends include a change in state funding, a change in the interest rate trend affecting county investments, or a change in moderate inflation trends. Also, other impacts which could affect future revenue include federal and state budget deficits which will likely result in revenue reductions and the potential for higher interest rates. Internal factors mainly include user fee increases, which help cover the rising costs of services and the ability to collect on client accounts, and the uncertainty of the County Executive and County Board supporting a revenue source, like a 0.5% county sales tax, which, if enacted, would significantly increase county revenues.

County Tax Levy

Section 66.0602 of the Wisconsin State Statutes imposes a limit on property tax levies by cities, villages, towns, and counties. These entities cannot increase their tax levy by a percentage that exceeds their prior year change in equalized value due to net new construction plus an increment for terminated Tax Incremental Districts. The limit also includes exemptions for debt service obligations, consolidated services, and unused tax levy from the prior year. In a typical year Waukesha County is allowed to increase its property tax levy somewhere between 1% and 2% under these limits. That new tax revenue is then distributed to various county departments to support ongoing operations.

The area of Justice and Public Safety receives the most new tax levy support in a typical year. The share of tax levy going to Justice and Public Safety has increased from 41% in the 2014 budget to 43.9% in the 2025 budget, due in part to it being a priority area for the county and the limited ability for these operations to generate other revenues. That trend will continue into the near and medium-term future. Together with Health & Human Services, over 2/3 of tax levy goes to these two functional areas. State-imposed tax levy limits as described above continue to put pressure on our county budget. The pace of inflation and the increasing market demand for higher wages that have accompanied the tight labor market is making living within levy limits increasingly difficult. The county continues to resist imposing the statutorily allowable county sales tax to offset the restrictions of the tax levy cap. The county will continue to monitor actions of the State Legislature that could ease levy limits or support alternative funding sources for counties.



INTERNAL ANALYSIS

County Facilities and Operations

In 2026, the existing Waukesha County Courthouse Building will continue to undergo an extensive renovation to upgrade the facility and prepare the county to serve its citizens for at least the next 50 years. This project, which will be completed in 2027, will have an impact on county employees working in both the existing 1959 Courthouse Building and the Administration Center, as well as the visiting public. Business operations in both buildings will be affected at various times during the project. Departments should consider how their employees will be impacted by temporary office movements and consider potential changes or modifications to service delivery to customers who visit the two buildings.

In addition to the Courthouse Building itself, the county is examining changes to the county’s jail as well as the county’s Administration Building. Two separate studies will determine what renovations or expansions are warranted for those facilities.

The county is also in the process of divesting itself from two long-held properties, the campus at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee at Waukesha and the Northview building and land. The university campus has already been marketed via an RFP process, and it is anticipated the Northview property will follow suit sometime in 2026.

Customer Service

Waukesha County is committed to the highest levels of customer service. Our team is dedicated to serving all customers by living our core values, standards of service, and behaviors of excellence. Waukesha County continues to focus its efforts on high levels of customer service; we can measure this using the Waukesha County Customer Service Survey. Waukesha County sets a goal to meet a 4.65 out of 5 for our overall customer service interactions. The table below shows the county’s scores across all departments for 2023-2025.

Performance Measure:	2023 Actual	2024 Estimate	2025 Target
Countywide Customer Satisfaction Rating	4.58	4.70	4.65

Employee Survey

Waukesha County received 737 complete responses to its 2024 Employee Engagement Survey.

As in past years, respondents were asked a range of questions about communication, sharing information, professional development, and continuous improvement. This includes four key questions that we have been measuring over time with a goal of meeting an 80% agreement threshold (Calculated by adding the % of ratings of Strongly Agree and Somewhat Agree).

Countywide results of those questions as of 2024 can be found [here](#).

- 96%** I understand that I can be recognized for extra effort while demonstrating the County’s Standards of Service Excellence
- 97%** Information and knowledge is shared openly within my department
- 96%** During my annual performance evaluation with my direct supervisor, I discussed training needs and opportunities for professional development
- 98%** I understand how my work and assigned goals directly contribute to the overall success of the County in meeting its key strategic priorities

Historical Perspective:

2014 2024 Difference

I understand how my work and assigned goals directly contribute to the overall success of the County in meeting its key strategic priorities

87% 98% +11%

Information and knowledge are shared openly within my department

64% 97% +33%

During my annual performance evaluation with my direct supervisor, I discussed training needs and opportunities for professional development

73% 96% +23%

I understand that I can be recognized for extra effort while demonstrating the County’s Standards of Service Excellence

61% 96% +35%

Comparing the 2014 results with the 2024 shows dramatic improvement in responses. The results are a testament to what a culture of continuous improvement should produce. We should all be proud of our progress and keep working to reach our 80% goal across all categories.

Countywide and Departmental Results using Power BI Dashboarding

To help understand the survey data and facilitate communication with county teams, Department Heads are provided a link to dashboards visually depicting the survey data in each department. Data may then be shared across Departments and utilized to determine individual or departmentwide performance goals or measure success of key initiatives.

County HR Scan Overview

County Employment Demographics - Years of Service

The charts below outline the distribution of employees by years of county service. During the period between 2022 and 2025 the percentage of employees with five or fewer years of county experience grew 45% to 48%. This trend is even more pronounced in comparison to 2012 when county work experience was more evenly distributed and the largest percentage of the workforce having twenty or

	2022						2025						Δ 2025 vs. 2022					
	<5	5-9	10-14	15-20	>20	County Total	<5	5-9	10-14	15-20	>20	County Total	<5	5-9	10-14	15-20	>20	
Administration	37	15	12	19	16	99	46	15	10	11	19	101	9	0	-2	-8	3	
Circuit Court Services	40	10	5	10	12	77	39	20	4	4	14	81	-1	10	-1	-6	2	
Corporation Counsel	18	7	5	5	5	40	17	9	5	6	6	43	-1	2	0	1	1	
Emergency Preparedness	20	11	7	10	3	51	29	12	3	6	8	58	9	1	-4	-4	5	
Public Works	62	17	10	10	28	127	58	28	14	7	18	125	-4	11	4	-3	-10	
District Attorney	19	3	5	6	11	44	13	3	4	2	11	33	-6	0	-1	-4	0	
Health and Human Service:	186	73	44	41	44	388	226	78	48	26	45	423	40	5	4	-15	1	
Parks and Land Use	38	18	9	8	25	98	41	18	14	6	22	101	3	0	5	-2	-3	
Sheriffs Department	145	49	36	50	40	320	161	46	37	32	52	328	16	-3	1	-18	12	
Multi Departments	18	14	6	6	10	54	37	15	15	8	10	85	19	1	9	2	0	
County Total	583	217	139	165	194	1298	667	244	154	108	205	1378	84	27	15	-57	11	
	<5	5-9	10-14	15-20	>20	County Total	<5	5-9	10-14	15-20	>20	County Total	<5	5-9	10-14	15-20	>20	
Administration	37%	15%	12%	19%	16%	100%	46%	15%	10%	11%	19%	100%	8%	0%	-2%	-8%	3%	
Circuit Court Services	52%	13%	6%	13%	16%	100%	48%	25%	5%	5%	17%	100%	-4%	12%	-2%	-8%	2%	
Corporation Counsel	45%	18%	13%	13%	13%	100%	40%	21%	12%	14%	14%	100%	-5%	3%	-1%	1%	1%	
Emergency Preparedness	39%	22%	14%	20%	6%	100%	50%	21%	5%	10%	14%	100%	11%	-1%	-9%	-9%	8%	
Public Works	49%	13%	8%	8%	22%	100%	46%	22%	11%	6%	14%	100%	-2%	9%	3%	-2%	-8%	
District Attorney	43%	7%	11%	14%	25%	100%	39%	9%	12%	6%	33%	100%	-4%	2%	1%	-8%	8%	
Health and Human Service:	48%	19%	11%	11%	11%	100%	53%	18%	11%	6%	11%	100%	5%	0%	0%	-4%	-1%	
Parks and Land Use	39%	18%	9%	8%	26%	100%	41%	18%	14%	6%	22%	100%	2%	-1%	5%	-2%	-4%	
Sheriffs Department	45%	15%	11%	16%	13%	100%	49%	14%	11%	10%	16%	100%	4%	-1%	0%	-6%	3%	
Multi Departments	33%	26%	11%	11%	19%	100%	44%	18%	18%	9%	12%	100%	10%	-8%	7%	-2%	-7%	
County Total	45%	17%	11%	13%	15%	100%	48%	18%	11%	8%	15%	100%	3%	1%	0%	-5%	0%	

2012						
	<5	5-9	10-14	15-20	>20	County Total
Administration	11	17	20	11	30	89
Circuit Court Services	16	19	19	7	31	92
Corporation Counsel	3	9	9	3	15	39
Emergency Preparedness	16	29	5	2	6	58
Public Works	15	14	27	26	48	130
District Attorney	2	4	10	6	10	32
Health and Human Services	96	76	65	52	111	400
Parks and Land Use	7	16	27	14	43	107
Sheriffs Department	65	86	60	47	83	341
Multi Departments	20	19	18	14	15	86
County Total	251	289	260	182	392	1374

	<5	5-9	10-14	15-20	>20	County Total
Administration	12%	19%	22%	12%	34%	100%
Circuit Court Services	17%	21%	21%	8%	34%	100%
Corporation Counsel	8%	23%	23%	8%	38%	100%
Emergency Preparedness	28%	50%	9%	3%	10%	100%
Public Works	12%	11%	21%	20%	37%	100%
District Attorney	6%	13%	31%	19%	31%	100%
Health and Human Services	24%	19%	16%	13%	28%	100%
Parks and Land Use	7%	15%	25%	13%	40%	100%
Sheriffs Department	19%	25%	18%	14%	24%	100%
Multi Departments	23%	22%	21%	16%	17%	100%
County Total	18%	21%	19%	13%	29%	100%

more years of experience at Waukesha County. The trend affirms the impact of the Baby Boom generation’s retirement and reflects the higher levels of turnover experienced coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The County continues to emphasize succession planning. Training programs such as Standards of Service Excellence (SOSE), Management University, Effective Supervision and Mentoring have been instrumental in employee transitions and in the mitigation of institutional knowledge loss as experienced employees, senior professionals, and managerial staff, have retired.

County Employment – Turnover

As the workforce transitions, it points toward the need for continued emphasis on county-wide efforts to recruit, develop and retain employees. This is especially clear when reviewing countywide turnover data, which in recent years has been affected by the low unemployment rate and changes in workforce participation. The chart below presents twelve years of data, and shows an uptick in overall turnover, regrettable turnover, and total resignations during starting in 2021.

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Regrettable Turnover Benchmark						
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024					
FTE--Budgeted Positions	1366	1368	1363	1354	1354	1373	1381	1390	1390	1404	1426	1426
FTE--Total Turnover	102	123	157	163	133	175	159	156	238	284	237	198
% Turnover	7.47%	8.99%	11.52%	12.04%	9.82%	12.75%	11.51%	11.22%	17.09%	20.23%	16.62%	13.88%
Regrettable Turnover*						68	66	68	106	169	105	94
% Regrettable Turnover						4.95%	4.78%	4.89%	7.59%	12.04%	7.37%	6.59%
Death	3	2	1	2	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	1
Disability Retirement	0	1	3	4	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	1
Discharge	8	8	21	7	8	8	8	12	15	13	14	23
Position Eliminated	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	7	0	0	2
Resignation	42	45	74	92	86	101	108	87	146	228	176	140
Retirement	49	67	58	58	38	65	41	52	68	43	46	31
Total	102	123	157	163	133	175	159	156	238	284	237	198

*Regrettable Turnover: Employees who left County employment that we planned to retain, or voluntary separation by individuals who are top performers, or high-potential employees, or where the separation is from a key position for which a possible successor has not been previously identified

*This turnover analysis does not include employees that transferred to other departments or had job assignment changes within the county

OFFICE OF CORPORATION COUNSEL

Background

The Office of Corporation Counsel is comprised of the Legal Services and Child Support Divisions dedicated to enhancing Waukesha County by providing expert legal guidance, supporting family stability, and protecting the community and its most vulnerable members.

Legal Services Division

Statement of Purpose

The Legal Services Division acts as the civil legal counsel for all County departments and Elected Officials. It represents Waukesha County in civil litigation and administrative proceedings where the county is a party. Besides providing legal advice, the division handles state-mandated services, the prosecution of mental health commitments, the establishment of guardianships and protective placements, and the representation of the public in cases involving children and juveniles in need of protection or services as well as the termination of parental rights.

Caseload

In 2023, the Legal Services Division received 54 claims, monitored 56 lawsuits, reviewed 296 contracts and 108 ordinances, and responded to 82 public records requests. In addition, the Legal Services Division filed 716 mental health cases, 459 guardianship and protective placement cases and 160 juvenile court petitions. In 2024, the Legal Services Division received 59 claims, monitored 50 lawsuits, reviewed 292 contracts and 105 ordinances, and responded to 148 public records requests. In addition, the Legal Services Division filed 692 mental health cases, 387 guardianship and protective placement cases and 178 juvenile court petitions. In 2025, the Legal Services Division received 41 claims, monitored 54 lawsuits, reviewed 280 contracts and 94 ordinances, and responded to 175 public records requests. In addition, the Legal Services Division filed 614 mental health cases, 382 guardianship and protective placement cases and 157 juvenile court petitions.

Child Support Division

Statement of Purpose

The Child Support Division (CSD) of the Office of Corporation Counsel administers the Child Support Enforcement program pursuant to Title IV-D of the federal Social Security Act and Wisconsin Statutes under contract with the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. The CSD is supported by state, federal, and county funding. Services include activities to establish paternity, obtain court orders for child support and health insurance, enforce or modify existing child support orders, and collect delinquent child support arrears.

Caseload

The total caseload for the CSD is the sum of IV-D cases and Non-IV-D cases. The CSD, per contract with the State, must provide limited services to Non-IV-D cases and maintain data in the KIDS statewide system. At the end of Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2025, the Waukesha County CSD total caseload was 13,906 total cases (9,320 IV-D cases plus 4,586 Non-IV-D cases).

Environmental Scanning Efforts

The Office of Corporation Counsel conducted focus groups and surveys to gather information from its stakeholders: employees, internal clients, and customers. Feedback via in-person meetings and email responses was collected between September 15th and October 22nd, 2025.

Employee Focus Groups

On September 15th and 22nd, 2025, two (2) employee focus groups were conducted. Employees also had the option to respond to focus group questions via an electronic survey. Between the focus groups and the survey, twenty-four (24) out of the department's forty-four (44) employees participated, resulting in a turnout rate of approximately 55%. The questions posed to the employee focus groups were as follows:

1. What does the Office of Corporation Counsel do well for our customers and clients?
2. What challenges do you see when we are serving our customers and clients?
3. What does the Office of Corporation Counsel do well for our employees?
4. How do you think the Office of Corporation Counsel should grow, change, or improve?

Internal Client Focus Group

On October 13th, 2025, an internal client focus group was conducted, allowing participation both in-person and via email. Seventeen (17) internal clients contributed, representing the Clerk of Courts, Department of Collections, County Clerk, Emergency Preparedness, Health & Human Services, Human Resources, Information Technology, Medical Examiner's Office, Public Works, and the Sheriff's Department. The focus group addressed specific questions designed to gather insights and feedback from these internal stakeholders including:

1. What Office of Corporation Counsel services do you utilize the most? Which of our services do you value the most?
2. What challenges have you encountered when working with the Office of Corporation Counsel?
3. How do you see your need for legal services changing in the next 3-5 years? Is there some service you would like that we do not currently provide?
4. What else would you like us to know as we establish our strategic objectives for the next 3 years?

Customer Survey

Parents on the IV-D caseload are vital stakeholders for the Waukesha County CSD as they are the most direct recipients of our services. To obtain their feedback and insights for future improvements, a communication method that was direct, quick, and simple was necessary. Traditional focus group

meetings had previously been largely unsuccessful due to the inability of busy parents to attend in-person sessions. A streamlined 4-question survey was introduced and conducted personally after routine interactions between September 11 and October 3, 2025. The survey required only a few minutes to complete, with parents having the option to fill it out or provide verbal responses, which were recorded by staff. This method proved more effective than earlier data collection efforts.

Our parent stakeholders were also asked some questions to identify respondent demographics. The questions were:

- Person Responding: Male Female
- Role:
 - Custodial Parent or person receiving child support
 - Noncustodial Parent or person making child support payments
 - Other

Respondents were equally divided between male and female participants, as well as between custodial and noncustodial parents. Five respondents were identified as “other”, such as grandparents.

The survey included four questions, with the first two being standard and the latter two focused on gathering feedback on effective communication and the delivery of information regarding their cases. The four survey questions were:

1. What does the Child Support Division do well?
2. What can the Child Support Division improve upon?
3. Have you ever used the Waukesha County Child Support Division’s website?
4. If you have a case in our office, how do you want us to contact or communicate with you?
 - Call my cell phone
 - Text my cell phone
 - By mail
 - Other

Over the course of several weeks in September of 2025, thirty-seven (37) survey interviews were conducted with parents. Most surveys were completed after parents concluded their business during in-person visits to the lobby of the Child Support Division or the Corporation Counsel Office. Others were discussed over the phone and recorded by staff at the end of a call. Lastly, several surveys were completed while a parent waited outside a courtroom for their case to be called.

Results Analysis

Employee Focus Group

The results of the employee focus groups highlighted the strengths and challenges faced by the Office of Corporation Counsel. The Office excels in advocacy and representation, providing human-centered service, and delivering clarity and education to clients. However, challenges include public misunderstandings of law and procedural constraints, requiring staff to carefully navigate ethical considerations.

Internally, the Office fosters a supportive and compassionate environment, bolstering team morale through organized events and a focus on work-life balance with flexible scheduling. To enhance service, the Office identified areas for improvement, such as better communication and training with legal partners and enhancing the county website with more FAQs, visuals, and easy-to-understand instructions.

These insights reinforce the Office's commitment to strong customer service and innovative problem-solving, while identifying key areas for growth and adaptation.

Internal Client Focus Group

Through internal client feedback, the Office of Corporation Counsel identified key services and areas for growth. Valued services include representation in court matters including probate, legal advice, and assistance with public records requests. Several staff members were highlighted for their responsiveness and expertise in areas like policy feedback, ADA accommodation, and union contract interpretation. Clients appreciate the collaborative approach and depth of knowledge, crucial for compliance and handling complex legal issues.

Challenges noted involved scheduling delays due to workload, with requests for clearer communication on handling priorities and attorney assignments. Looking ahead, clients anticipate a greater need for legal services related to public records requests, federal regulation changes, and continued education on legal topics. Suggestions for strategic objectives included specializing in governmental collections, avoiding frequent attorney reassignments, and maintaining strong attorney-client relationships.

Overall, the Office's efforts are appreciated for providing accurate and dependable legal guidance.

Customer Survey

Question no. 1: What does the Child Support Division do well?

This question received the most responses, with only four (4) participants not answering. Many participants provided multiple answers. Notable strengths in the office include effective communication and listening skills, coupled with compassionate and patient customer service.

Sample Responses:

- "The caseworker communicated and helped me understand the court order and what is expected from the court moving forward."
- "You have been more helpful than my attorney with papers and documents."
- "They keep me updated on the case along with resources to help through the process. The information they gave me today was great. It reassured me."

Question no. 2: What can the Child Support Division improve upon?

Five (5) participants stated there was "nothing" to change, which, while positive, does not aid in planning. Approximately twelve (12) stakeholders identified areas for improvement, primarily suggesting enhancements to the website for better information and navigation. Another area for improvement is the coordination of communications with the office and call center to streamline interactions. Some

suggestions, like providing legal advice or facilitating family reunification, fall outside the program's scope. Thirteen (13) participants did not answer this question.

Question no. 3: Have you ever used the Waukesha County Child Support Division's website?

Most parents had not used the website (22 responses), though about half affirmed usage (12 responses). There was some uncertainty, as a few parents mentioned using the state's Child Support Online Services (CSOS) website instead. Four participants did not answer.

Question no. 4: If you have a case in our office, how do you want us to contact or communicate with you? Participants were permitted to provide more than one answer to this question.

- ___ Call my cell phone
- ___ Text my cell phone
- ___ By mail
- ___ Other

Almost all the participants indicated that they wanted to be contacted by cell phone as their preferred method of contact (45 responses total). Participants overwhelmingly preferred being contacted via cell phone calls (24 responses) or text messages (21 responses). Preferences for mail (4 responses) and email (3 responses) were significantly lower. Only three participants did not answer, with most providing more than one communication method.

Themes

The environmental scan identified key themes for service improvement, communication, and resource management within the Office of Corporation Counsel. Drawing from input provided by employees, internal clients and customers, these themes offer insights into enhancing client services and operational efficiencies. They underscore the need to upgrade processes, improve communication channels, and optimize resource allocation to better serve clients and meet organizational goals.

Employee Focus Groups

The themes for improvement that emerged from the employee focus group are as follows:

1. Improve communication and training with our legal partners including the judiciary, private bar and public defender's office.
2. Improve our county website to better inform the public. Suggestions include more FAQs, visuals, process flow charts, and easy-to-understand form instructions.

Internal Client Focus Group

The following key themes for improvement were identified from the internal client focus group:

1. Enhancing Communication Across Departments.
 - a. Provide a timeline for tasks to be completed.
 - b. Explain how to make a legal inquiry including necessary information and whom to contact.

- c. Clarify where internal client's inquiry falls within an attorney's list of priorities.
 - d. Inform departments and divisions when attorney assignments change; post current attorney assignment list; and for the Department of Health & Human Services, the topics covered by each of its four (4) attorneys.
2. Accelerate Timeliness of Legal Services Performed.
 - a. Reduce time to answer questions and complete research.
 3. Provide Ongoing Legal Education for Departments and New Supervisors.
 - a. Provide training, similar to public record request training, on topics that cover a larger audience such as human resources issues and unfavorable contract terms.
 - b. Be prepared to advise departments of federal law changes impacting work and policies.
 - c. Stay abreast of new laws, caselaw, ordinances, and county policies and educate departments in advance of effective dates.
 4. Reimagine the Contract Review Process.
 - a. Increase efficiencies in contract review communications and status notifications.
 - b. Consider partnering with Information Technology to improve processes and create efficiencies.

Customer Survey

Key themes identified from the customer survey were as follows:

1. Improving Technological Resources and Procedural Transparency

Feedback from the customer survey indicates that parents are seeking greater digital accessibility to achieve self-service empowerment and avoid the friction that often comes with navigating the child support process. Parents asked for complex court procedures, such as the filing of stipulations or motions, to be explained on the Child Support Division's website. There was also a request for readily accessible self-service tools, such as obtaining payment history printouts, to be available on the website. While these tools and resources are available on other websites and resources, this feedback suggests that improvements can be made to centralize these resources and improve the clarity of online instructions.

2. Streamlining Telecommunication Efforts to Conduct Conversations Expeditiously

A significant portion of the customer service of a child support agency is done via telephone with parents, attorneys or other agencies. The Waukesha County Child Support Division gets a high level of calls daily. It handles this function, in part, by contracting with the Call Center at the Support Collections Trust Fund to provide initial customer service to callers and to screen the calls for case workers. Each month the Call Center answers on average 1,579 calls, or almost 19,000 annually for the Waukesha County Child Support Division.

It appears from the survey that parents are pleased with the communication and services of the child support division staff when they speak with them in person or over the phone. However, there was

feedback that too much time was spent relaying simple information or trading messages with Call Center staff before a parent could talk with their case worker.

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[SOCIOECONOMICS | Regional Performance Monitoring](#)

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