

## BUDGET USERS GUIDE

The County's budget is a financial guide for its citizens, staff and elected officials. The purpose of the document is to communicate the initiatives authorized by the County Executive and County Board. This plan accounts for the County's anticipated "income" from various revenue sources (e.g. property tax, sales tax, user fees, etc.) and how those resources are to be used during the fiscal year. The reader will also find background information on County government, the community, and other pertinent statistical data about Dane County. The budget document is organized into ten sections:

**INTRODUCTION:** This section lists the names of the County Executive, the County Board Chair and the other thirty-six County Board Supervisors. There is an organizational chart of County government showing all of the county departments, elected officials, county board committees and other county boards and commissions. The County's mission statement is also found in this section. There is a profile of Dane County government, which discusses the County's elected officials, departments, and major facilities. There is also a profile of the Dane County community, including information on population and housing, employment and economic data, and quality of life.

**BUDGET POLICIES AND STRUCTURE:** This section contains the financial and management policies of the County, a discussion of the budget activity structure, basis of budgeting and fund structure, and a description of the County's budget process.

**BUDGET OVERVIEW:** Provides a summary of program highlights and staff changes for the budget year, as well as a discussion of the County's major revenue sources. This section also provides an overview of revenues and expenditures for all funds for the budget year along with comparative data for the prior and current years. In this section, expenditures are summarized by fund, appropriation and activity, and expenditure category. Revenues are summarized by fund, appropriation and activity, and revenue source category. There is also a schedule of budgeted positions by department and a schedule of changes in budgeted positions.

**PROGRAM BUDGET NARRATIVES:** This section provides budget information for each of the program budget areas of the County. Each program budget area includes a mission and description, and summary budget information for the prior year, current year and budget year.

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The County uses the decision item concept to build the program budgets. Under this concept a Base budget is established for each program which fully funds all existing positions, including anticipated salary and benefit increases, funds operating and contractual services at current year adopted amounts, zeros out all operating capital and removes any one-time items included in the current year budget. Base budgets are also adjusted for any expenditure and revenue changes that are required based on approved commitments, such as debt service and depreciation. Departments then request increases or decreases to the Base budget through decision items. Decision items group increases and decreases in various accounts according to their root cause (e.g. inflation, average daily population changes, new activity or service, etc). Decision items are intended to help decision-makers focus attention on the programmatic impact of the request rather than the individual account details. Each program is allowed up to seven different decision items. Each decision item has a brief narrative description of the department's request, a narrative of the County Executive's action on the decision item, and a narrative of the County Board's action on the decision item. In addition, decision items can be initiated at the County Executive and County Board stages of the budget process.

**STATISTICAL AND SUPPLEMENTAL DATA:** Contains a variety of historical data and charts on operating expenditures by activity, operating revenues by source, equalized valuation, and county taxes for the past 10 years. This section includes demographic information on Dane County, including population, per capita income, school enrollment, unemployment, principal taxpayers, and largest employers, followed a computation of the County's legal debt margin. There are also supporting schedules and information related to the adopted budget, including the County Board resolution establishing the tax levy for the budget, a schedule apportioning the tax levy out across the local municipalities and a schedule of the equalized values used in the apportionment of the levy. Finally, this section also includes salary schedules for the various employee groups of the county.

**OPERATING BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS RESOLUTION:** This section is the official operating budget adopted by the County Board and approved by the County Executive. The Operating Budget Appropriations Resolution includes the tax levy computation and fund balance analysis, a tax levy history, schedule of appropriations for operations, an operations expenditure and revenue history, list of operating budget carryforwards, schedule of principal and interest payments, and a schedule of budgeted positions.

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**CAPITAL BUDGET:** The Capital Budget section includes an introduction that discusses the scope of the capital budget, the state imposed property tax levy limitation, the capital improvement planning and budgeting process, budget control policies, and financing of the capital budget. This section has a schedule of existing debt service by fund and information on the County's outstanding debt as a percent of its legal debt limit. The Planned Project Overview is a schedule of capital budget items for the prior year, current year and budget year. The Project Detail Summaries contain a brief description, justification and financing summary for each project in the Capital Budget. When available, an estimate of the project's impact on the operating budget is also included on the project detail summary.

**CAPITAL BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS RESOLUTION:** This section is the official capital budget adopted by the County Board and approved by the County Executive. The Capital Budget Appropriations Resolution includes the tax levy computation and fund balance analysis, tax levy history, appropriations for capital, capital expenditure history, capital budget carryforwards, and a principal and interest payment schedule.

**GLOSSARY:** A glossary of common budget terms and acronyms.

**INDEX:** An alphabetical directory of the budget document.