

2026 WLIP Report

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October 5, 2026
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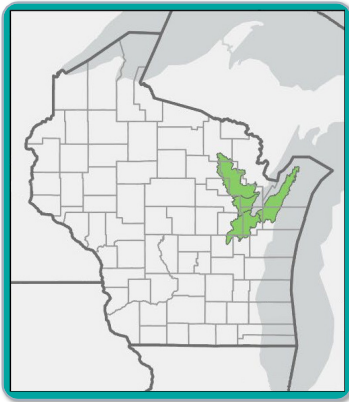
OVERVIEW

The Wisconsin Land Information Program (WLIP), administered by the Division of Intergovernmental Relations within the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA), provides public funding to Wisconsin counties for the modernization of local land records. This funding takes the form of register of deeds real estate document recording fees retained at the county level and grants awarded by DOA.

This annual report discusses the year in review for WLIP program activities and how WLIP funding was invested in county geospatial technology and infrastructure in the previous reporting year (2025).

WLIP YEAR IN REVIEW

FIRST-TIME ELEVATION-DERIVED HYDROGRAPHY AWARD



In 2026, the WLIP and the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program coordinated Wisconsin state agencies' first application for a program called the U.S. Geological Survey Hydrography Program (3DHP), a systematic remapping of the nation's surface water features. The 3DHP project will create 2,687 miles of elevation-derived hydrography data over northeast Wisconsin, covering parts of Brown, Calumet, Door, Forest, Kewaunee, Langlade, Marinette, Menominee, Oconto, Outagamie, and Shawano counties. Partner funding was provided by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

The application of new elevation-derived hydrography data is projected to support numerous current and future natural resource management and planning projects. Benefits of new high resolution and standardized hydrography data include flood risk mitigation, improved resiliency planning, nonpoint source pollution mitigation, habitat, wetland, and stream restoration, fisheries and water resource management, land protection prioritization, modeling, and watershed

planning. New 3DHP data applications are projected to provide base hydrography data for the proposed [Green Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve](#), integrate with state wetland planning and mapping, and county-level applications for land and water resource management.

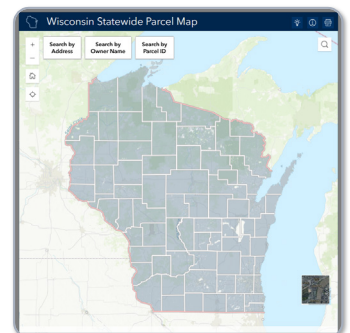
2027 GRANT APPLICATION RELEASE

The [2027 WLIP Grant Application](#) was made available in September, offering three types of WLIP grants totaling \$5.7 million. Each county is eligible to receive a \$40k Strategic Initiative grant for 2027. Strategic Initiative grants are prioritized to meet standards known as "benchmarks" for parcel dataset development, which includes the annual parcel/tax roll data submission. Every county is also eligible for a \$1k Training & Education grant, and the 51 counties that retained less than \$100k in recording fees during the previous fiscal year are eligible for Base Budget grants.

V12 STATEWIDE PARCEL MAP DATABASE PROJECT

The Version 12 Statewide Parcel Map Database Project (V12) is part of the larger Statewide Digital Parcel Map Initiative, a multi-year DOA initiative that resulted from Act 20 of 2013. The Parcel Initiative is important for improving the quality of Wisconsin's real estate information, economic development, emergency planning and response, and other citizen services. Like V1-V11, the V12 Project was a collaboration between DOA and the State Cartographer's Office.

Counties submit data according to the Searchable Format, a set of standards detailed in the [Submission Documentation](#) that followed from the statutory directives in Act 20. On June 23rd, **the V12 statewide parcel database was released**—the 12th version of the state's publicly available digital parcel map, featuring 3.57 million parcel records. Visit the statewide parcel map [webpage](#) for data downloads, a web app, and more. Detailed analysis of V12 data can be found in the [V12 Final Report](#).



Statewide PLSS Layer Sub-Project

In 2026, DOA and SCO continued work to create an updated statewide PLSS database, constructed from local PLSS corner data collected as part of the V12 Project. Learn more about PLSS data in Wisconsin at www.sco.wisc.edu/surveying.

COUNTY DATA ACCESS & OPEN DATA



GeoData@Wisconsin

For Version 12 of the Statewide Parcel Map Database Project, the data request was coordinated with the UW-Madison Robinson Map Library (RML). RML collects and archives annual snapshots of several framework vector layers which

are available for download via GeoData@Wisconsin, a geospatial data portal developed in partnership with SCO. In 2026, **379 new county GIS datasets with 457 feature classes were added to GeoData@Wisconsin** for public download. For the most current county data, users can always consult county webpages, listed at doa.wi.gov/DIR/County_Contacts.pdf.

SCO and the Robinson Map Library also supply in-kind support to manage and archive GIS datasets for the WisconsinView Data Archive. The Archive serves as a home for Wisconsin aerial imagery and lidar (light detection and ranging) raster files, which are sizable datasets acquired by counties in large part with WLIP resources. The WisconsinView Data Archive collection is accessed through GeoData@Wisconsin.

FEDERAL FUNDING FOR LIDAR

With the completion of the FY22 lidar acquisition project, all 72 Wisconsin counties have lidar elevation data meeting federal Quality Level 2 standard or better. County land information offices have been critical to the success of the statewide acquisition. In 2026, WLIP staff helped coordinate another successful multi-county grant application for QL1 lidar data through the federal USGS 3D Elevation Program (3DEP).

- A multi-county application for FY26 3DEP lidar submitted through DOA was funded—Calumet, Dodge, Eau Claire, Green Lake, Iron, Lincoln, Marquette, and Sheboygan counties—for a total of **\$789,327.60** in federal funding.
- Total cost of acquisition and processing was \$1,497,467.60, with county and state partners contributing the balance.
- DOA also directly supports distribution of final data products, as well as WLIP-funded lidar data, to state partners and to the public through <https://geodata.wisc.edu> and the interactive map for "Wisconsin Elevation/LiDAR Data" at www.sco.wisc.edu/data/elevationlidar.
- The Department of Natural Resources offers online streaming [REST services](#) and [WI DNR Open Data](#).
- The status of the statewide elevation effort can be viewed at coast.noaa.gov/inventory, with some 3DEP data available on the USGS site, <https://apps.nationalmap.gov/downloader>.

This totals **\$8,934,520.02 of federal funding netted for lidar** in 2015-2026 3DEP applications coordinated by DOA on behalf of county and other Wisconsin partners.

WISCONSIN LAND INFORMATION COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

The Wisconsin Land Information Council (WLIC) serves in an advisory role to DOA on matters relating to the WLIP. The group provides a channel for stakeholder organizations to voice their opinions on matters relating to land information records modernization. The WLIC [12-member](#) group met three times in 2026.

FUNDING

Since the Program's earliest days, from 1990 through June 30, 2026, Wisconsin counties have retained a total of \$251 million for land information activities and received a total of \$100 million in land information grants. In order to retain fees for land information and be eligible for WLIP grants, county land information offices must meet several **requirements for accountability and transparency**:

- Update the [county's land information plan](#) at least every three years
- Meet with the county land information council to review expenditures, policies, and priorities of the land information office at least once per year
- Report on expenditure activities each year
- Submit detailed applications for WLIP grants
- Complete the annual WLIP survey, if conducted
- Subscribe to DOA's land information listserv
- Submit parcel data in the Searchable Format to DOA
- Submit other WLIP-funded GIS layers to DOA as requested

WLIP REVENUE AND GRANTS

As of January 1, 2015, counties are required to submit \$7 per document recorded to the state Land Information Fund. The \$7 contribution to the state Land Information Fund amounted to state revenue of \$6.1 million in State FY2026, which is the source of funding for WLIP grants and administration of the program.

ROD Document Recording Fee

\$15	County Undesignated
\$ 8	County Retained for Land Information
<u>\$ 7</u>	State Land Information Fund
<u>\$30</u>	

Because counties with modest real estate market activity do not generate substantial land information office revenue, WLIP Base Budget grants are provided in order to enable eligible counties to develop, maintain, and operate a basic land information system. Counties that retain less than \$100k in retained fees for land information are eligible for a Base Budget grant according to the formula at right.

WLIP Base Budget Grant Eligibility Formula

\$100k – ROD document recording fees @ \$8 per doc recorded

Example: County records 5,000 documents
 $\$100k - (5,000 \times \$8)$
 $\$100k - (\$40k)$
 $\$ 60k = \text{Base Budget grant eligibility}$

Base Budget grants totaled \$2.9 million statewide and were awarded to 55 counties in 2026. Counties are projected to retain fees and receive grants that combined total \$11.4 million for Calendar 2026.

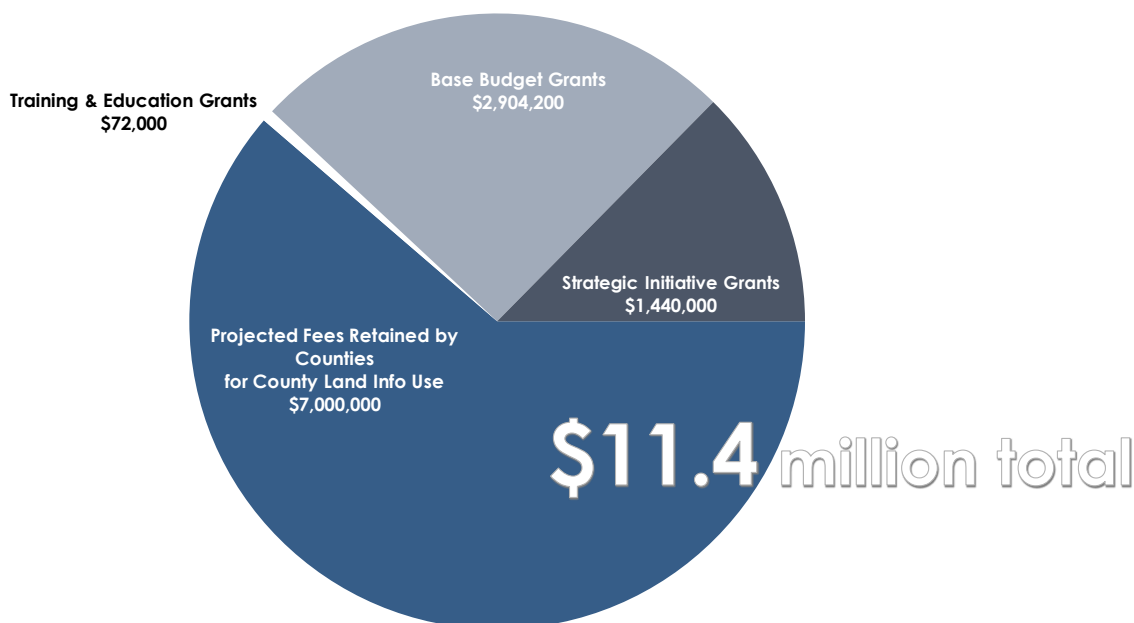


Figure 1. Projected 2026 County Land Information Funding – Fees Retained and WLIP Grants

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDING TO COUNTIES

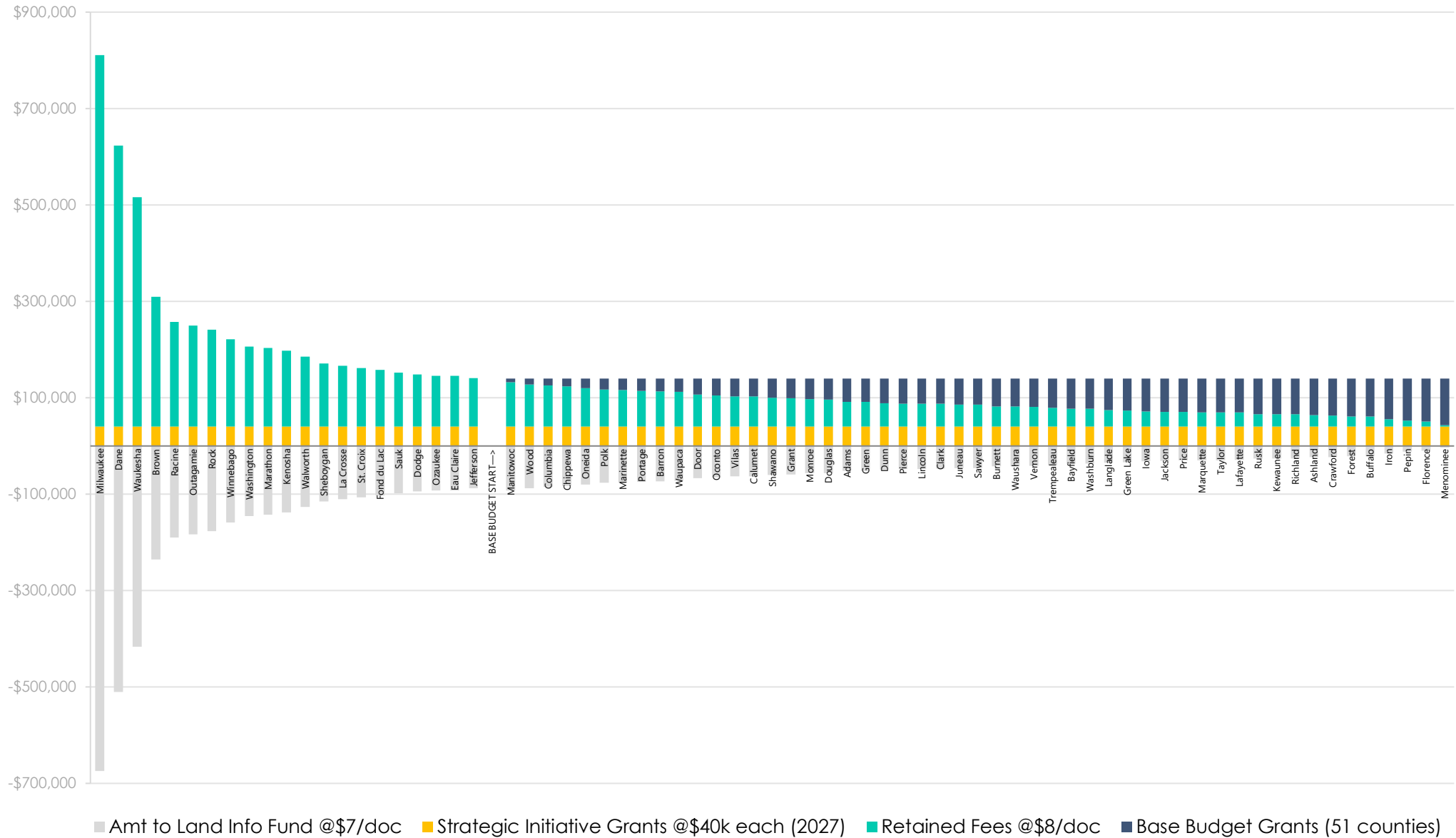


Figure 2. Projected distribution of all Land Information Fund funding to counties for 2027

REVENUE TREND: SLIGHT RECOVERY FROM HISTORIC LOW

The number of documents recorded and thus Land Information Fund revenue varies from year to year. For each of the last 30 years, the annual total has equaled an average of 1,238,229 documents recorded per year. This would correspond to \$8,667,603 in Land Information Fund revenue (at \$7 submitted per document recorded).

Due in large part to the increase in mortgage interest rates and a limited supply of housing on the market in 2023-2024, in State Fiscal Year 2024 the register of deeds instrument recordings declined to the lowest point in 30 years. FY 2025 and FY 2026 saw a slight uptick. Figure 3 illustrates the revenue trend over time.

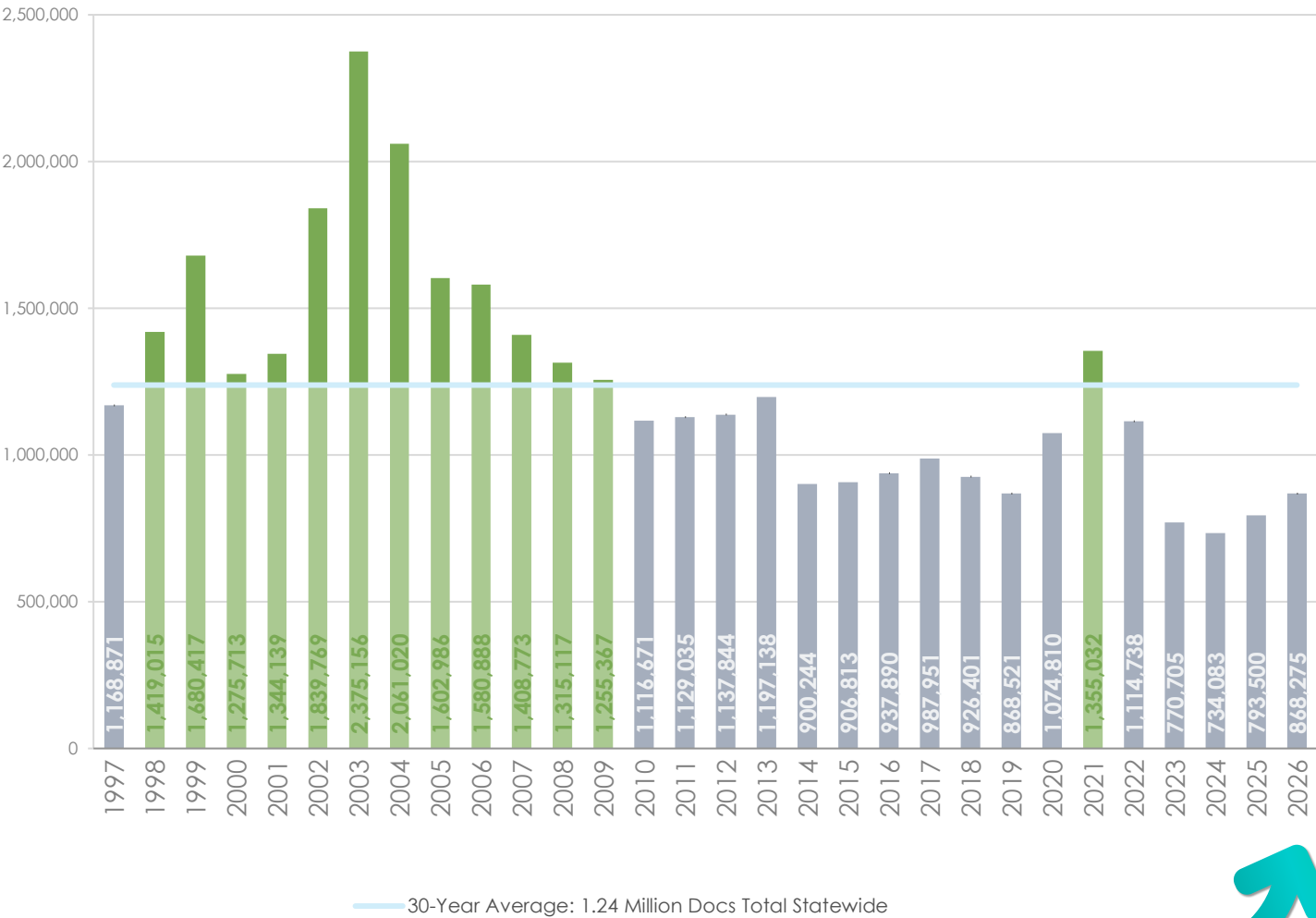


Figure 3. Number of Register of Deeds Documents Recorded Statewide Under s. 59.42(2)(ag)1 or e

EXPENDITURE OF RETAINED FEES AND GRANTS IN 2025

Counties submit annual expenditure reports on how WLIP retained fees and grants were utilized in the previous year and categorize their expenditures in a [Retained Fee/Grant Report](#), in keeping with s.59.72(2)(b).

In 2025, counties retained fees and received grants for land information totaling \$11.2 million. The dollars spent on land information in 2025 were devoted to the areas depicted in Figure 4.

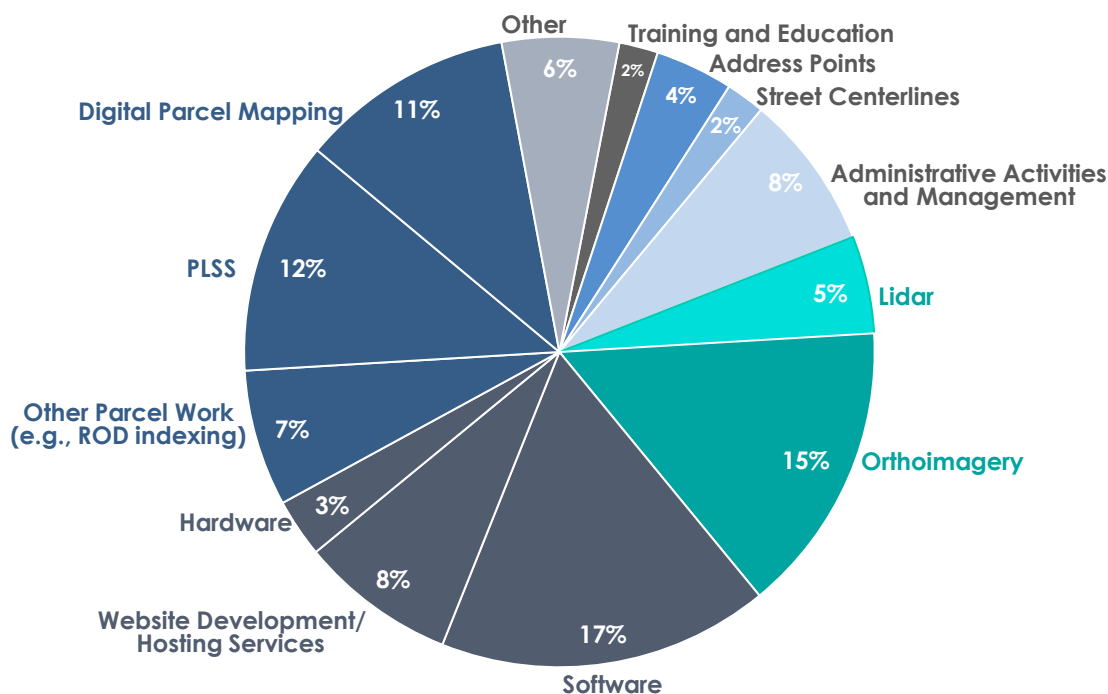


Figure 4. County 2025 Expenditures Reported

Roughly consistent with previous years, Figure 4 illustrates that a third of WLIP funding was used for the development and maintenance of county parcel datasets, including Public Land Survey System remonumentation and other parcel work.

About a third of the funding was used for computer hardware, software, and website development and hosting. These expenditures help to provide convenient access to land records through searchable databases, online interactive maps, and various types of mapping applications.

Fifteen percent was spent on orthoimagery and five percent on lidar. Some lidar and orthoimagery acquisitions are packaged together.

The remaining funding supported a diverse range of activities, including the development of address points and street centerlines to meet Next Generation 9-1-1 standards. A portion of funding also goes to administrative activities and management.

FUTURE GRANT PROJECTIONS

Figure 5 shows grants already awarded and the projected Land Information Program budget for the next few years.

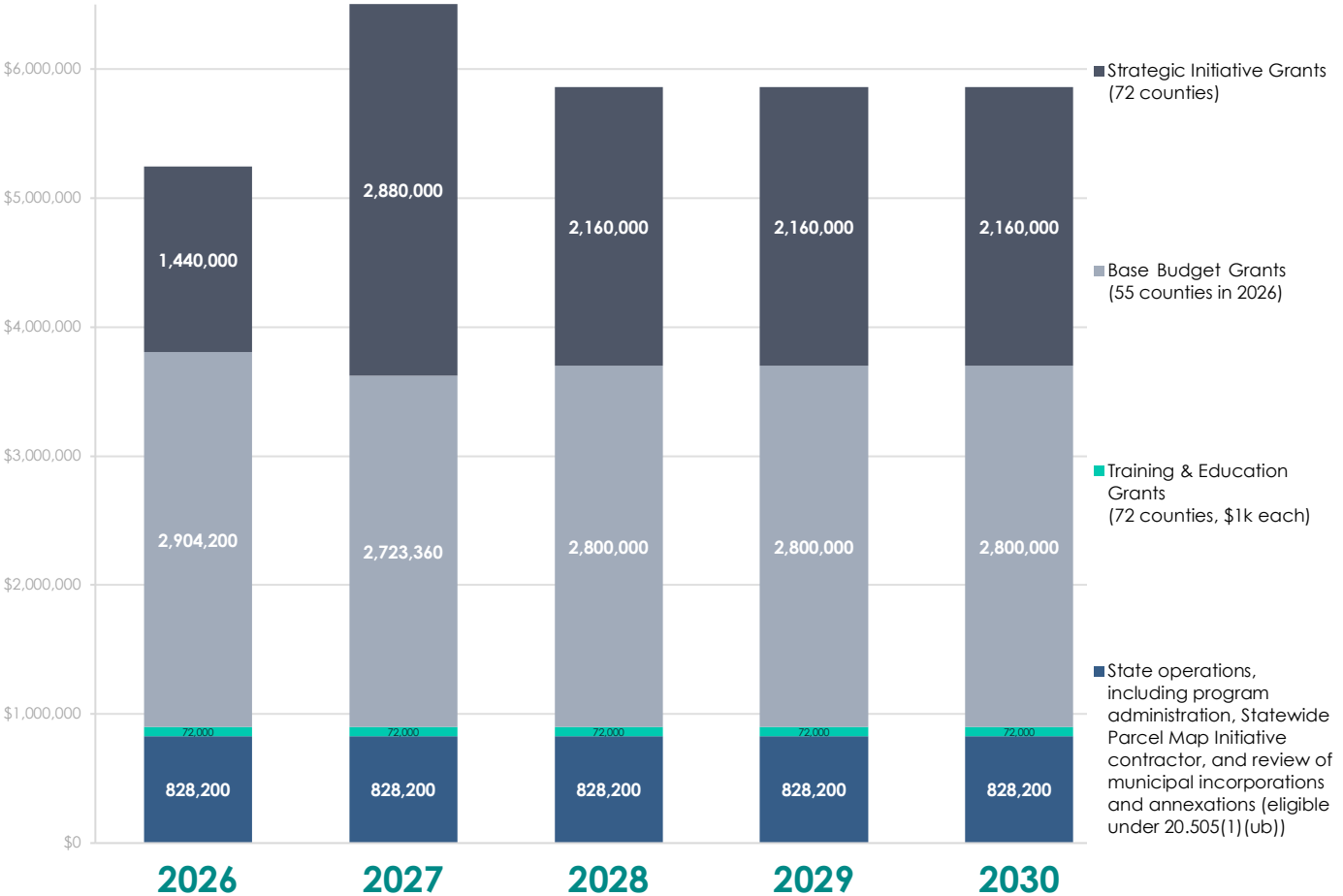


Figure 5. Projected Land Information Program Budget

If implemented as depicted in Figure 5, in 2027 all counties would receive at least \$141,000 in WLIP funding, made up of retained fees, Base Budget grants where applicable, a \$1k Training & Education grant, and a \$40k Strategic Initiative grant.

Projected WLIP Funding to Counties	
≥ \$100k	Base Budget grant + Retained fees
\$ 1k	Training & Education grant
\$ 40k	Strategic Initiative grant
≥ \$141k	per county

Such a scenario would mean that **over 85% of Land Information Fund spending will be invested in grants to counties** for local land records modernization.

DOA is mindful that utilization of Land Information Fund revenue must be consistent with statutory spending authority as described by state statutes 16.967, 20.505(1)(ub-ud), and schedule under s.20.005(3), and should be for well-defined activities with statewide benefits.