

Sauk County 2023 Budget Guidance

Sauk County's Vision Statement

Where the County would ideally like to be, defines guiding principles, values, and the long range result of work
To develop a service model for a thriving, progressive county government, founded on organizational flexibility, inherent capability and resources.

Sauk County's Mission Statement

Defines the major reasons for the existence of the Sauk County government
To provide essential services to the residents of Sauk County in a fiscally responsible manner that promotes safety, economic development, and stewardship of natural resources while encouraging the development of cultural, social, and community values that enhance human dignity.

Budget Priorities

Broad, overarching goals to promote accomplishment of Sauk County's mission
Priority 1 - Cross Sectional Analysis of County Operations
Priority 2 - Proactive Relationships to Retain Programmatic and Financial Flexibility

Budget Policies

Overarching courses of action to prudently guide budget decisions

Budget Policy 1 - Sauk County will provide necessary services to those most in need within the limits established by the availability of resources and statutory authority. Balancing of dollar costs with social costs shall be a conscious effort. To that end, preventative programs and services are encouraged whenever possible.

Budget Policy 2 - Sauk County will protect, maintain, and enhance its financial reserves and provide the oversight necessary to assure its citizens and creditors of its financial and institutional stability. Revenue enhancements to offset operational costs and improve financial health will be pursued.

Budget Policy 3 - Sauk County property tax dollars respond to social need. The need for County services tends to be greatest when economic growth, which provides key County funding through the property tax and sales tax, is least. This inverse relationship relative to state limitations will be recognized.

Budget Policy 4 - Sauk County will consciously consider adjusting the level of services provided when changes in departmental revenue can be directly related to changes in state or federal aid and other outside funding sources. Planning for, rather than reacting to, rising expenses in a culture of innovation is strongly encouraged as programs evolve. When making adjustments, recognize that programs substantially funded by state or federal funds, leverage local tax dollars. In other words, a program that is half funded by state and/or federal money only uses half as many local dollars per dollar of gross spending, compared to a program that is not even partially funded by state and/or federal money.

Budget Policy 5 - Even if not mandated, programs and services should be encouraged if they hold down costs elsewhere. The "elsewhere" could be within a department, within the County's operations, and even with other local units of government.

Budget Policy 6 - The impact of decisions on the future should always be strongly considered - not just the impact on the next budget year or five years in the future, but generations in the future. The transition to future budgets should be smooth, honest, and within long-term plans.

Budget Policy 7 - The County's physical assets shall be properly and timely maintained. Deferring maintenance so that other programs can be provided is strongly discouraged.

Budget Policy 8 - Sauk County will encourage information sharing with other counties and other units of government to increase the effectiveness of the use of resources to meet the needs of citizens.

Budget Policy 9 - Many Sauk County services are offered annually, not because they have always been offered but because they are valuable to Sauk County citizens. Yet, even time tested valuable programs can sometimes be made more effective by changing the way they are performed.

Budget Policy 10 - Last year's budget should not be the only benchmark used to evaluate current requests. Multiple-year trends should be considered too.

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Budget Policy 11 – Decisions should be evidence-based as much as possible. Sauk County government uses a substantial amount of data for operational purposes that could also be better used for decision making.

Budget Policy 12-Although county government services aren't expected to make profits as measured by businesses, it is still important to measure the cost of each service to make the service as effective and cost effective as possible.

| Characteristics of Essential... | Characteristics of Core... | Characteristics of Desirable... |
|--|---|--|
| Parallels the overall Sauk County mission | Parallels the overall Sauk County mission | Parallels the overall Sauk County mission |
| Results (as opposed to processes) are mandated by an external body | Results (as opposed to processes) are pressing to the County Board | Results (as opposed to processes) are important to the County Board |
| If discontinued, the negative impact to the public is significant. High social cost. | If discontinued, the negative impact to the public is noticeable. Moderate social cost. | If discontinued, the negative impact to the public may be noticeable. Minimal social cost. |
| Service cannot be provided by the private sector or other partners | Service can/is provided by the private sector, but the County can provide the service more effectively or efficiently | Service can or is provided by the private sector, but the County can offer alternatives |

Approved by the Sauk County Finance Committee 6/02/2022

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