

Waukesha County
Office of the Medical Examiner

Strategic Plan

2023 - 2025



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Reader’s Guide: How to Read the Strategic Plan

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Thanks for reading Waukesha County Department of the Medical Examiner’s Strategic Plan.

This plan provides an overview of what Waukesha County leadership aims to achieve over the next three years and how this Department aims 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 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.

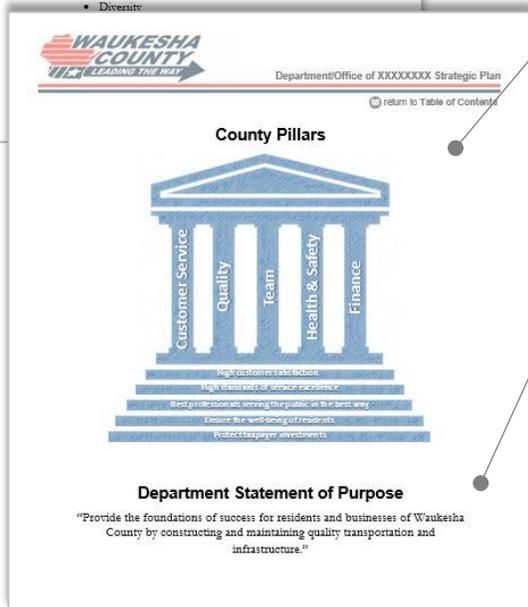
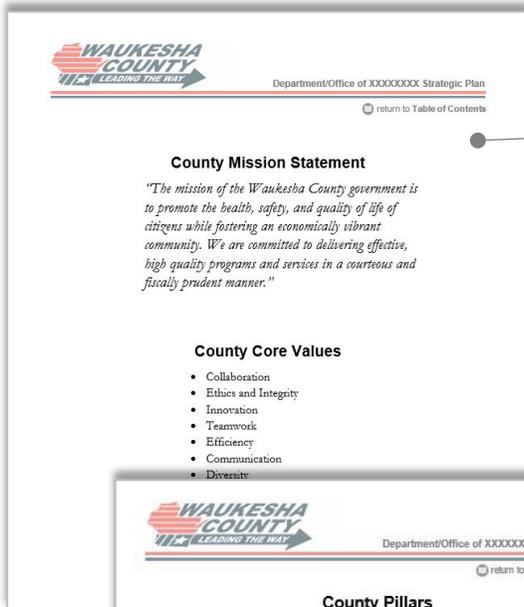
The screenshot shows a page header with the Waukesha County logo and the text 'Department/Office of XXXXXXXX Strategic Plan'. Below the header is a red bar with the text 'Pillar: Choose an item.' and two links: 'return to Objectives list' and 'return to Table of Contents'. The main content area contains an objective: 'Objective 1: Click or tap here to enter text.' with an owner: 'Owner: Click or tap here to enter text.' and a performance measure: 'Performance Measure: Click or tap here to enter text.' Below this is a large box labeled 'Insert graphic/image here'. To the right of this box is a 'Learn More:' section with three links: 'Type here, update link', 'Type here, update link', and 'Type here, update link'. At the bottom of the screenshot is a table with three columns: 'STRATEGY', 'STRATEGY OWNER', and 'TIMEFRAME'. Each cell in the table contains the text 'Click or tap here to enter text.'

Learn More:

Jump to supporting resources found in this Strategic Plan’s appendices, on WaukeshaCounty.gov, or elsewhere!

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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

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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.”

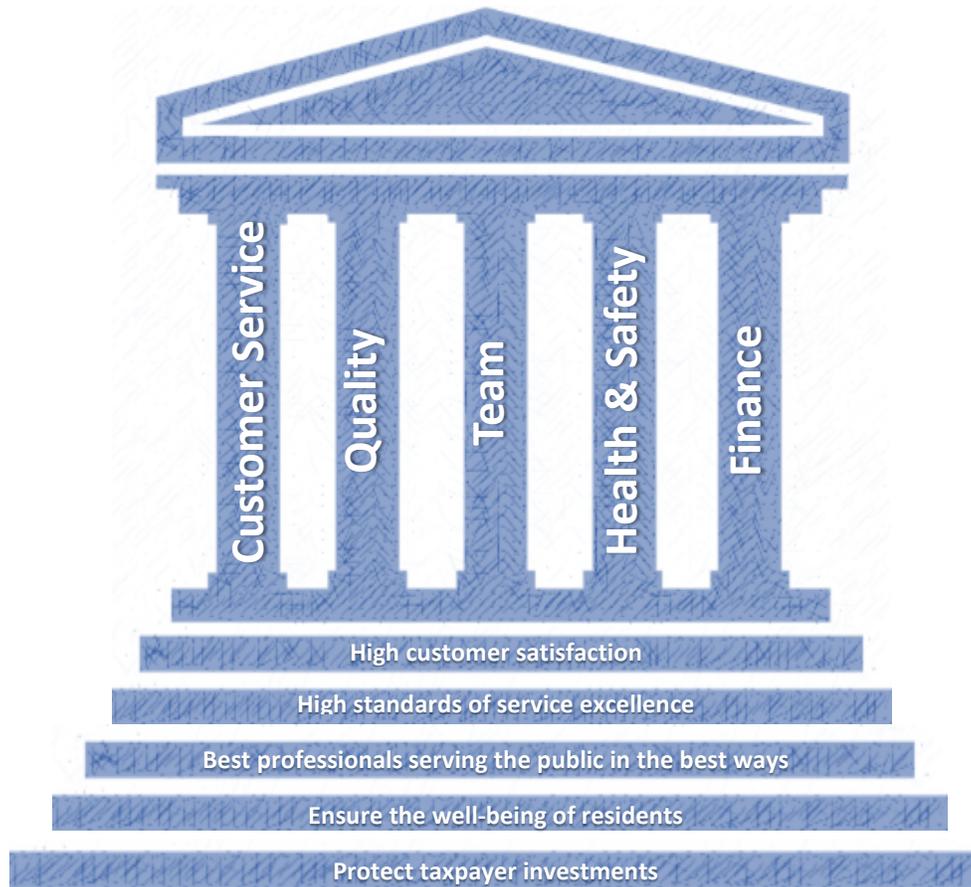
County Standards of Service Excellence

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

Executive Summary: County Pillars & Statement of Purpose

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County Pillars



Department Statement of Purpose

“The Waukesha County Medical Examiner’s Office investigates deaths as mandated by Wisconsin State Statute 979 to ensure the safety, health, and welfare of the community. The office provides investigation, documentation, and medical evaluation of reportable cases. We achieve these goals by applying knowledge and experience in the field of death investigation and forensic pathology to the performance of comprehensive, professional investigations.”

Executive Summary: Overview & Strategic Objectives

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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 Law Enforcement Communication](#)
- [Objective 2 Health & Human Services Opioid Data & OFRT Collaboration](#)
- [Objective 3 Indigent and Unclaimed Decedent Final Disposition Plan](#)
- [Objective 4 Policy and Procedure Review Process](#)
- [Objective 5 Funeral Home Customer Satisfaction](#)
- [Objective 6 Staff Professional Development Program](#)
- [Objective 7 Office Renovation Project Goals and Outcomes](#)
- [Objective 8 Implementation of Departmental Focus Groups](#)

County Pillar: Health & Safety

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Objective 1:

By June 30, 2023, the Waukesha County Medical Examiner’s office leadership team will develop structured communication for the Waukesha County Law Enforcement Community to include current drug-related death statistics, data regarding emerging trends and updates about relevant investigative and ME office procedures. Methods for information sharing will include the ME Operations Supervisor’s attendance at the Waukesha County Police Chiefs’ Association meetings and/or communication via an e-mail distribution list.

Owner:

Kristine Klenz, Operations Supervisor

Performance Measures:

Survey Waukesha County Law Enforcement agencies by the end of 2nd Quarter 2025 to measure the impact of this initiative with the goal of a 4.65 satisfaction rating.

Strategy	Strategy Details	Owner	Timeframe
Utilization of the Waukesha County Police Chiefs Association Meeting as a forum for sharing information.	ME Operations Supervisor will routinely attend WCPCA meetings (monthly).	Kristine Klenz, ME Operations Supervisor	By end of 1 st Quarter 2023.
Connect with WCPCA leadership to determine best contacts to dissemination information to.	Obtain from WCPCA members, an e-mail distribution list of appropriate agency personnel for use in disseminating information outside of WCPCA meetings.	Kristine Klenz, ME Operations Supervisor	By end of 2 nd Quarter 2023.
Identify content for information to be shared via e-mail distribution list	Review policies, substance alert bulletins and recent cases for information that would be relevant to law enforcement partners.	ME Office Leadership Team	By end of 3 rd Quarter 2023.
Survey law enforcement partners to gauge usefulness of content and frequency.	Create a survey to send out to law enforcement agency personnel.	Kristine Klenz, ME Operations Supervisor; Nicole Powell, Dept. Executive Assistant	By end of 4 th Quarter 2024.
	Send out survey to law enforcement partners and compile data.	Kristine Klenz, ME Operations Supervisor; Nicole Powell Dept. Executive Assistant	By end of 2 nd Quarter 2025.

County Pillar: Health & Safety

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Objective 2:

To aid the Opioid Fatality Review Team's efforts to collect and analyze data, beginning March 2023, the MEO will collaborate with Waukesha County IT, Health & Human Services, and their designated social worker in developing a data sharing system, sharing appropriate information, and forming community connections on drug-related deaths; projecting the processes to be fully implemented by January 2024.

Owner:

MEO leadership team

Performance Measure:

Implementation completed by January 2024

Strategy	Strategy Details	Owner	Timeframe
Develop a secure data sharing system that provides designated HHS personnel access to historic drug-related cases.	Identify drug-related death cases from 2018 – 2021 and work with IT to develop a process for permitted data access to that specific case file information.	MEO Leadership Team MEO IT Coordinator IT MED App team	By end of May 2023
Develop a secure data sharing system that provides designated HHS personnel access to preliminary information on suspected drug-related deaths on or after January 2022 as well as completed cases.	Create criteria for identifying suspected drug-related cases, preliminary information to be shared and mechanism for permitted access to basic information and later file view.	MEO Leadership Team MEO IT Coordinator IT MED App Team	By end of June 2023
Develop a process for community connections (next of kin interviews) to be performed by HHS	Work with HHS designated personnel to create a process and timeline for connecting with families for initial grief support outreach and later OFRT interviews.	MEO Leadership Team HHS Leadership Team	End of January 2024

Learn More:

- <https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/opioids/dashboards.htm>
- <https://www.waukeshacounty.gov/news/fentanyl-declaration/>

County Pillar: Finance

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Objective 3:

Improve the efficiency, consistency, and budget impact of final disposition arrangements in cases where the decedent is indigent or abandoned, by developing a structured process through the collaboration with other applicable county departments (Corporation Counsel, DOA) and community partners (funeral homes & cemeteries). An applicable process with established benchmarks will be developed by 12/31/2024.

Owner:

MEO Leadership team; Nicole Powell, Departmental Executive Assistant

Performance Measure:

Have a structured plan developed to manage final disposition for indigent and unclaimed decedents.

Strategy	Strategy Details	Owner	Timeframe
Collaborate with Corporation Counsel and DOA-Finance	Collaborate with Corporation Counsel and DOA-Finance to develop guidelines for management of final disposition	Nicole Powell, Departmental Executive Assistant and MEO Leadership team	By end of Sept. 2023
Identify and collaborate with community partners	Enlist assistance from other agencies with vested interest who have resources available to provide	Nicole Powell, Departmental Executive Assistant and MEO Leadership team	By end of Apr. 2024
Develop standardized process and communicate to all department staff	Develop formal stepwise procedure to manage the variable pathways that occur in these cases.	Nicole Powell, Departmental Executive Assistant and MEO Leadership team	By 12/31/2024

County Pillar: Quality

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Objective 4:

To increase the accuracy and relevancy of existing policies and procedures and identify gaps, the MEO will develop a structured review, update, and notification process with the goal of implementation by 2/1/2025. Upon implementation of process, 25% of materials will be reviewed annually.

Owner:

All MEO staff

Performance Measure:

Increased clarity and ease of use should result in improved efficiency as measured by feedback during department employee focus group.

Strategy	Strategy Details	Owner	Timeframe
Establish review team	Identify staff in all areas of the office to participate in review team and determine meeting schedule	All MEO staff	By end of Dec 2023
Meet and determine plan	Team meets to develop process for review and update of existing policies & procedures as well as determine what new procedures are needed, keeping in mind national standards and guidelines	All MEO staff	By end of Mar. 2024
Rollout to staff	Communicate to staff the new plan and method by which the updated and new policies will be shared.	All MEO staff	End of Jan. 2025

County Pillar: Customer Service

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Objective 5:

By end of 3rd quarter 2025, the MEO will develop and distribute a new customer satisfaction survey model for funeral home customers, to gather more specific responses, reduce neutral feedback, and with the goal of increasing volume of responses by 50% from 2022 survey.

Owner:

Kristine Klenz, Operations Supervisor and Nicole Powell, Departmental Executive Assistant

Performance Measure:

Modify and distribute survey, receive 50% more responses, and observe reduction in neutral responses.

Strategy	Strategy Details	Owner	Timeframe
Review prior survey results	Determine area(s) with highest opportunity for improvement	Kristine Klenz, ME Operations Supervisor; Nicole Powell Dept. Executive Assistant	By end of 2023
Conduct outreach to funeral homes	Reach out to a few large funeral homes to gain better understanding of division of duties.	Nicole Powell, Dept. Executive Assistant	By end of 2 nd quarter 2024
Modify current survey layout	Take information obtained from funeral home conversations and modify survey	Kristine Klenz, ME Operations Supervisor; Nicole Powell Dept. Executive Assistant	By end of 1 st quarter 2025
Rollout new survey	Distribute new survey to funeral home customers	Nicole Powell, Dept. Executive Assistant	By end of 2 nd quarter 2025

County Pillar: Team

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Objective 6:

To cultivate employees’ professional development and their preparation for potential career advancement, a program will be designed which individuals can participate in to gain and/or enhance the skills necessary to succeed in a promoted job role or opportunity. ME Office leadership will identify and prioritize appropriate positions; develop a guide and communicate the plan to departmental staff by the end of June 2024.

Owner:

MEO Leadership Team

Performance Measure:

By June 30 2024, guidance and pathways for specific roles will be created to prepare employees who seek internal promotion and/or plan for position succession.

Strategy	Strategy Details	Owner	Timeframe
Identify which departmental job classes/positions lend themselves to promotion within the office	Review roles within the department and determine which ones best segue to the next, higher job class.	MEO Leadership Team	December 31, 2023.
Create programs for professional development	With the assistance of Human Resources, determine which courses, training, and tools would best prepare employees desiring to advance in the position(s) identified as well as participation in professional organizations.	MEO Leadership Team	March 31, 2024
Share Professional Development plans with MEO Staff	Roll out the goals of the program(s) and plans with MEO staff.	MEO Leadership Team	June 30, 2024

County Pillar: Team

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Objective 7:

By May 31, 2023, the WCMEO leadership team will obtain feedback from all department employees regarding renovation and workstation improvement goals to incorporate into the new office design; employees will be surveyed after completion of the project to determine if the originally identified goals have been met and to gauge satisfaction.

Owner:

MEO leadership team

Performance Measure:

Staff responds with at least 4.65 satisfaction rating, indicating renovation goals were met.

Strategy	Strategy Details	Owner	Timeframe
Develop and disseminate questionnaire to staff	Create survey, distribute to staff and illicit responses from each employee	MEO leadership team	Collect responses by 5/31/2023
Review feedback and create aggregate list	Carefully review employee feedback and develop list of desired goals to share with design team consultants	MEO leadership team	Complete list of department goals by 7/1/2023
Provide updates to staff during design and construction	Provide updates to staff when project milestones are reached	Kristine Klenz, Operations Supervisor and Nicole Powell, Departmental Executive Assistant	Ongoing throughout project
Survey staff when construction is complete	Review initial goals, develop follow-up questionnaire, and distribute to staff	Kristine Klenz, Operations Supervisor and Nicole Powell, Departmental Executive Assistant	Disseminate to staff 90 days after project closed

County Pillar: Team

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Objective 8:

To promote employee engagement, the MEO will utilize departmental focus group discussions to identify opportunities for innovation, team building, and enhancing the department’s mission and vision, with the goal of having a total of 3 completed sessions and an employee feedback assessment by the end of 3rd Quarter of 2025.

Owner:

All MEO staff

Performance Measure:

Participating employees will be surveyed about the focus group experience(s) & process, with the goal of achieving a 4.65 satisfaction rating.

Strategy	Strategy Details	Owner	Timeframe
Identify and select processes or objectives that will benefit from Focus Group discussions	Review potential topics based on ideas captured during Employee Focus Group held in Fall 2022.	MEO Leadership Team and staff	End of 3rd Quarter 2023
Conduct Departmental Focus Group Discussion(s)	Notify employees of specified topic(s), invite participation in Focus Group, create questions, collect ideas through group session, and determine next steps.	MEO Leadership Team and Staff	First Group Session completed by End of 4th Quarter 2023
Conduct Follow-up Session(s) to Focus Group if needed	Focus Group will reconvene should an action(s) be identified that merits further planning	MEO Leadership Team and Staff	End of 1 st Quarter 2024
Conduct two additional Focus Groups (topics differing from the first)	Notify employees of specified topic(s), invite participation in Focus Group, create questions, collect ideas through group session, and determine next steps.	MEO Leadership Team and Staff	Two subsequent Focus Groups completed by End of 1 st Quarter 2025
Survey participating employees to gauge usefulness of process and overall experience	Create a survey for ME Office staff who participated in Focus Group(s).	Kristine Klenz, ME Operations Spv. Nicole Powell, Departmental Executive Assistant	End of 2 nd Quarter 2025
	Send out survey to participating ME Office employees and compile data.	Kristine Klenz, ME Operations Spv. Nicole Powell, Departmental Executive Assistant	End of 3 rd Quarter 2025

Appendix A: Medical Examiner’s Office Environmental Scan (completed 11/1/2022)

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Death Investigations

The WCMEO investigates deaths as guided by mandates referenced in §979.01. Investigations are conducted under the direction of our Medical Examiner and performed by our Deputy Medical Examiner staff members.

Trends

In the past three years our office has seen a significant rise in the number of death investigations required by our specialized staff. We have identified a few major causes affecting these numbers. There is an overall increase in the population of Waukesha County and the percentage of the population who are age 65 and older is also growing. Consequently, we have seen a significant rise in scene (non-healthcare setting) deaths.

Additionally, deaths arising because of the opioid epidemic have greatly increased. The rise of opioid and other drug related deaths not only affect the total number of cases but also the level of investigation required.

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 YE estimate
Total Cases Investigated	1,404	1,452	1,440	1,695	1,654	1628
Scene Investigations	432	490	427	364	378	349
Phone Pronouncements (home deaths)	--	--	--	186	231	200
Total Scene Cases	432	490	427	550	609	549
Phone Cases	972	962	1,013	1,145	1,045	1079
Autopsies	249	251	216	282	311	300
External Examinations	203	205	206	246	230	255
Total Examinations	452	456	422	528	541	555
Body Transports (Waukesha Cases)	497	492	464	565	584	613
Death Certificates Signed	455	462	427	543	549	551
Total Cremations	2,054	2,230	2,266	2,625	2,706	2611

Note: Phone pronouncement cases are scenes with no in-person response.

A related but separate element of death investigation is cremation permitting (also cited in §979.01). The issuing of cremation permits is a multistep process that requires both our deputy medical examiner staff and administrative staff to coordinate with our funeral home partners. Funeral homes are not only located in Waukesha County – several are also in Milwaukee and other neighboring counties in southeastern Wisconsin. In the past three years we have experienced a surge in the number of cremation permits issued (32% increase over the past 4 years).

Customer Service

Two of our essential external customers are law enforcement and funeral home personnel. We felt it important to reach out to both populations prior to developing our next strategic plan.

Many of the death investigations we perform are in collaboration with our law enforcement partners who service all 37 municipalities in Waukesha County. Our office conducted a focus group with law enforcement representatives, requesting their feedback.

They identified areas like communication and information sharing as essential elements necessary for continued success and improvement/growth upon moving forward; not only to facilitate effective investigations but also to assist with combating major community concerns such as the opioid epidemic.

In identifying our funeral home partners as a key customer, we requested they participate in a survey. They too have been impacted by the rise in cremations and overall deaths. As we look to the future, we wanted to gain a better understanding of the needs and expectations of the funeral homes we serve every day. Our goal is to gauge how well our customer service ranks in five major categories. In addition to the ratings, the funeral homes also provided us with specific process related feedback for future consideration.

Category	Overall Score
Communication	4.5
Decedents	4.4
Death Certificates	4.6
Cremations	4.5
Home Death Investigations	4.3

Workforce

Another important step we took during the environmental scanning process was to conduct focus group sessions with our staff. Their ideas and suggestions highlighted themes such as teamwork & collaboration, communication, and efficiency as areas of focus for our next strategic plan. Employee feedback also correlated with topics and themes expressed by the external partners we queried.

In the last few years there have been changes in the workforce which have affected the prevalence of specialized personnel available to perform the important work of our office. Recruitment for the roles of death investigator and forensic pathologist is currently challenging. This has heightened our awareness of the importance of strong employee compensation, engagement, enrichment, and well-being in attracting and retaining quality employees.

Economic

Beginning in 2015, due to legislation revolving around the Wisconsin Funeral and Cemetery Aid Program (WFCAP), Coroner and Medical Examiner offices are limited to revenue increases no higher than the prior year consumer price index (CPI) rate. Additionally, we are required to write off fees for services rendered to decedents who qualify for the WFCAP program. These mandates have and continue to impact our revenue capabilities.

In the past few years our office has also seen a rise in the number of Indigent or unclaimed decedents. These situations require our office to bear the responsibility of arranging and funding final arrangements to ensure these decedents are respectfully laid to rest.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 YE estimate
ME funded final disposition	0	3	0	2	3	7

Technology

We continue to collaborate with Waukesha County IT to develop ways to manage our increased caseload as efficiently as possible. This year we are completing phase one of development on our web-based case management system. In 2023 we plan on moving into phase two. We continue to investigate ways of implementing technology to increase process efficiencies. Our focus group with law enforcement partners also identified opportunities for innovation in information sharing.

Appendix B: Countywide Environmental Scan

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Environmental Scan Overview

COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

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, approximately 408,756 people resided in Waukesha County and as of Wisconsin Department of Transportation's 2022 Report, the population is estimated to be over 410,000 residents. The County is made up of 37 municipalities, including 11 towns, 19 villages, and seven cities. There are opportunities to coordinate with these municipalities to work toward greater governmental efficiencies. Cooperation and coordination with these municipalities can reduce duplicative services that come at a cost to taxpayers. 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 population is projected to increase to 427,721 by 2025 and to 442,476 by 2030. This equates to a 5.6% increase in population between 2020 and 2025 and a 3.2% increase in population between 2025 and 2030.
- The population is projected to grow by 91,500 persons between 2010 & 2050 (24% increase).
- Projections show that through 2050, Waukesha County will continue to be the third largest county in population in Wisconsin.
- Net migration will continue to be the primary source of the 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.
- Over the past 60 years, Waukesha County's share of the regional population has increased from 7% to 19.3%, whereas Milwaukee County's share of the regional population has decreased from 70% to 47%.
- Waukesha County's share of the regional population is projected to increase from 19.3% (measured in 2010) to 20.4% by 2050, whereas Milwaukee County's share of the regional population is projected to decrease from 47% to 41.5%.
- The median age in Waukesha County is approximately 44.9 years old. The median age has been increasing since 1970 when it was 25.4 years old.
- People 65 yrs. and older made up approximately 14.3% of the population in 2010 and 17% in 2015, 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.

Community Analysis: Health and Public Safety

COVID-19 Recovery

Waukesha County engaged in the evaluation of the American Rescue Plan Act – Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (ARPA-SLFRF) program's final rules and selection of projects for which this funding can be used. In addition to using this funding for continued costs related to the pandemic response, the County established teams to analyze the needs of the County against the objectives of the grant while ensuring that program outcomes are achieved in an effective, efficient, and equitable manner.

Projects were submitted by established teams and were reviewed against the objectives of the County including:

- Addressing short-term pandemic related operational impact
- Investing in public health infrastructure (e.g., mental health, substance abuse, community violence interventions)
- Advancing economic recovery and growth
- Investing in productivity, generating return on investment
- Enhancing services
- Leveraging partnerships and collaborations, both internally and with other governments
- Meeting federal timeline restrictions (funding through 2026)
- Mitigating program risks/long-term levy impacts
- Managing total funding availability

Limiting administrative complexity Prior to the release of the final rule, projects were approved based on the interim allowed use guidance. This included continued pandemic response, addressing the impact of the pandemic on the Courts system, investing in Health and Human Services (HHS) technology needs, and administrative costs to manage this grant. After the final rule was released, the projects submitted were reviewed against allowed uses and proposed to the workgroup teams for feedback. Presentations were given on the use of ARPA funding to management teams, the County Executive, the Executive's Cabinet, department heads and the full County Board. The first projects, after the release of the final rule, were approved starting in May of 2022, and include projects for law enforcement capacity, mental health services, technology enhancements, and water and sewer infrastructure. To effectively continue to respond to the pandemic and assist in local post-pandemic recovery, Waukesha County has established ARPA Management Response Teams with representatives from countywide functional areas.

Community Health Improvement Plan & Process (CHIPP)

The task of improving the health of Waukesha County is not one that can be done alone but requires the collaboration of the community to make a collective impact. Under the leadership of the Waukesha County Department of Health and Human Services and the Public Health Division, a cross-sector Steering Committee composed of key community leaders formed to participate in a Community Health Improvement Plan & Process (CHIPP), focused on improving community health.

The CHIPP Steering Committee created the following vision that became the guiding framework for community health improvement. The vision for a healthy Waukesha County is strong families, connected communities, healthy environments, and accessible services that promote overall safety, well-being, and quality of life.

After conducting several in depth assessments over the course of a 9-month period, the Steering Committee identified three strategic priorities to improve community health in Waukesha County: Opiates, Mental Health, Nutrition & Physical Activity. Action teams were formed around these three strategic health priorities.

The CHIPP engaged a cross-sector of community partners from 2017-2021 and created action plans focused on these critical strategic health issue areas. These community partners included nonprofit, healthcare, education, law enforcement, business, government, and other relevant stakeholders. The CHIPP Steering Committee provided guidance and oversight throughout the entire time frame. The work of the CHIPP supports Waukesha County's mission which is to promote the health, safety, and quality of life of citizens while fostering an economically vibrant community. Improving the health and well-being of Waukesha County citizens correlates directly with strengthening economic opportunities for Waukesha County residents.

Opiate Action Team: As a result of wide-ranging efforts to gather local data to inform the CHIPP process, the citizens of Waukesha County identified that the opioid epidemic was their number one concern relative to community health. The Heroin Task Force (HTF) of Waukesha County began their work in 2014 and integrated their efforts with the CHIPP in 2017.

Today, the HTF of Waukesha County continues to spearhead the continued work of this action team. The HTF has recently been realigned to be more effective and responsive to new opiate trends. Over 175 community partners have re-engaged with the newly formed HTF during 2021. Of those partners, over 60 have committed to serving on action teams. These action teams will be using a data driven collective impact approach to identify specific action to be taken in the areas of Prevention, Harm Reduction, Treatment & Recovery, and Data and Reporting.

Mental Health Action Team: Prior to the pandemic, nearly one in five Americans suffered from mental illness, according to NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness). Millions of people are affected by mental illness each year, and the pandemic has only exacerbated this critical health issue. Mental health was ranked as the number two health concern in Waukesha County during the CHIPP assessment process. Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the United States and has risen steadily since the 2000's. The Mental Health action team saw the rising suicide rates in Waukesha County and focused their efforts on suicide prevention. This team's overarching focus was to successfully launch the Waukesha County Suicide Prevention Initiative (WCSPi) which is dedicated to reducing the number of deaths by suicide in Waukesha County by scaling up evidence-based mental health practices in prevention, stigma reduction, and access to treatment.

Nutrition & Physical Activity Action Team: Because of the overarching impact of nutrition and physical activity on literally every aspect of overall health for every age group, this concern was chosen as the third health priority during the CHIPP assessment. The goal of this team was to improve physical activity and nutrition for Waukesha County residents. Their approach was to reduce barriers to residents who couldn't access healthy food or physical activity options. This Action team divided their work into two teams and offered incredible opportunities to improve personal well-being in both areas of their focus: Nutrition and Physical Activity.

Opioid Epidemic

In Waukesha County, drug-related deaths became the leading non-natural cause of death for adults ages 18-45 in 2020 and 2021, driven by a rise in fentanyl poisoning. Waukesha County saw a record ninety-five drug-related deaths in 2020. In 2021, at least ninety-two people died from drug-related causes, with ten cases still being pending investigation as of the end of Q3 2022.

From May 2017 to July 23, 2022, more than 305 documented lives have been saved, at least 303 used the overdose reversal drug Naloxone/Narcan, because of the Waukesha County HHS Naloxone Project.

From May 2017 to June 2022, people who are using, their family members and friends, First Responders, and the public have been helped through: 521 Naloxone administration training sessions to 4,918 individuals, which includes 1,048 law enforcement personnel. 7,170 Naloxone kits have been distributed free of charge.

Waukesha County leaders announced new efforts to prevent substance use in the community through allocation of approximately \$200,000 to expand prevention efforts in schools and the community.

On August 1, 2022, Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow declared fentanyl to be a community health crisis in Waukesha County. Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid up to 100 times more powerful than morphine, is fueling overdose deaths across the US and Wisconsin.

The Declaration provides directives to do the following:

- Distribute opioid settlement money, in partnership with the County Board; to support Narcan training, the District Attorney's pre-trial diversion programming, and other related purposes.
- Implement the Overdose Fatality Review (OFR) initiatives, in partnership with public and private entities and surrounding counties to share data and best practices.
- Launch a local public information initiative utilizing the US Drug Enforcement Agency's 'One Pill Can Kill' campaign.
- Create a set of measurable objectives to track the county's efforts in the fight against fentanyl that will be evaluated on a quarterly basis.

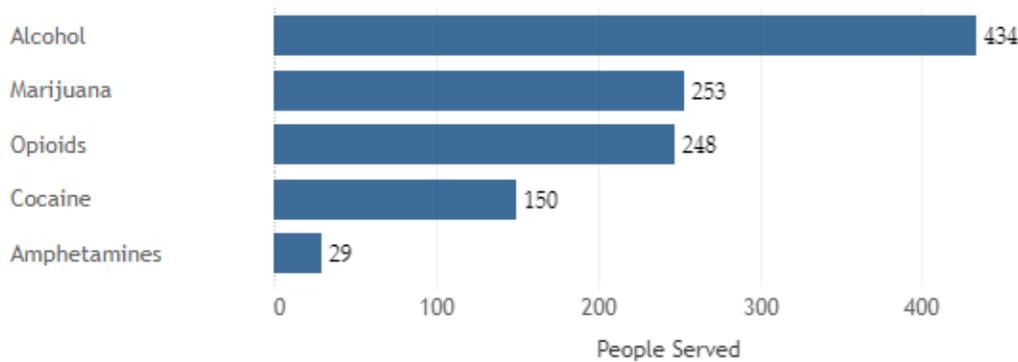
Earlier in Summer 2022, the Waukesha County Sheriff's Department's announced that its Metro Drug Unit will transition into a unit of the federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) later this year. As a federal task force, the Metro Drug Unit will have an enhanced ability to continue the reduction of available controlled substances within Waukesha County. They will also be able to pursue investigations that lead to source suppliers outside of Waukesha County. Waukesha County is also working to expand a program that embeds a counselor into the Sheriff's Department to expedite care for mental health crises.

In 2022, HHS added an additional full-time peer support specialist to its Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Use Services Clinic Staff. The Waukesha County Heroin Task Force has relaunched its collaborative work to reduce the impact of the opioid epidemic in the County. Action Teams of key community stakeholders work collaboratively in three key areas: Prevention, Harm Reduction, and Treatment & Recovery to achieve results within a calendar year.

HHS maintains a strong relationship with the AODA Volunteers of Waukesha County, who provide valuable outreach, education, and support services to individuals in recovery, or who are considering abstinence from drugs or alcohol. The Women’s Health and Recovery Project (WHARP), coordinated by Waukesha County HHS, assists women with substance use disorders, and their children, who have complex needs with issues such as housing, employment, mental health, physical health, transportation, and childcare.

Waukesha County participates in multiple statewide initiatives, such as Drug Treatment Court, National Prescription Drug Takeback Day, and the Wisconsin Injection Drug Use Prevention Project

Top 5 Most Common Substances in 2020



Total Cases Referred to DA’s Office

	2019	2020	2021
Cases	8,801	9,768	10,115

In comparing 2019 (pre-pandemic) to 2021, there was approximately a 15% increase in arrests and referrals to the DA’s Office for charging decisions.

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.

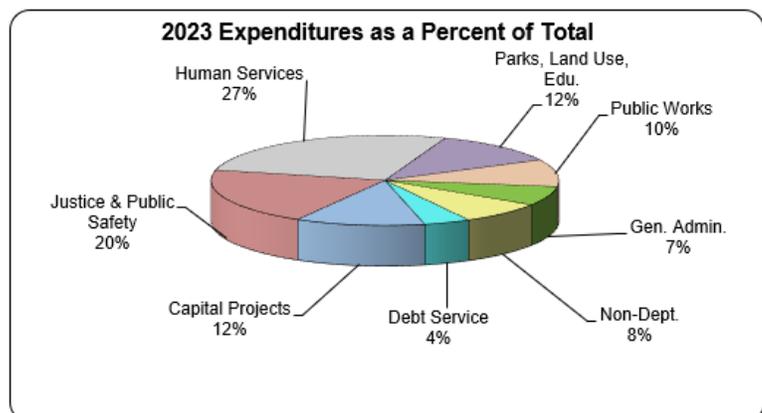
The available workforce population, which is younger and more racially diverse than before, requires the same housing considerations as the baby boomers. Locating a variety of housing near job centers helps attract skilled workers to the county and provides a customer base for nearby goods and services, 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

- There are approximately 160,600 households in Waukesha County. The number is expected to increase about 3% every 5 years. The average persons per household is approximately 3.
- The county is relatively affluent with a median household income of \$92,359, which is above both the state (\$64,901) and national (\$67,340) median, and the highest among all counties in Wisconsin. Similarly, per capita income in Waukesha County is estimated at \$75,958, which is higher than the state (\$55,593) and the nation (\$59,147), and the second highest among all counties in Wisconsin (behind Ozaukee County at \$87,395). The latest data available is from 2020.
- 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. Between 2016 and 2021, property value growth increased about 5% on average annually, with the January 1, 2022, estimate growing 13%. The increase is mostly due to higher value inflation and, to a lesser degree, new development. A realistic assumption for future growth would be about 4% but could be lower or negative if there’s an economic downturn.
- The median home sale price in 2022 was \$312,000, up 5.8% from 2021.
- 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, averaging over \$900 million in net new construction the last seven years, with its highest year ever in 2021 with nearly \$1.2 billion. However, the county’s tax base is comparatively large (\$66.7 billion for 2023 budget purposes, and \$75.4 billion for 2024 budget purposes), so that this growth results in a relatively small net new construction growth factor, averaging 1.64% the last seven years. 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 increase about 2%-3% and can fluctuate from year-to-year due to state and federal funding awards. Increases for the 2022 adopted and 2023 proposed are higher at about 5% and 7%, respectively, due to additional federal pandemic relief funding.

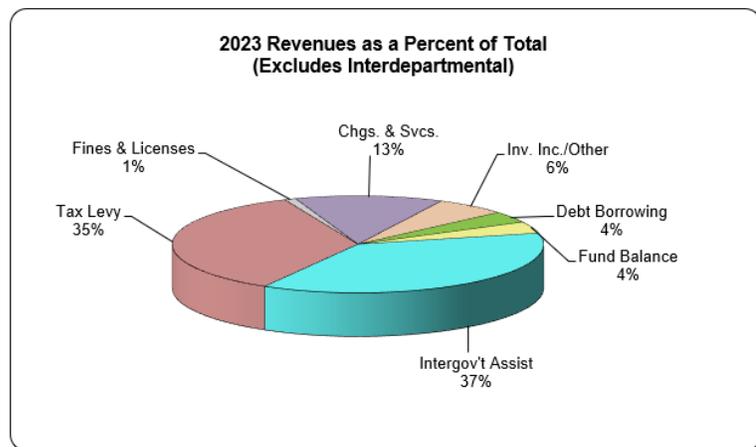


The county provides many labor-intensive services, and personnel costs consistently make up about half of total operating budget. The two largest functional areas, Justice & Public Safety and Health & Human Services, consistently comprise about 55%-56% of the operating budget (excluding capital and debt). 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.

Due to relatively stable price levels, the cost to continue has been assumed to be about 3% in recent years. Since 2021, there has been an increase in price levels nationwide, with year-over-year increases in the Consumer Price Index exceeding 8% for most of 2022. Higher price levels are due to increased consumer demand following the easing of pandemic restrictions, supply chain disruptions, higher fuel prices, and a competitive labor market. 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 is between \$3 million and \$5 million, but was forecast at above \$7 million for 2023 due to higher price levels.

Waukesha County Budget: Revenues

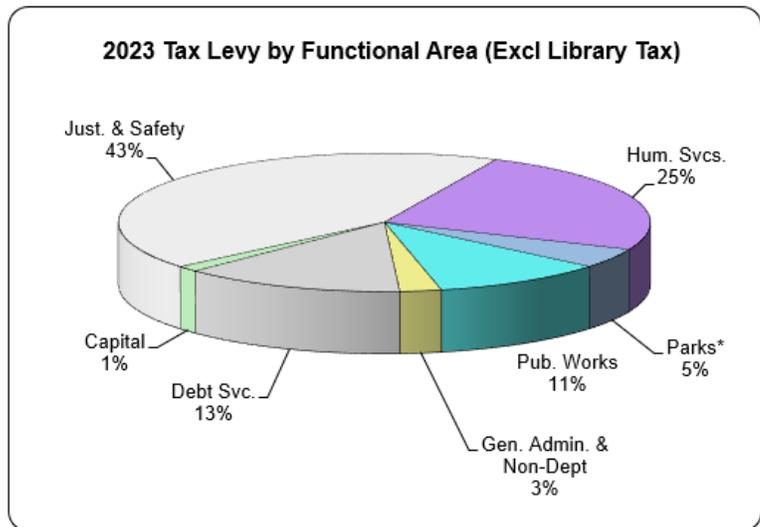
The share of total budgeted revenues coming from the property tax has declined from 42% in the 2018 budget to 39% in the 2022 budget, mostly due to state-mandated levy limits and budgeting \$8 million of additional temporary federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds (excluding ARPA funds, levy would be 40% of revenues). The tax levy share decreased more significantly to 35% in the 2023 proposed budget; though, that is largely due to budgeting \$28.9



million of ARPA funding (excluding ARPA, would be 39%). 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 (higher in 2023 due to ARPA funding); 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 make up about 13% in the 2023 proposed budget.

County Tax Levy

The share of tax levy going to Justice and Public Safety has increased from 41% in the 2014 budget to 43% in the 2023 proposed budget, due in part to it being a priority area for the county and the limited ability for these operations to generate other revenues. Together with Health & Human Services, over 2/3 of tax levy goes to these two functional areas. State imposed tax levy limits 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:

From 2023 to 2026 the existing Waukesha County Courthouse Building will 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 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 its employees will be impacted by temporary office movements and consider potential changes or modifications to service delivery to customers who visit the two buildings.

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.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 (Jan. through Sept.)
Accessibility	4.64	4.67	4.55	4.49	4.49
Attitude	4.67	4.8	4.61	4.62	4.55
Accuracy	4.63	4.72	4.54	4.48	4.51
Communication	4.61	4.72	4.53	4.5	4.51
Timeliness	4.62	4.71	4.54	4.53	4.49
Overall	4.63	4.73	4.55	4.52	4.51

Employee Survey

Waukesha County received 843 complete responses to its 2021 Employee Engagement Survey, which is one of highest response rates since the survey began in this format 2014.

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 2021 can be found [here](#).

- 89%** I understand that I can be recognized for extra effort while demonstrating the County’s Standards of Service Excellence
- 81%** Information and knowledge is shared openly within my department
- 91%** During my annual performance evaluation with my direct supervisor, I discussed training needs and opportunities for professional development
- 96%** 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:

<u>2014</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>Difference</u>
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I understand how my work and assigned goals directly contribute to the overall success of the County in meeting its key strategic priorities		
87%	96%	+9%

Information and knowledge is shared openly within my department		
64%	81%	+17%

During my annual performance evaluation with my direct supervisor, I discussed training needs and opportunities for professional development.		
73%	91%	+18%

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

61% 89% +28%

I met with my direct supervisor or manager for a 1-on-1 rounding session*

83% 86% +3%

Comparing the 2014 results with the 2021 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. The Countywide dashboard data can be found [here](#).

County HR Scan Overview

County Employment Demographics - Years of Service

The charts below outline distribution of employees by years of county service. During the five-year period between 2018 and 2022 the percentage of employees with five or less years of county experience has grown from 38% to 45%. This trend is even more pronounced in comparison to 2012 where county work experience was more evenly distributed and the largest percentage of the workforce having twenty or more years of experience at Waukesha County.

Department	Years of Service					County Total
	<5	5-9	10-14	15-20	>20	
Administration	37%	15%	12%	19%	16%	100%
Circuit Court Services	52%	13%	6%	13%	16%	100%
Corporation Counsel	45%	18%	13%	13%	13%	100%
Emergency Preparedness	39%	22%	14%	20%	6%	100%
Public Works	49%	13%	8%	8%	22%	100%
District Attorney	43%	7%	11%	14%	25%	100%
Health and Human Services	48%	19%	11%	11%	11%	100%
Parks and Land Use	39%	18%	9%	8%	26%	100%
Sheriffs Department	45%	15%	11%	16%	13%	100%
Multi Departments	33%	26%	11%	11%	19%	100%
County Total	45%	17%	11%	13%	15%	100%

Department	Years of Service					County Total
	<5	5-9	10-14	15-20	>20	
Administration	24%	11%	15%	24%	26%	100%
Circuit Court Services	43%	10%	12%	15%	21%	100%
Corporation Counsel	36%	23%	15%	13%	13%	100%
Emergency Preparedness	41%	17%	29%	6%	8%	100%
Public Works	35%	8%	10%	19%	29%	100%
District Attorney	24%	6%	9%	32%	29%	100%
Health and Human Services	45%	16%	14%	12%	13%	100%
Parks and Land Use	34%	11%	8%	26%	21%	100%
Sheriffs Department	35%	15%	19%	15%	16%	100%
Multi Departments	42%	23%	11%	13%	12%	100%
County Total	38%	14%	15%	15%	17%	100%

Department	Years of Service					County Total
	<5	5-9	10-14	15-20	>20	
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%

During the past decade, the County emphasized succession planning recognizing that many employees would be reaching retirement age. 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 a 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 coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic. The chart below presents ten years of data, and shows an uptick in overall turnover, regrettable turnover, and total resignations during 2021 and 2022.

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 Aug
FTE--Budgeted Positions	1,366	1,368	1,363	1,354	1,354	1,373	1,381	1,390	1,390	1,404
FTE--Total Turnover	102	123	157	163	133	175	159	156	238	206
% Turnover	7.5%	9.0%	11.5%	12.0%	9.8%	12.7%	11.5%	11.2%	17.1%	14.7%
Regrettable Turnover*						68	66	68	106	135
% Regrettable Turnover						5.0%	4.8%	4.9%	7.6%	9.6%
Separation Type										
Resignation	42	45	74	92	86	101	108	87	146	168
Retirement.	49	67	58	58	38	65	41	52	68	31
Other	11	11	25	13	9	9	10	17	24	8
Total	102	123	157	163	133	175	159	156	238	206

*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

SOURCES

SEWRPC Vision 2050 (Updated): Land Use and Transportation Data

<https://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPCFiles/Vision2050/2020UpdateReportFinal.PDF>

SEWRPC "The Economy of Southeastern Wisconsin":

<https://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPCFiles/Publications/TechRep/tr-010-5th-ed-economy-se-wisc.pdf>

Waukesha County Business Alliance Annual Business Survey Summary:

www.waukesha.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Waukesha-County-Business-Survey-Executive-Summary.pdf

Waukesha County Executive Budget 2023 Demographic Information:

<https://www.waukeshacounty.gov/globalassets/administration/budget/2023-executive-budget/introduction/6-waukesha-county-community-profile.pdf>

United States Census: Waukesha County 2020 Quick Facts

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/waukeshacountywisconsin>

Waukesha County Demographics and Housing Data:

<https://www.point2homes.com/US/Neighborhood/WI/Waukesha-County-Demographics.html>

Wisconsin Counties Association County Fact Book 2022:

<https://www.forward-analytics.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2022-County-Fact-Book-1.pdf>

Waukesha County Community Health Improvement Plan & Process (CHIPP) 2017-2021 Summary

Document. https://www.waukeshacounty.gov/globalassets/health--human-services/public-health/chipp/chipp-summary-report_11-2021.pdf