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## Governor Releases Biennial Budget Recommendations

On Tuesday, February 16, Governor Tony Evers released his second biennial budget. This budget proposes bold, urgent initiatives to address the immediate needs of Wisconsinites while balancing long-term sustainability. The budget, once again, makes historic investments in key areas in pursuit of the Governor's promise to always put the people of Wisconsin first.

The Governor's budget reflects our shared Wisconsin values of looking out for those in need, whether it is through increased economic support, increased wages for the long-term care workforce, or working to ensure food security.

It also recognizes the unprecedented challenges over the past year that nearly all Wisconsinites have faced to some degree by directly investing in our workforce, our kids, our farmers, our schools, our direct care workers, and our small business owners, among others.

Some exciting initiatives for governments in Wisconsin include:

- Increase General Transportation Aids for both counties and municipalities by 2 percent in calendar year 2022 and by another 2 percent in calendar year 2023.
- If approved by local referendum, allow counties to impose an additional 0.5 percent sales tax and allow municipalities with populations over 30,000 to impose a 0.5 percent sales tax to diversify local revenue sources and better empower local governments to fund police and fire protection, transit, roads, and other important services.
- Provide successive 2 percent increases in the funding for the County and Municipal Aid Program to take effect in 2021 and then again in 2022. Each county and municipality's base entitlement will be increased by 2 percent over its 2020 levels for 2021 payments and then will be increased by 2 percent again in 2022 over 2021's payments. These increases will provide \$15.06 million for county and municipal governments in 2021 and \$30.4 million in 2022 and in future years.
- Allow towns to fund emergency medical services via the same mechanisms allowed for fire protection services.

Here is a link to the page where the budget documents are posted:  
<https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/2021-23%20Executive%20Budget.aspx>

Here is a link to the Governor's address on YouTube:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_RGfrYZt2ps](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_RGfrYZt2ps)

# The State Trust Fund Loan Program

The Board of Commissioners of Public Lands (BCPL) works with local governments to maintain and improve Wisconsin's public infrastructure with the State Trust Fund Loan Program. This is one of the largest public lending programs in the state.

These loans can be used for any public purpose. Some examples include:

- **School repairs and improvements** – including the installation of more energy-efficient heating and lighting systems
- **General public works projects** – including roads, town halls, airports, sewer systems, wastewater facilities, trucks, and emergency vehicles
- **Economic development projects** – like TIF (tax incremental financing) districts and downtown revitalization projects

Perhaps most importantly, more than 95% of the interest collected on Trust Fund loans go back to the BCPL and is used to provide critical support for K-12 public school libraries throughout the state—a benefit no commercial lender can match.

The application process is easy. There are no loan origination or application fees. Interest rates are competitive and can be fixed for terms of up to 20 years.

For more information on State Trust Fund Loans and the BCPL, visit their web page at <http://bcpl.wisconsin.gov> or contact Trust Fund Loan Specialist Richard Sneider, (608) 261-8001 or [richard.sneider@wisconsin.gov](mailto:richard.sneider@wisconsin.gov).

## Wisconsin Governors Conference on Tourism

Registration is now open for the 2021 Virtual Wisconsin Governor's Conference on Tourism! We've planned a lively lineup of presenters and we're looking forward to having you join us for the first of four programs starting on March 16.

The cost to participate in our virtual conference is \$60.00 for all four programs or \$25.00 for each individual program. Go to our website for additional information on programming, sponsors and exhibitors, online registration and future program dates. If you had a previously paid registration from the 2020 WIGCOT, you will receive another email with a code to complete your registration.

<https://wigcot.eventsair.com/2021-wigcot-virtual>

Don't forget to submit your nominations for the Governor's Tourism Awards. Visit the Awards tab on the website to learn more about the program and access the online submission portal. Nominations for the awards are due by Friday, April 2, 2021 and award recipients will be announced at our final program in May.