

EXECUTIVE BUDGET MESSAGE



Dear Brown County Residents,

2021 was a challenging year for all of us due to the multiple levels of uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these trials and tribulations, Brown County was able to provide high levels of service, complete major projects, and maintain a strong fiscal house thanks to dedicated employees and leadership focused on staying the course.

Coupled with the pandemic came the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, featuring a trillion dollars of federal funds for all levels of government. After completing four public listening sessions, Brown County is proposing responsible investments using these funds as detailed in the Non-Divisional Budgets section of this book.

Brown County continues down the path of lowering the burden on property taxpayers as the County's credit card balance keeps dropping. This budget demonstrates the benefits of the Debt Reduction, Infrastructure, and Property Tax Relief Plan passed by the Brown County Board in 2017.

Our financial position heading into 2022 is resolute, with an increase in net new construction of 1.9% leading to an equalized value of \$26.708 billion dollars. Since my first budget in 2012, Brown County's equalized value has grown by more than \$8.5 billion dollars.

The increase in net new construction means the county was able to capture approximately \$1.5 million in new levy capacity, which was offset the most by reductions in debt service payments, leaving us roughly \$1,060,000 in new levy. Brown County is also able to provide property taxpayers a reduction of 26 cents per thousand to bring their equalized tax rate from \$3.98 to \$3.72. This is the lowest tax rate since 1984. On a home valued at \$200,000 you should receive \$52 back in your pocket.

We continue to manage our total outstanding debt. Since 2017, the Debt Reduction, Infrastructure, and Property Tax Relief Plan has helped the County pay off more than \$74 million in debt, while saving taxpayers millions of dollars in interest payments and providing financial well-being to future generations. The 2022 budget calls for another \$10 million payment to the County credit card, further reducing our historically low level of debt to \$58 million.

Brown County will also proceed in 2022 with major initiatives designed to keep our community a great place to live, work, and play.

Infrastructure Investments:

Highway 29/CTH W Interchange: Following a groundbreaking ceremony held in April 2021, work on the interchange is scheduled to be completed in October 2022. Brown County and its community partners were able to leverage a nearly \$20 million federal BUILD grant to address safety concerns for the residents in this area while providing opportunities for economic development.

Reforestation Campground: Our Parks Department will wrap up construction on a campground at the Brown County Reforestation Camp in Spring of 2022. With nearly 60 sites of varying amenities, the campground will host a variety of tents and RV's. Campers will be able to enjoy the NEW Zoo and Adventure Park along with nearly 1,500 acres of forested trails.

County Highway/Bridge Improvements: Brown County Public Works will focus on completing over \$10 million worth of work to provide safe travels for drivers across our network of County highways and bridges. This includes work performed in the city of De Pere, villages of Allouez, Bellevue, Hobart, Howard, Suamico, and Wrightstown, and the towns of Morrison, Pittsfield, Rockland, and Wrightstown.

Collaboration/Regionalism:

Phoenix Innovation Park: Brown County is partnering with UW-Green Bay to establish the Phoenix Innovation Park, next to the STEM Innovation Center, as a campus epicenter for established businesses, start-ups, researchers, and retail to synergize. The park will be built on three pillars: water, advanced manufacturing, and hospitality.

Land Conservation Expansion: The proposed budget puts \$10,000 towards initiatives with the goal of continuing to grow the number of cover crops and no-till acreage in Brown County, including improvement projects like wetlands and pollinator plantings. We will keep partnering with the Lower Fox Demonstration Farms Network in this pursuit of improving soil health and water quality.

Emergency Food Response Plan: Extension Brown County will set aside \$5,000 in its budget to team up with various community partners to complete an Emergency Food Response Plan. In the event of a large-scale disaster, this plan will develop the procedure for helping to equally distribute food to residents of Brown County.

Health & Public Safety:

Substance Use Detox Solution: Brown County's Community Services division will budget mental health initiative funds and grants to pursue a community-based detox service through an RFP. The current model has not been fully utilized to address the needs of individuals with substance use disorders. Their goal is to provide a residential setting where detoxification services and monitoring can take place in the community.

Housing Navigator: The proposed budget sets aside \$84,000 in grant funds in Brown County's Community Services division to create the position of a Housing Navigator. This position will provide direction for individuals experiencing housing instability and homelessness who intersect with other available county services, focusing on people experiencing mental illness. They will also provide coordination and support for existing programs and services.

Sheriff's Office Body Cameras: The Brown County Sheriff's Office is negotiating a contract to adopt an Officer Safety Program. By leveraging a contribution by the Packers, the Sheriff's Office will be able to have new body worn cameras, squad cameras, interview room cameras, and tasers. The 5-year contract also covers data storage along with activation, dictation, and redaction software.

Community:

The Year of Pals: 2022 will be the "Year of Pals." Pals is a mentoring program for children in Brown County being served within the Children, Youth, and Families division of Health and Human Services. This program serves a diverse population, and there are approximately 50 children awaiting a mentor. Our goal is to enlist 100 mentors by the end of the year to address this need in our community.

Noncustodial Parent Education: Brown County Child Support will utilize \$38,000 to provide noncustodial parents with employment and parenting services to improve court-ordered child support payment remittance as part of its 5-County Demonstration Project. The agency will partner with My Brother's Keeper in this initiative serving this demographic.

Disabled Accessible Food Truck: The ADRC of Brown County received a \$118,000 grant to purchase a food truck that will be accessible to all persons with disabilities to work on location. This will support its mission of reaching underserved populations in rural communities, persons of color, persons with disabilities and older adults who may not know about available services. It will be just the 2nd Disabled

Accessible Food Truck in the U.S. and will expand its outreach efforts by bringing their nutritional program to where people live.

Working with Troubled Youth: This proposed budget will use \$245,000 in grants to participate in a new program in partnership with Rawhide Youth Services to improve outcomes for troubled youth in our community. Youth will be connected to case managers while their family will be offered support, if needed. This Early Youth Diversion program will focus on youth who don't consistently attend school and unsupervised youth who have not returned to school despite previous intervention efforts.

These are just a handful of highlights that are throughout the 2022 budget book. I hope you take the time to look at the department initiatives and highlighted summaries that provide a financial snapshot of the coming year.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Troy Streckenbach". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Troy Streckenbach
Brown County Executive