

2025 Administrator's Budget Highlights

SEPTEMBER 19, 2024



LA CROSSE COUNTY

Budget Introduction

- **Balancing act** between providing strong **county services** while working within constraints of **levy limits** and outside funding sources
- Budget is the result of **hundreds of hours** of work by Finance team, Department Heads and other staff
- **Quick overview** of highlights this evening, **more detail** next month

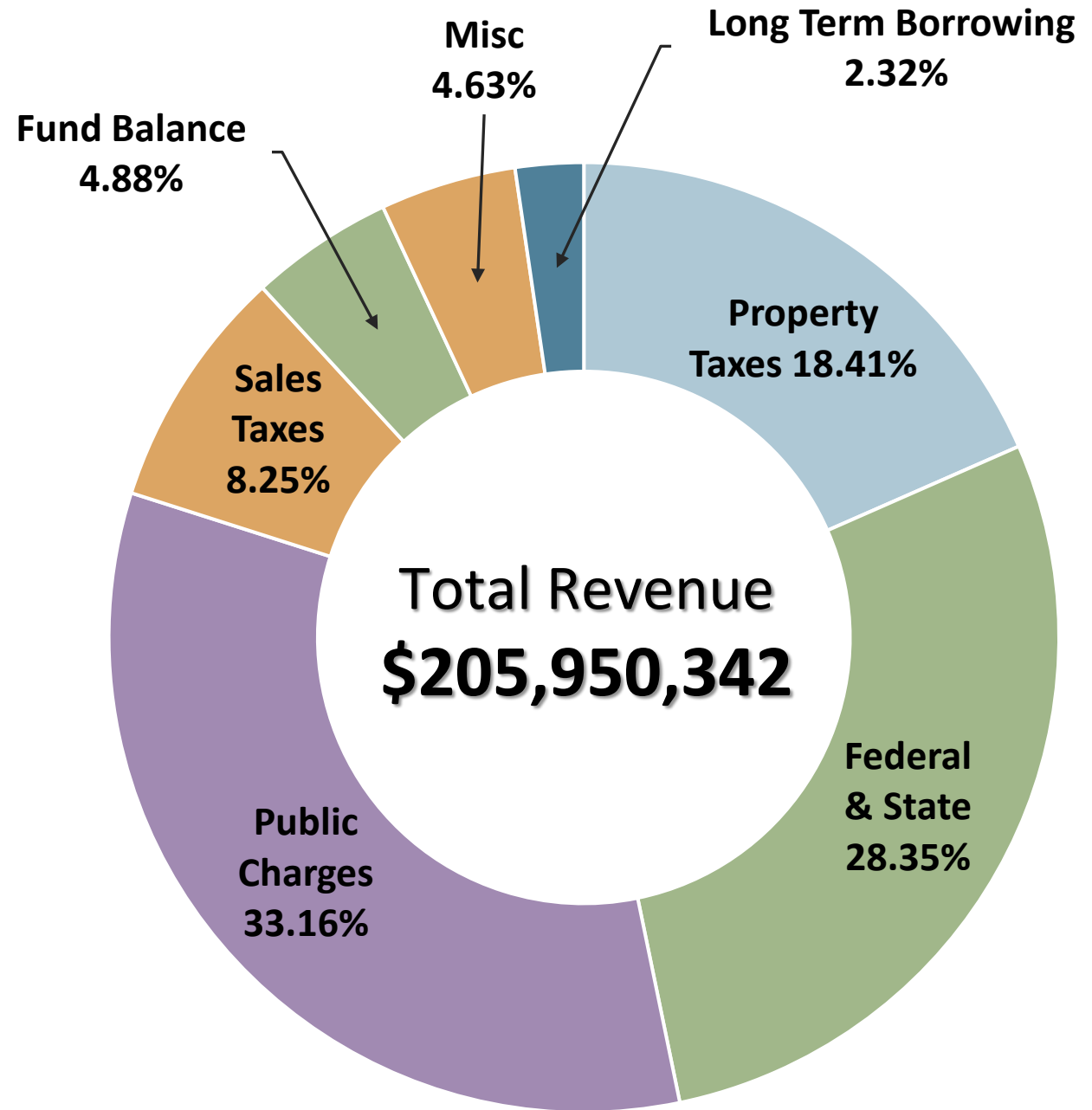
2025 Administrator's Budget Highlights

- **\$206 million** balanced budget
- Maintains and strengthens **county services**
- **3% raise** for staff *and* no increase in health premiums
- Our total levy for 2025 is **decreasing (-0.3%)**
- **No borrowing** for ongoing capital needs (**4th year in a row**)
- **County debt** continues to fall.

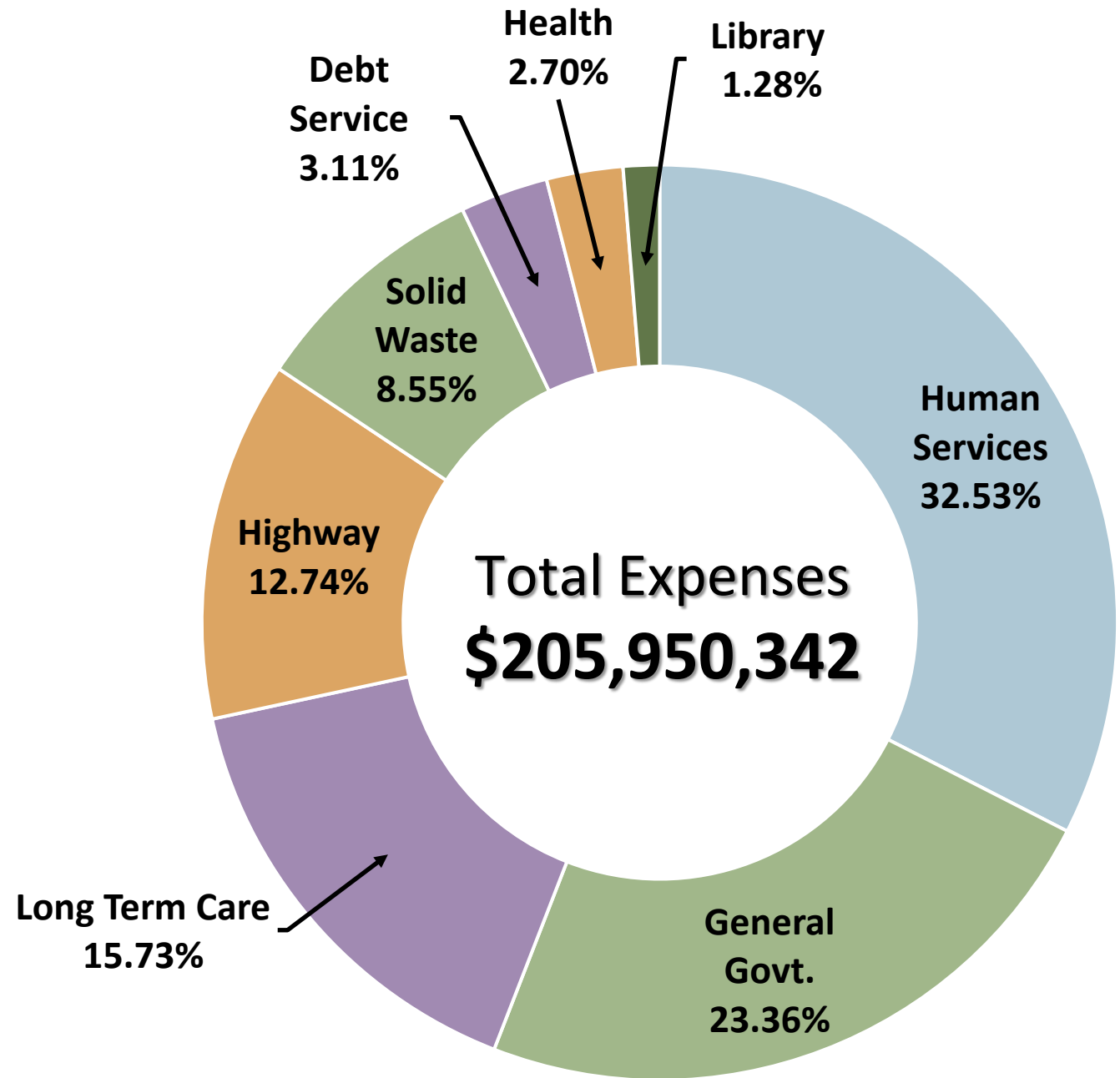
Background/Considerations

- Sales tax growth **slowing** (estimated +0.5% over 2023)
- **Out-of-home care** costs running \$1.1 million over budget
- Expected increase in **shared revenue** is \$109,000
- Workforce **turnover** generated \$5 million savings this year
- Investment income trending **\$1 million over budget** (2024)

2025 Budget
Where the
Money
Comes
From



2025 Budget
Where the
Money
Goes



Property Tax Levy (in millions)

2024 ADOPTED

Operating Levy	\$28.978
Library	\$2.392
Debt	<u>\$6.650</u>
Total	\$38.020

\$2.70 mill rate* per \$1,000

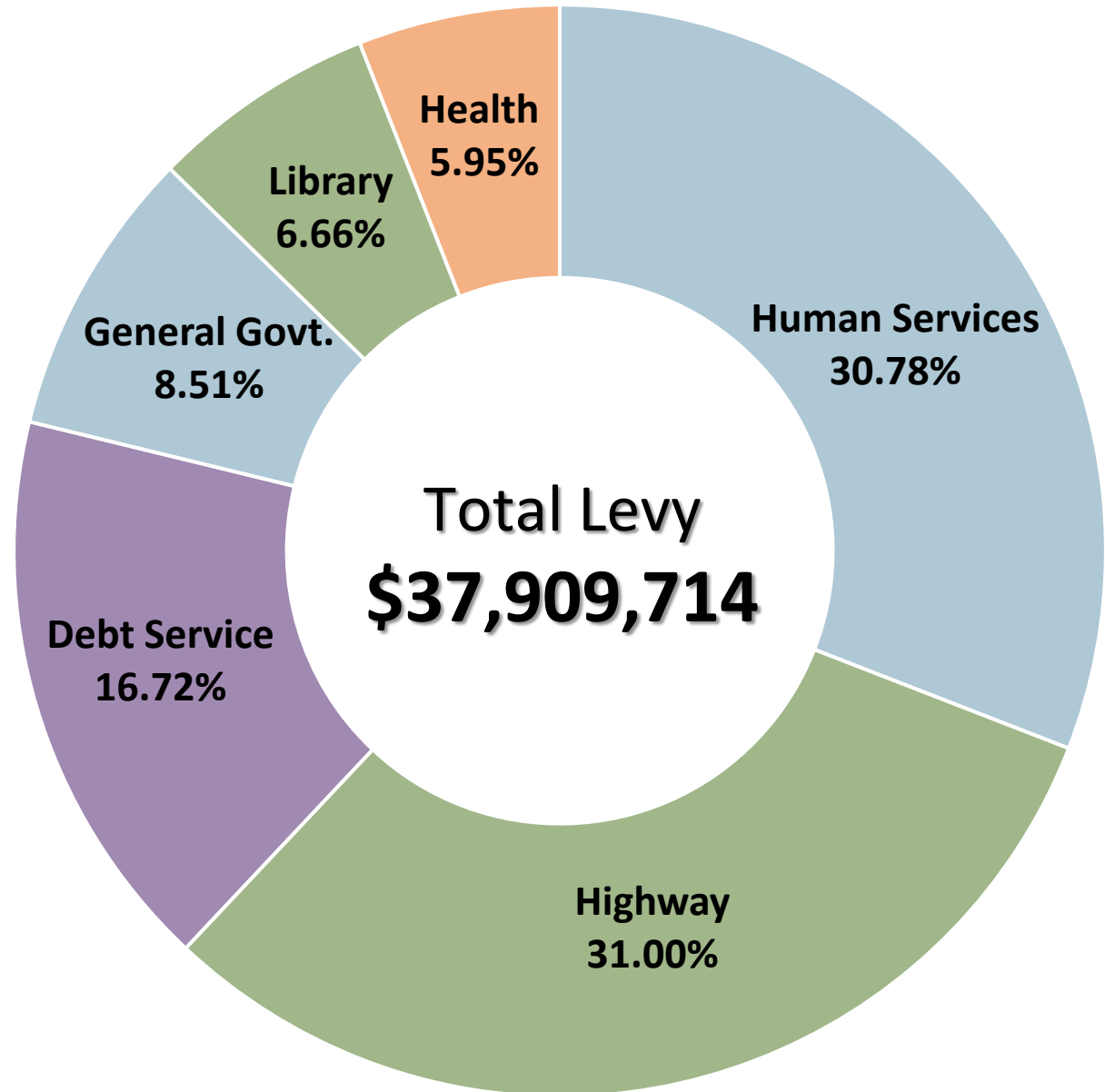
2025 RECOMMENDED

Operating Levy	\$28.955
Library	\$2.550
Debt	<u>\$6.405</u>
Total	\$37.910

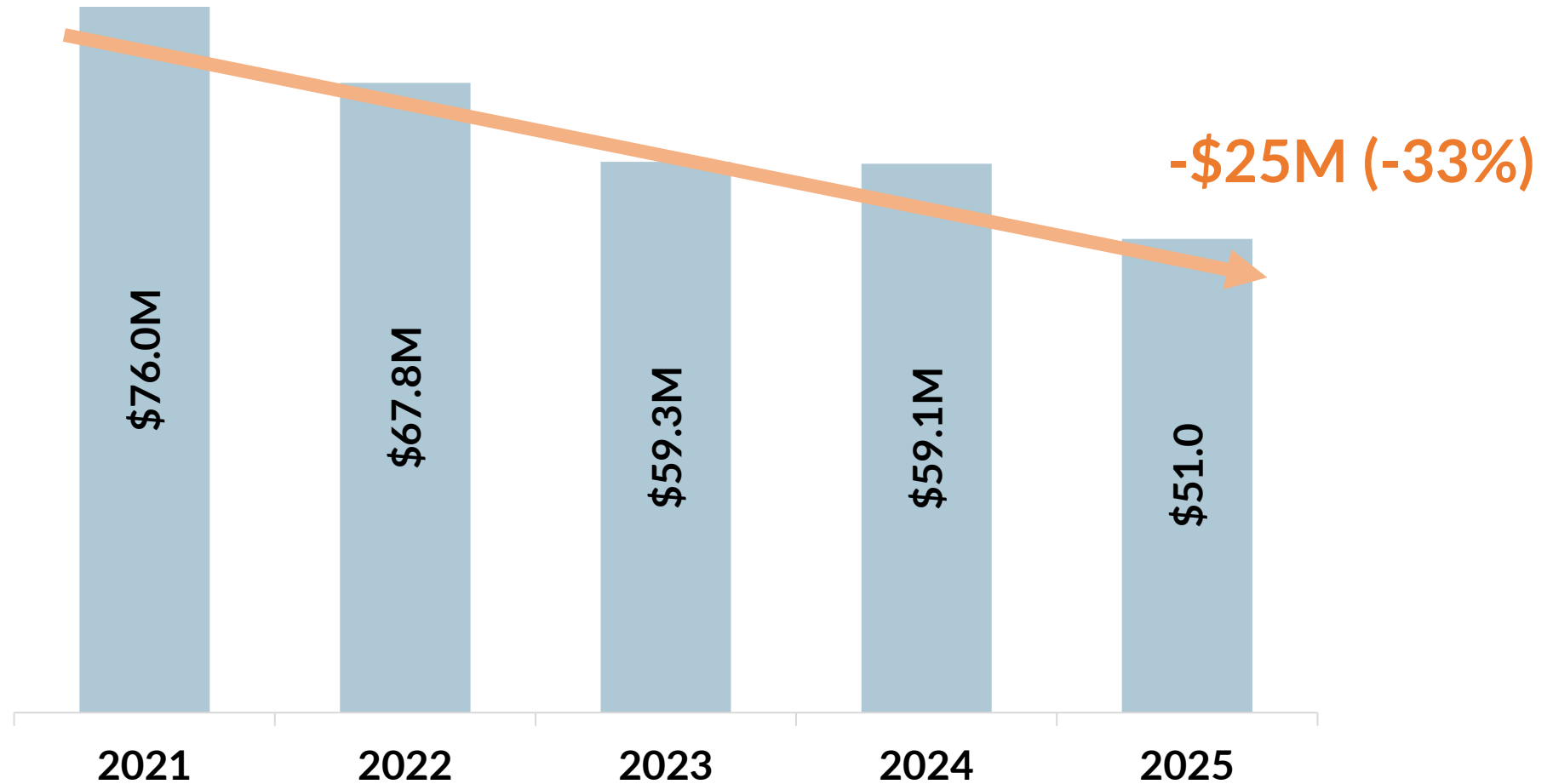
\$2.55 mill rate* per \$1,000 (-5.6%)

*Average mill rate.

2025 Budget
**Property
Tax Levy**
(-0.2%)



Total County Debt 2021-2025



2025 Budget Themes

- Investing in employees
- Balancing Competing Needs
- Record Highway Funding
- Providing high quality service to residents
- Strategic Plan Implementation
- DEIB Report Prioritization
- Hillview Reimagination
- Pathways Home

Investing in our Employees

- **3% raise for 3rd consecutive year.**
- **No increase in health premiums.**
- **Funding for leadership training and wage study.**



Balancing Competing Needs

- Our budget is a balancing act, with many **competing needs**
- For example, since 2019, we have increased county levy funding for highway construction by **183%**
- At the **Jail**, levy funding is up just **20% since 2019** but needs around services and staffing continue to grow
- Over the same period, levy funding for **Human Services** has **fallen by 12.7%**

Example: Out-of-Home Care

- This year, out-of-home care costs for children and adults are running **\$1.1 million over budget.**
- Example of a cost that's difficult to control and predict, requiring the cushion of a large **fund balance.**
- 2025 budget for out-home-care is **\$3.3 million** which is primarily levy funding
- This is a **mandated service** that isn't often talked about at the board level

Focus: Youth Out-of-Home Care

- **61 children** a month in foster care and nine in residential care on average.
- Foster care costs \$440-\$2k/month per child. Residential care is **\$18k-\$25k/month** per child.
- Increase in children with **complex needs** who can't stay in local foster care.
- **Shortage** of higher-level care (one child placed in Arkansas and one in Illinois currently).



Focus: Inpatient Care (ISRS)

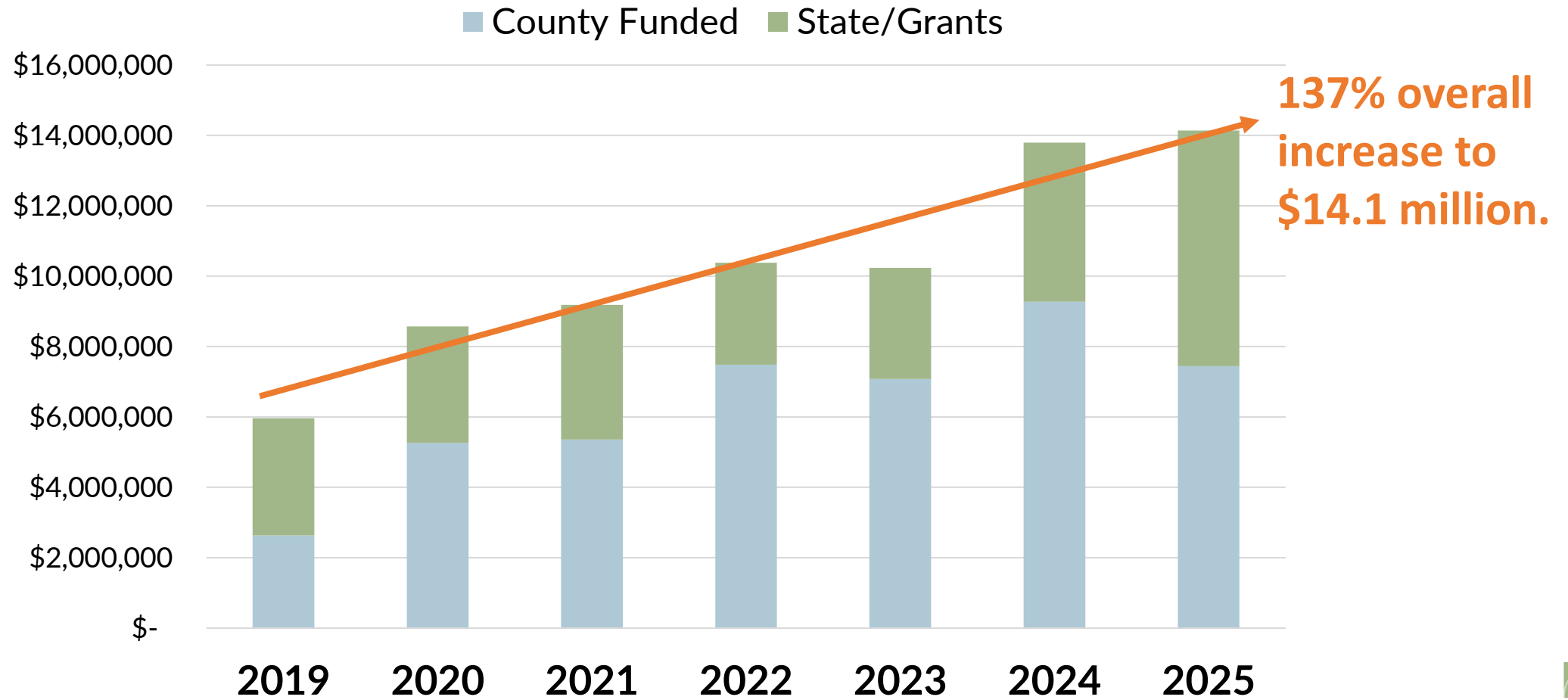
- ISRS uses **Winnebago** Mental Health Institute and **Trempealeau** County Health Care Center for hospitalizations
- Winnebago placements were **88** in 2023 (youth and adults) and Trempealeau (adult only) **5**
- Cost at Winnebago is \$1,596/day for adults and \$1,632/day for youth (**10% increase for 2025**). Trempealeau cost is generally \$355/day
- Difficult to predict annual cost, **need fund balance** as back-up

Record Highway Funding

- **\$14.1 million** in total county highway construction funding an increase from \$13.8 million in 2024.
- Funds will support **11 miles** of highway construction work.
- 20 to 25 miles of **chip sealing** planned (compared to 3.4 miles this year) for an additional cost of \$700,000.



Highway Construction Spending



Making Progress

- We are seeing a **significant improvement** in county highway conditions (14.8 miles paved in 2024).
- By end of 2025, miles rated as being in “poor” condition have been **reduced by 50%** since 2020.
- By 2025, it’s estimated that **90% of county highway miles** will be rated as being in fair to good condition.



Key Budget Takeaways

1. Maintains our **exceptional service** to the public.
2. **Invests in staff** with a 3% raise, no change in health premiums, leadership training, and wage study.
3. Funds **record highway construction** spending to continue improvement in road conditions.
4. **Balances competing priorities** while county debt and tax rate decline.

Budget Next Steps

- **Budget book link** demonstration this evening
- Budget presentations to committees **through October**
 - This is the time to make proposals regarding the budget
- Second **budget presentation** at Oct. 17 monthly meeting
- Public hearing and **vote** on budget on Nov. 12
 - Any board modifications happen in November

What **questions** do you have for October?

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