

SMRT, Budget & Thriving Families Update

NOV 3, 2025

Purpose

- 1. Provide information on SMRT bus**
- 2. Answer questions raised at October Planning Meeting**
 - Thriving Families process
 - Use of Fund Balance, including outside requests
 - Employee count
 - Opioid settlement funding
 - Pathways Home
- 3. Overview of discretionary funds usage**
 - Levy
 - Sales tax
 - Interest income
 - Shared State Revenue

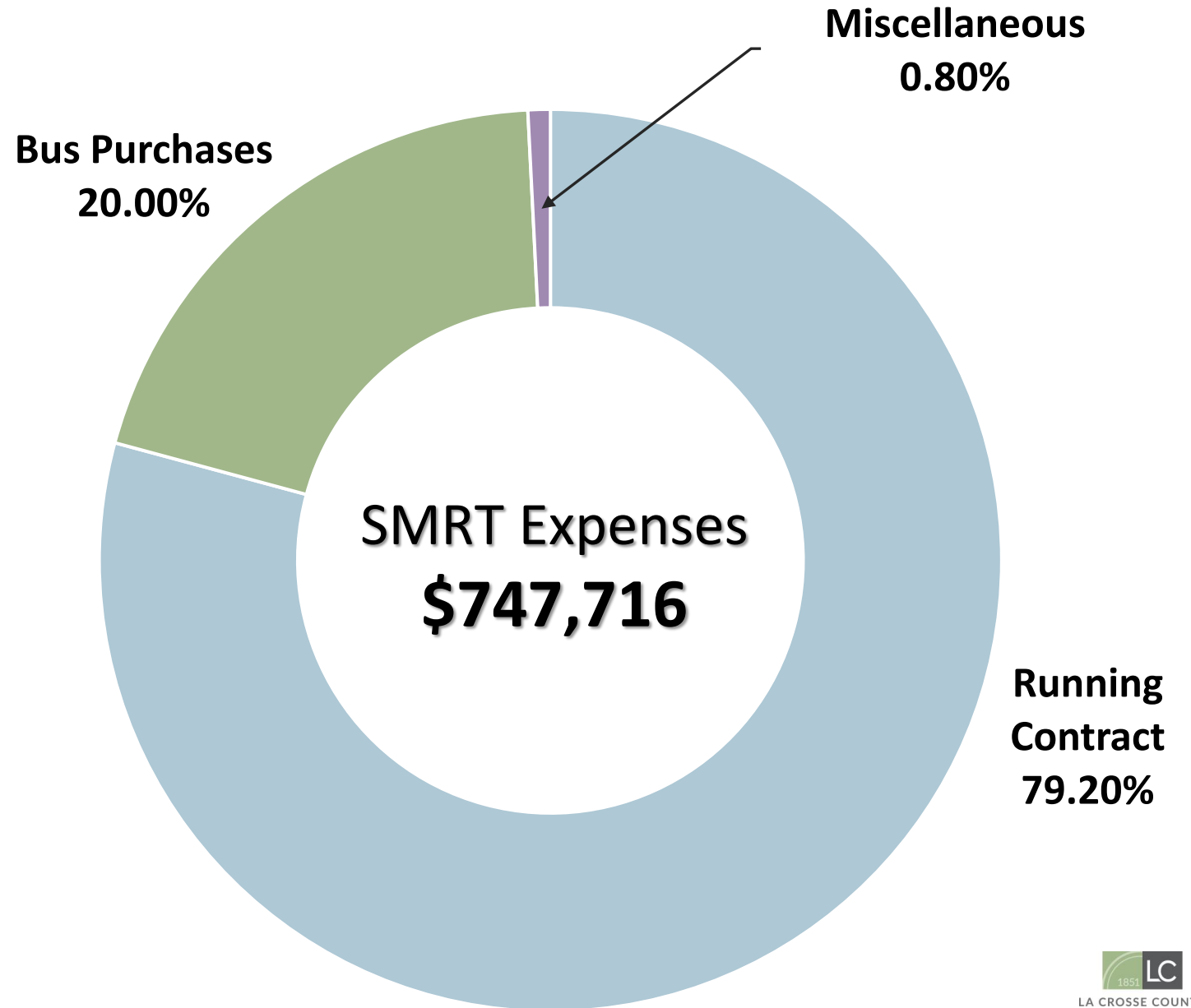
1. SMRT Bus Current Status

NOVEMBER 3, 2025

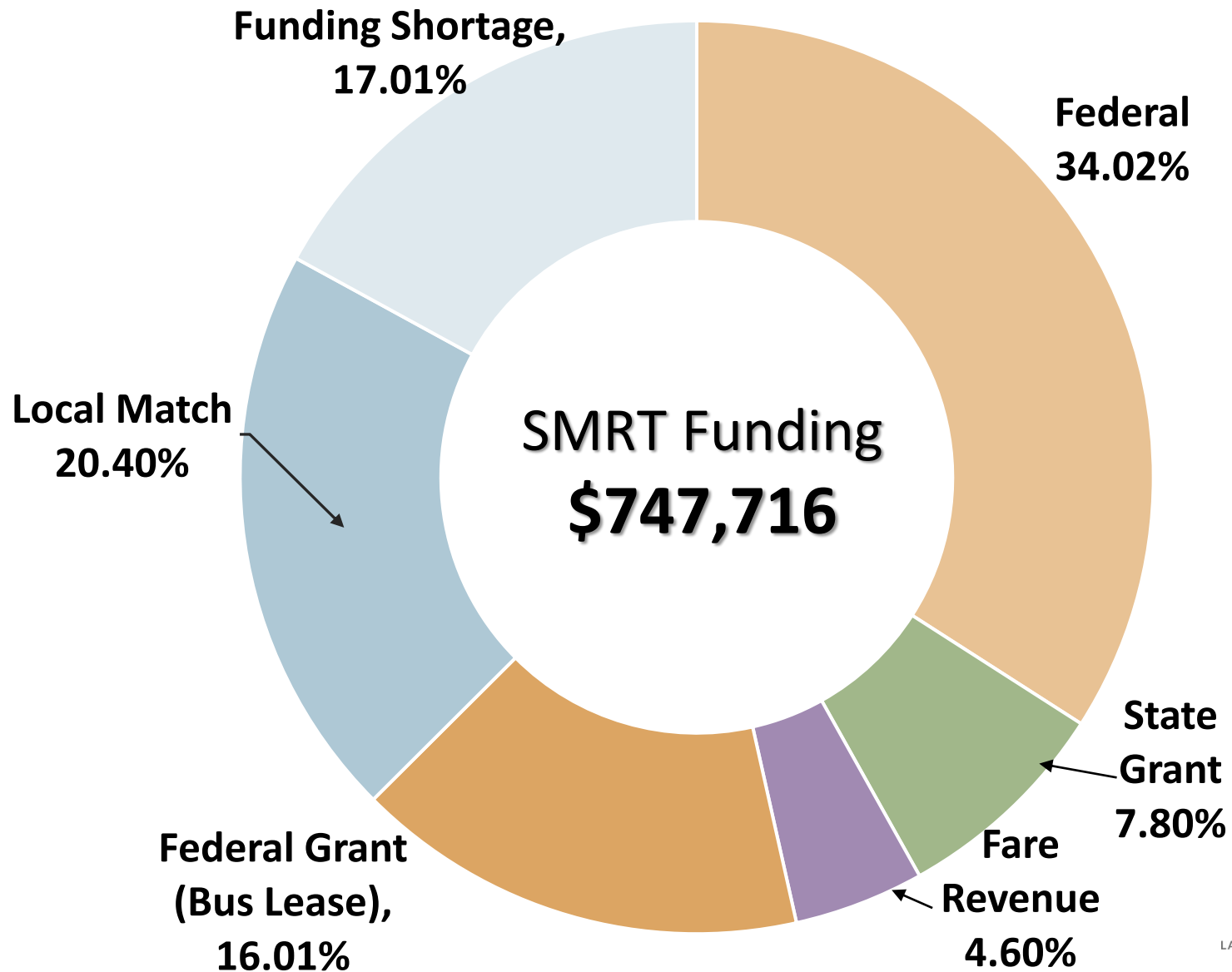
SMRT Background

- Regional bus service launched in **2012**
- **13 routes** connecting Prairie du Chien, Viroqua, Tomah, and points in between to the City of La Crosse
- Funded by **state, federal and local** sources
- Administered by **La Crosse County**
- Operated under **contract** by Running, Inc.

2026 Budget
**SMRT
Projected
Expenses
for 2026**

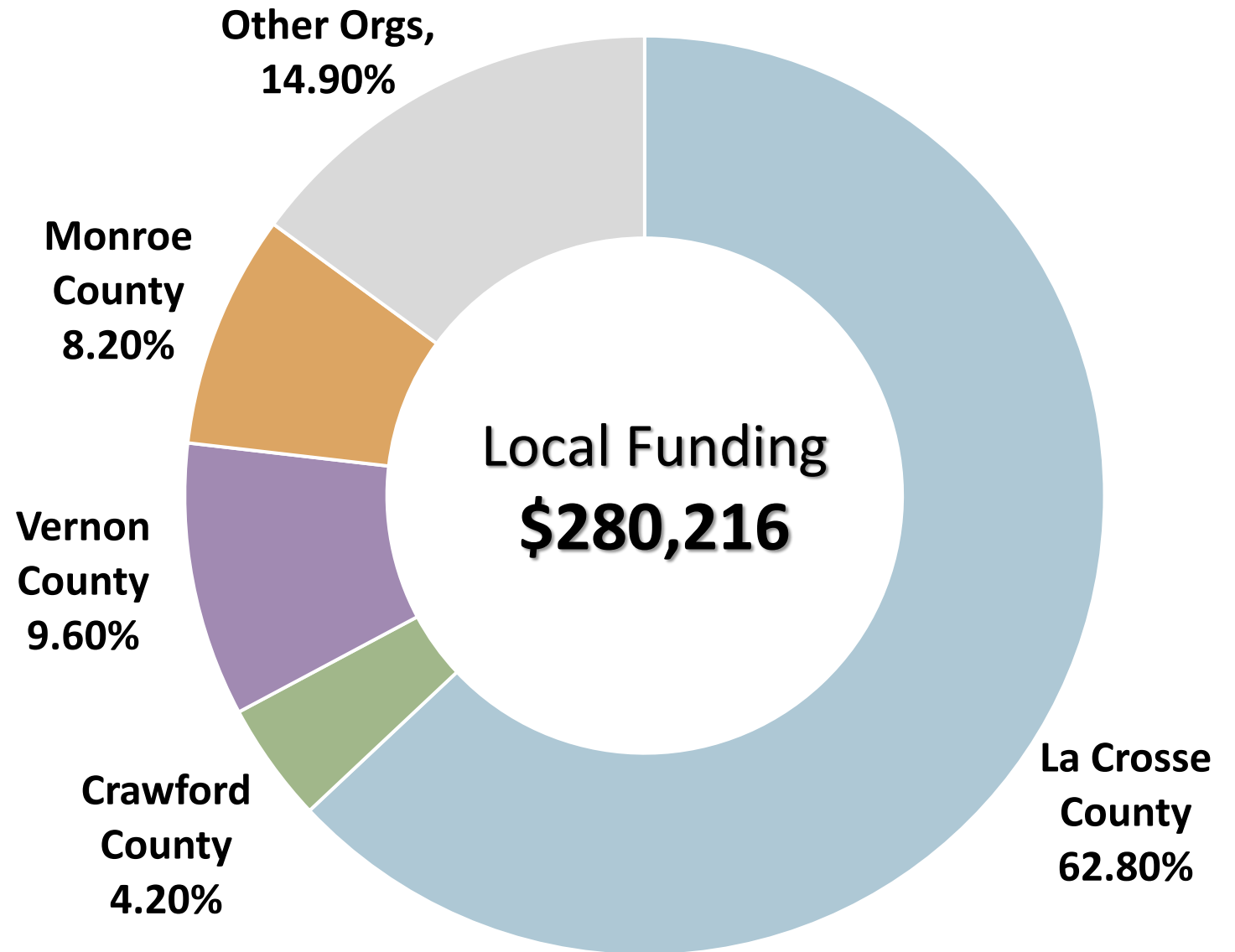


2026 Budget
SMRT
Projected
Funding
for 2026



Projected 2026 Local Funding Breakdown

*County funding
includes municipal
contributions



SMRT – Considerations for 2026

La Crosse County Board commitment **\$30,000/year**

La Crosse County contribution:

- \$30,000 → \$120,000 (2025) → Projected **\$157,000 (2026)**

Ridership down 12.5% in 2025 (Jan–Sept)

- **30 daily riders** on average across all 13 routes

System cost per one-way ride: \$43

Any significant route changes requires RFP

SMRT – Status of Current Funding

Not included in Administrator's 2026 Budget

Partner Counties, Municipalities and Organizations

- Many have **removed funding** from 2026 budgets
- La Crosse County projected contribution of \$157,000 does not reflect this
- None willing to administer the SMRT Bus

La Crosse County projected contributions do not include **staff time.**

SMRT – La Crosse County Residents

Significant investment of La Crosse County tax dollars primarily serving residents of neighboring counties.

Low utilization of SMRT diminishes the economic impact for our County.

SMRT – Timeline

- Running, Inc. has been given 90-day notice of our intention to not renew their contract.
- Wisconsin DOT has been notified.
- Public Notice has been given and Public Hearing scheduled for November 6th at 4:30pm
- Board will vote on Budget on November 10th.

2. Questions from October Planning

NOVEMBER 3, 2025

Thriving Families: History

- La Crosse County received \$23M from the **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)** in 2021
- **Obligated** by end of 2024, **spent** by end of 2026
- **Family Bridge Housing** identified as a top priority

Key Milestones – Pre-Implementation

- **June 2021:** Two meetings to outline priorities.
- **Aug–Dec 2021:** Affordable Housing Task Force with community partners.
- **Dec 2021:** Bridge Housing for Families ranked 2nd in prioritization.
- **Jan 2022:** County reserved ARPA funds for 8 project areas, including Family Bridge Housing.
- **Oct 2022:** RFP released; responses from Catholic Charities & Couleecap with letter of support from New Horizons and the YWCA. All organizations part of the task force.

Funding and Implementation

December 2022: County Board Approves Resolution

- ✓ Approves \$3M for family bridge housing
 - ✓ Funds to purchase, rehab, and maintain scattered-site housing (**with support from broad group of local agencies**)
 - ✓ Titles held by Couleecap & Catholic Charities
 - ✓ Binding agreement approval by Executive Committee

March 2023: Exec Committee Approves Agreement

June 2025: Exec Committee approves revised MOU

- ✓ Future approvals by Health and Human Services Committee

Background for 2025 Revised MOU

- La Crosse County **strongly encouraged** the change
- County **determines who enters the rentals and how much rent is paid**
- Community partners wanted to **choose renters** based on income
- County negotiated **55% HUD fair market rent guarantee** based on projected costs
- County **already budgets** for family assistance
- **Approved** by Executive Committee, signed by Administrator
- **\$0 spent this year**, 2026 budget includes funding of up to \$150,000

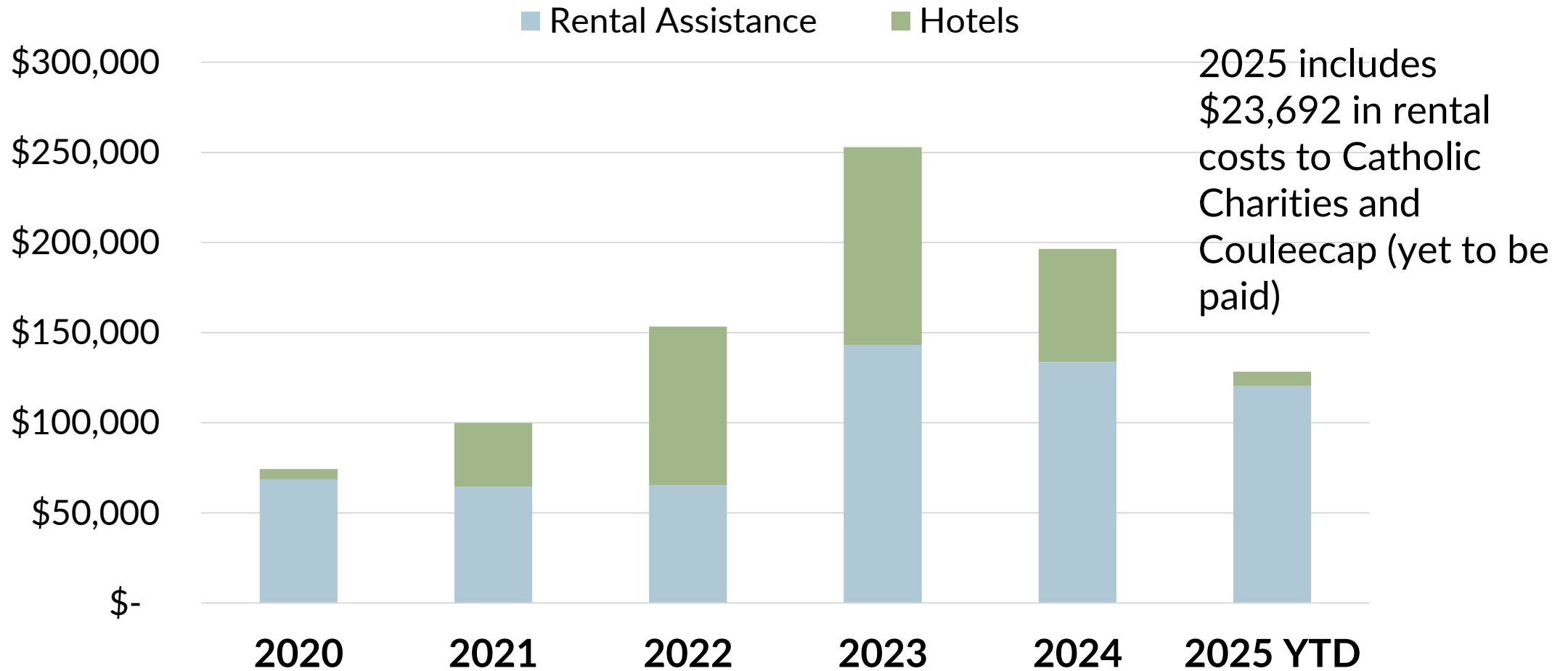
Dec. 2022 board-approved resolution

“**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that prior to release of any funding, a binding agreement will be approved and legally executed by the Executive Committee and Couleecap and Catholic Charities that clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities between Catholic Charities, Couleecap and La Crosse County regarding use of the property, property management and case management to best serve the families in need.”

Dec. 2022 board-approved resolution

- **“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, ... that this resolution does not obligate La Crosse County to provide any additional funding for a damage liquidation fund or any other operational expenses not specified in the proposal.”**
- **There is no damage liquidation fund.**
- **The County budgets for rental/hotel stays; some of those funds are being redirected to Thriving Families for rent.**

Hotel & Rental Assistance Spending



What Are Contract Approval Forms?

- Internal tracking document
- No legal authority

Community Action Programs

- Local non-profits fighting poverty; core funding from CSBG (Community Services Block Grant)
- CSBG programs require tripartite boards:
 - 1/3 low-income reps
 - 1/3 government reps (2 each from Crawford, Vernon, Monroe and La Crosse counties)
 - 1/3 community stakeholders

Families Served (by Thriving Families)

OCTOBER 2025

Units Occupied	13
Adults Housed	18
Children Housed	38
Individuals Housed	56

2023-2025

Total Adults Housed	24
Total Children Housed	55
Total Individuals Housed	79

- 16 properties purchased
- 3 new/unoccupied

2026 Use of General Fund Balance

- General Fund Balance \$1 million
- Facilities Capital \$820,000
- 911 Radio Upgrade \$360,088
- Sheriff Capital \$462,052
- La Crosse Center \$200,000
- Goose Island Bike Trail \$100,000
- IT Capital \$92,000
- Emergency Services Tower Lease \$40,000
- MPO \$33,000 (rail crossing study)

Total: \$3,107,140

Facilities Capital Detail

HHS Building

Family visitation remodel	\$50,000
Lab floor/ceiling tile replace	\$11,000
Chiller replacement	\$25,000
Fire alarm replacement	\$30,000

Courthouse/LEC

Courts carpet and paint	\$75,000
Sheriff mat replacement	\$15,000
Sheriff squad room remodel	\$30,000
Water heater replacement	\$20,000
UPS Replacement	\$50,000
Fire alarm replacement	\$40,000

Parks and Campgrounds

Vault toilet replacement	\$65,000
Playground equipment	\$25,000
GI Bathhouse drain field	\$125,000
GI Cul de Sac electric upgrade	\$50,000
GI Shelter 4 refurbish	\$75,000
Vets rip rap shoreline	\$20,000
Canoe/Kayak launch	\$5,000
GI Garage room replacement	\$20,000
Ophelia's House plumbing	\$10,000
Mowers GI	\$28,000
Mower cab and brush	\$15,000

Admin Center

Atrium skylight repair	\$36,000
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Not Funded (Capital Requests)

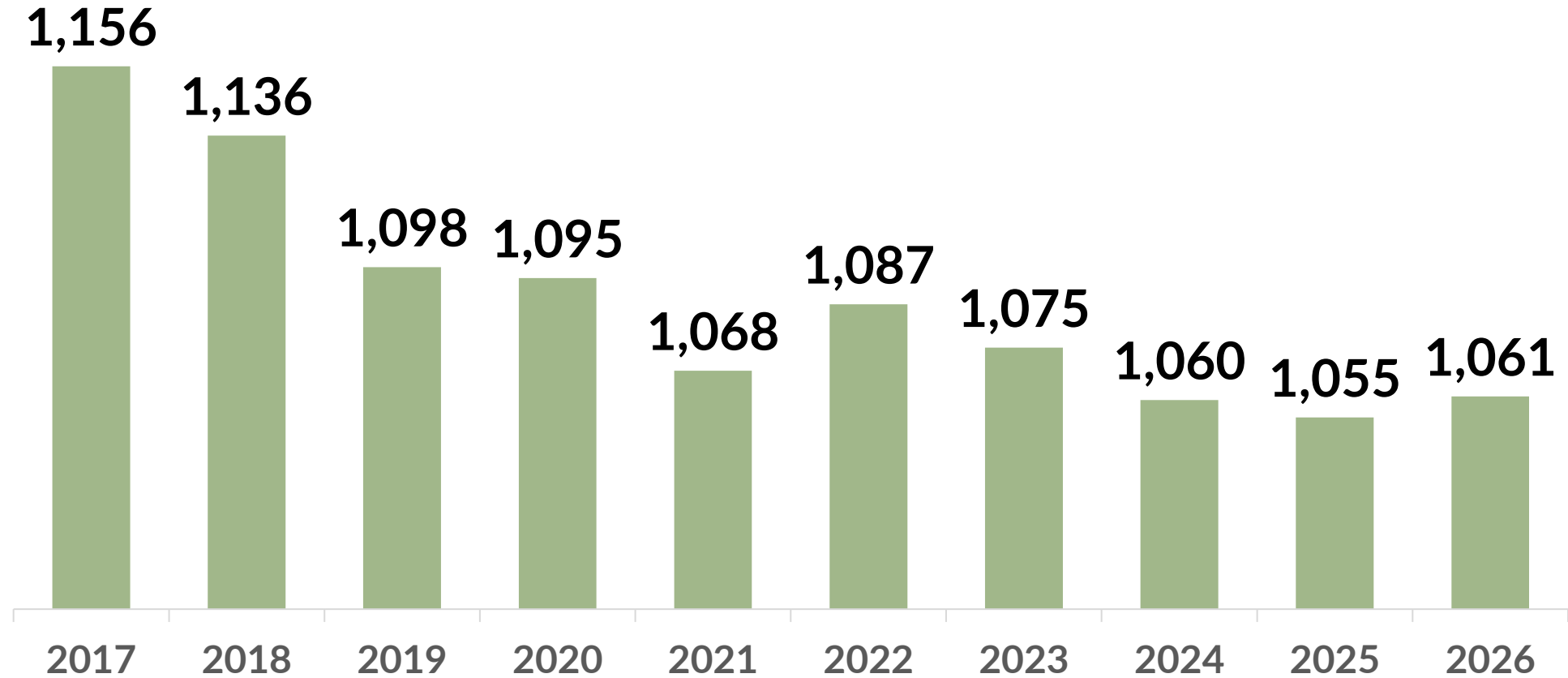
- Goosey Golf upgrade
- New surveyor vehicle
 - **Solution:** Share Land Con vehicles
- Emergency response team vehicle for Sheriff's Office
 - **Solution:** Repurposed Highway Department Van
- Courtroom and County Board Room upgrades
- Jail study recommendations

Outside Requests

Four criteria for consistency (must meet all):

1. The requestor is a government entity
 2. La Crosse County has supported similar projects in the past
 3. The request meets a need of La Crosse County
 4. La Crosse County is not the primary source of funds
- La Crosse County Historical Society – **no additional funds**
 - Holmen Community Center - **no**
 - La Crosse Center – **yes**, previous resolution and meets four criteria
 - Lake Onalaska Lake District – **yes**, but will be “no” in the future if they don’t tax

Budgeted FTE (Full Time Equivalent) Employees (+6)



Employee Count +6.08 FTE

2026 BUDGET PROCESS

Risk Manager	1.00
Patrol Deputy	1.00
Adolescent Services Worker	2.50
Clinical Therapist	1.00
Dental Assistant	-.22
Accounting Specialist	-1.00
Account Clerk	<u>-1.00</u>
Total Addition	3.28

2025 CHANGES

Library Page	.37
Deputy Clerk of Court	2.00
Long Term Care	1.43
Social Worker (Res)	2.00
Social Services Specialist	1.50
Homeless Response	-1.00
Administrative Clerk	-2.00
Social Worker	<u>-1.50</u>
Total Reconciling	2.80

Opioid Plan 2026 Budget Summary

A. Justice

1. Jail Services	\$314,600
2. Treatment Courts & Deflection	\$ 6,000
3. Housing	\$ 80,000

B. Child Welfare

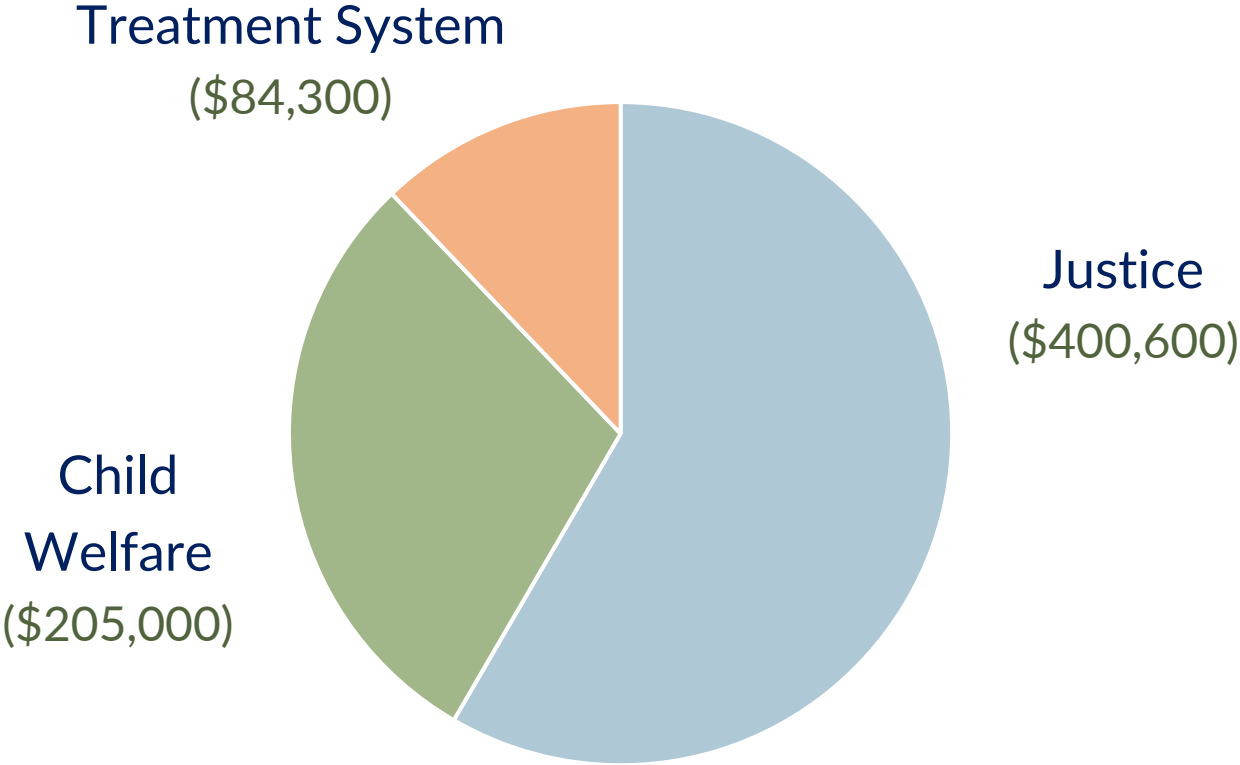
1. Prevention – Home Visiting	\$100,000
2. Treatment	\$ 5,000
3. Housing	\$100,000

C. Treatment System

1. System Coordination	\$ 48,300
2. Harm Reduction	\$ 6,000
3. Artificial Intelligence	\$ 10,000
4. Housing	\$ 20,000

Year#1 Allocation

\$689,900*



*Includes \$200,000 in housing supports

Pathways Home: 5-Year Plan

- **Pathways Home** is a long-term plan, *not* a line item.
- **Specialized Unit** (6 social workers, 3 Peer Support Specialists)
 - Prior approval for homelessness response manager
 - Others were existing positions repurposed for the unit
 - Medicaid funded

- Pathways Home is a plan for existing budgeted resources.

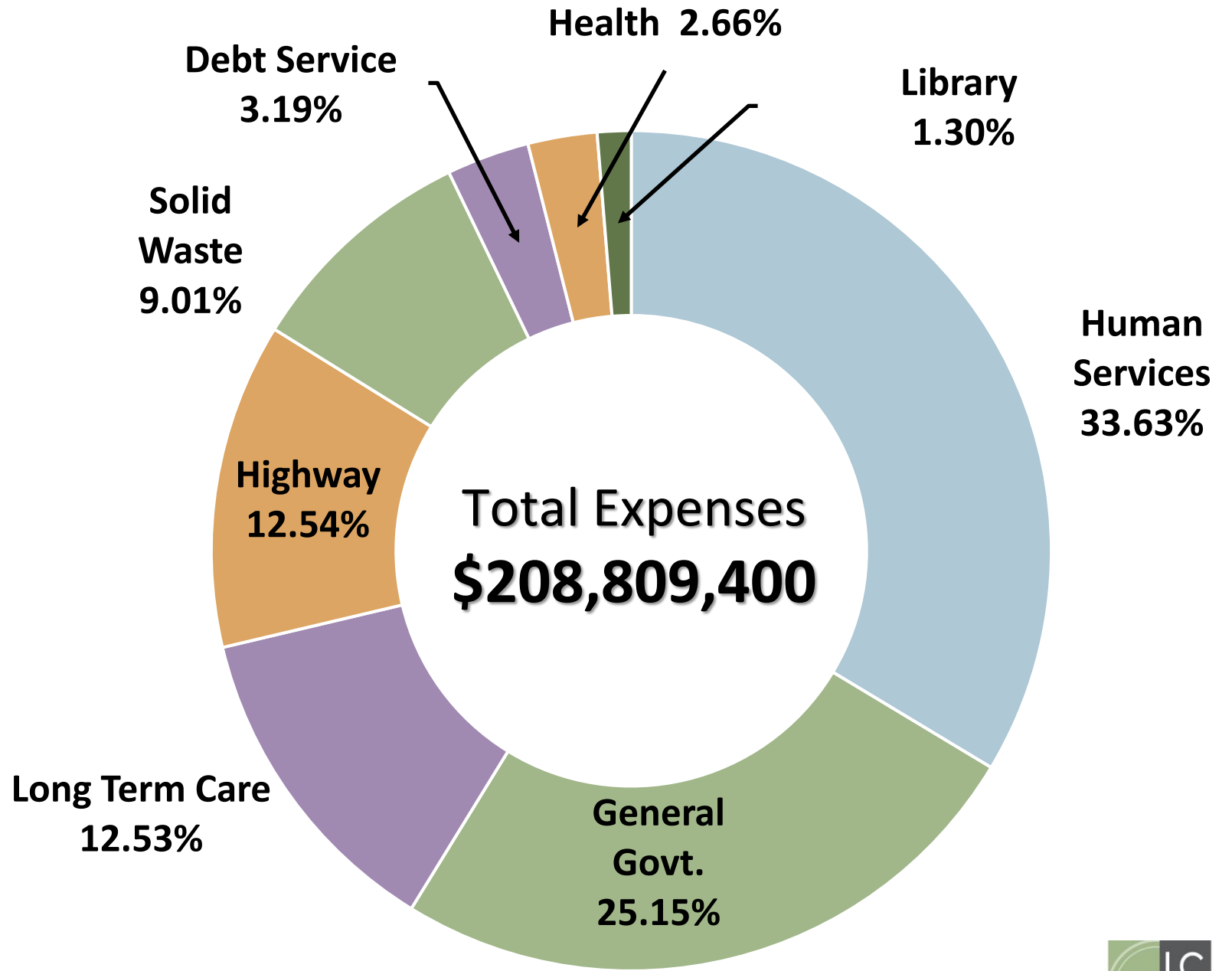
Pathways Home: 5-Year Plan

- The plan has helped unlock **Medicaid 1915(i)** funding to cover staff time connecting people to housing.
- Pathways Home also helped county win a \$350,000 deflection grant.
- **Thriving Families** (16 units) and **Park Lane Studios** (10 units)
 - Now part of the plan, developed prior to Pathways launch
 - Funding for both projects comes from the federal American Rescue Plan Act.

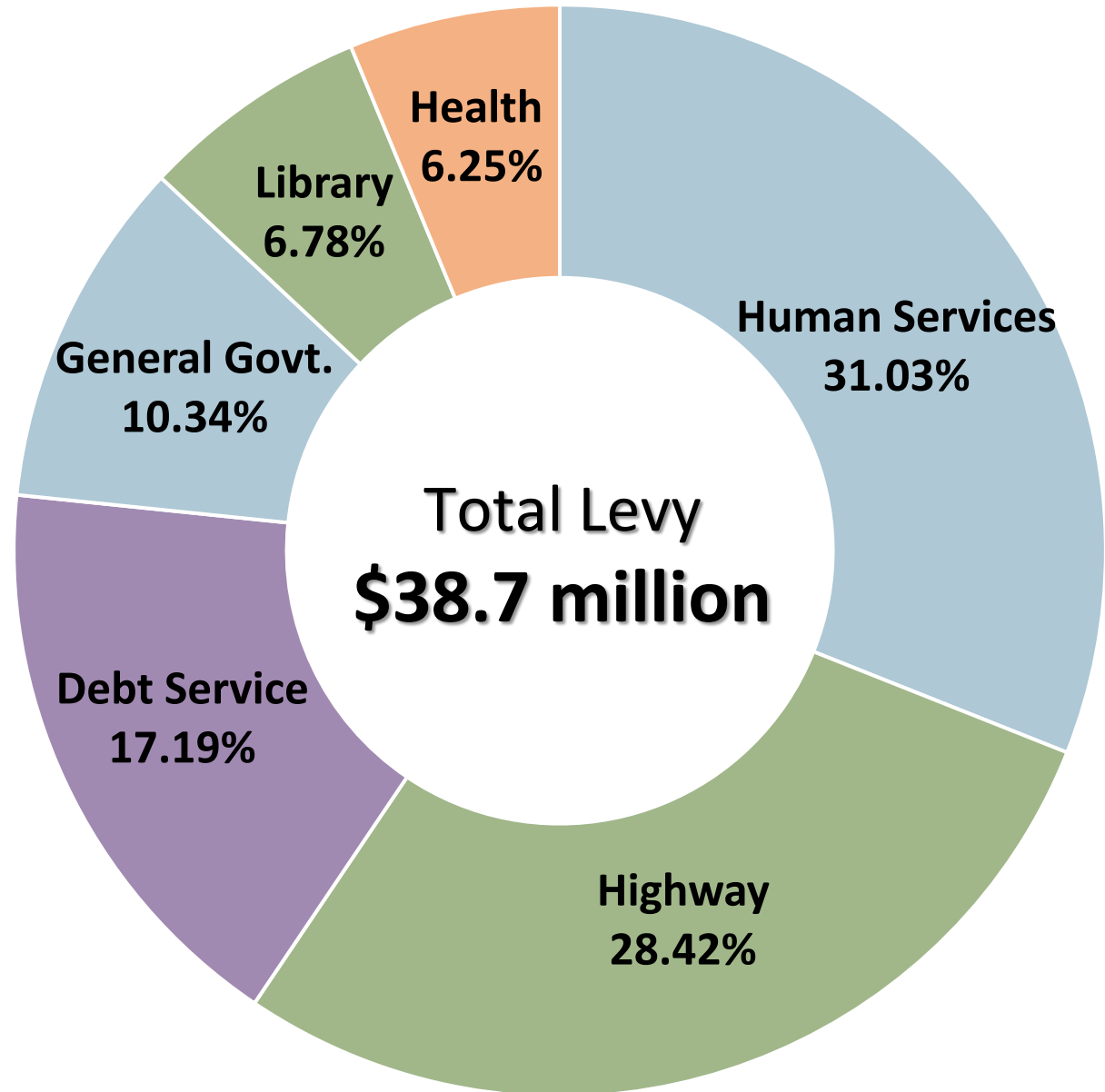
3. Overview of Discretionary Funding

NOVEMBER 3, 2025

2026 Budget
**Where the
Money
Goes**



2026 Budget
**Property
Tax Levy
(+2.1%)**



2026 Budgeted Discretionary Funding

- Property Tax Levy: \$38.7 million

plus

- Sales Tax: \$17.5 million

- State Shared Revenue: \$5.1 million

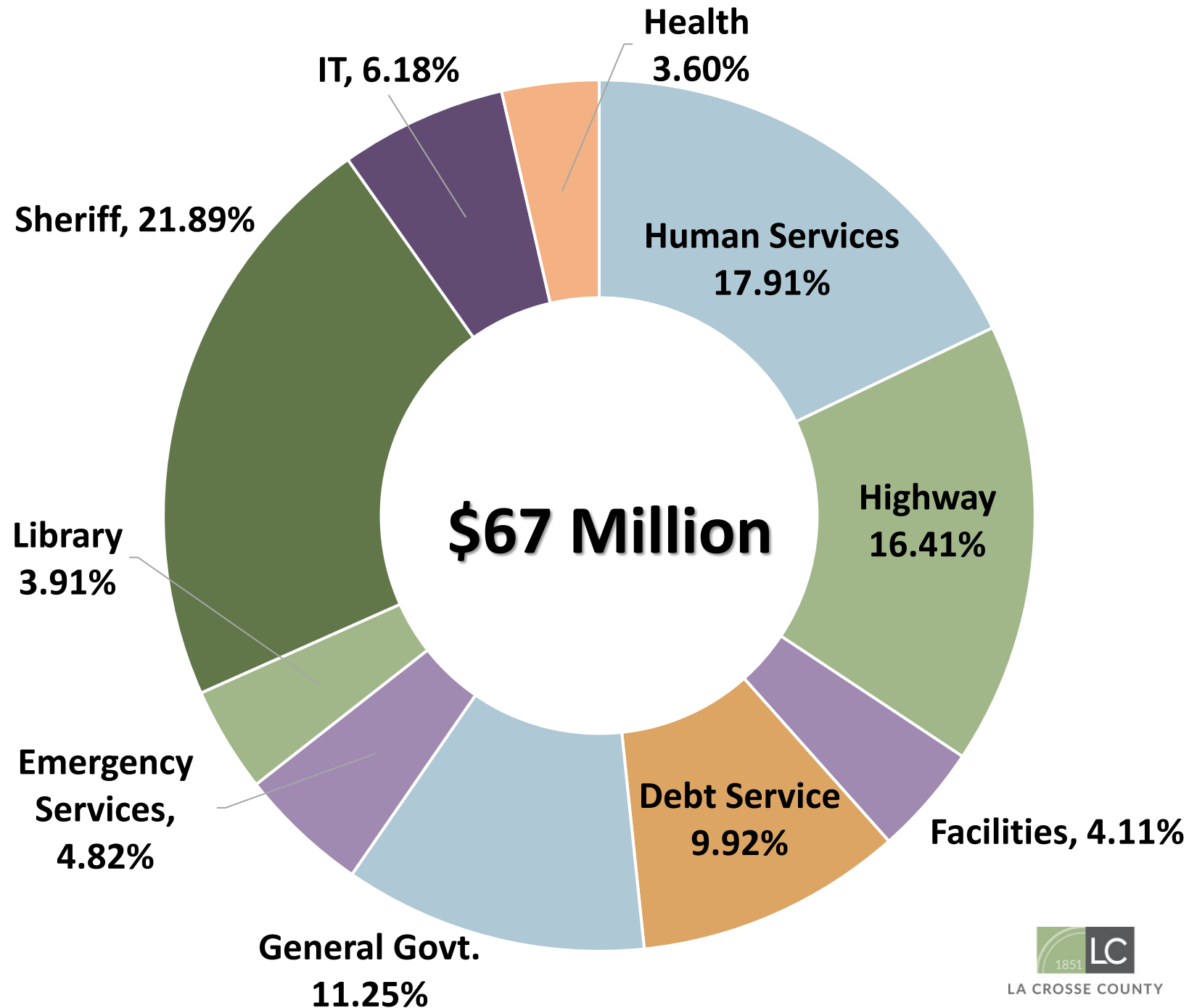
- Interest Income: \$4 million

- Personal Property Aid: \$742,476

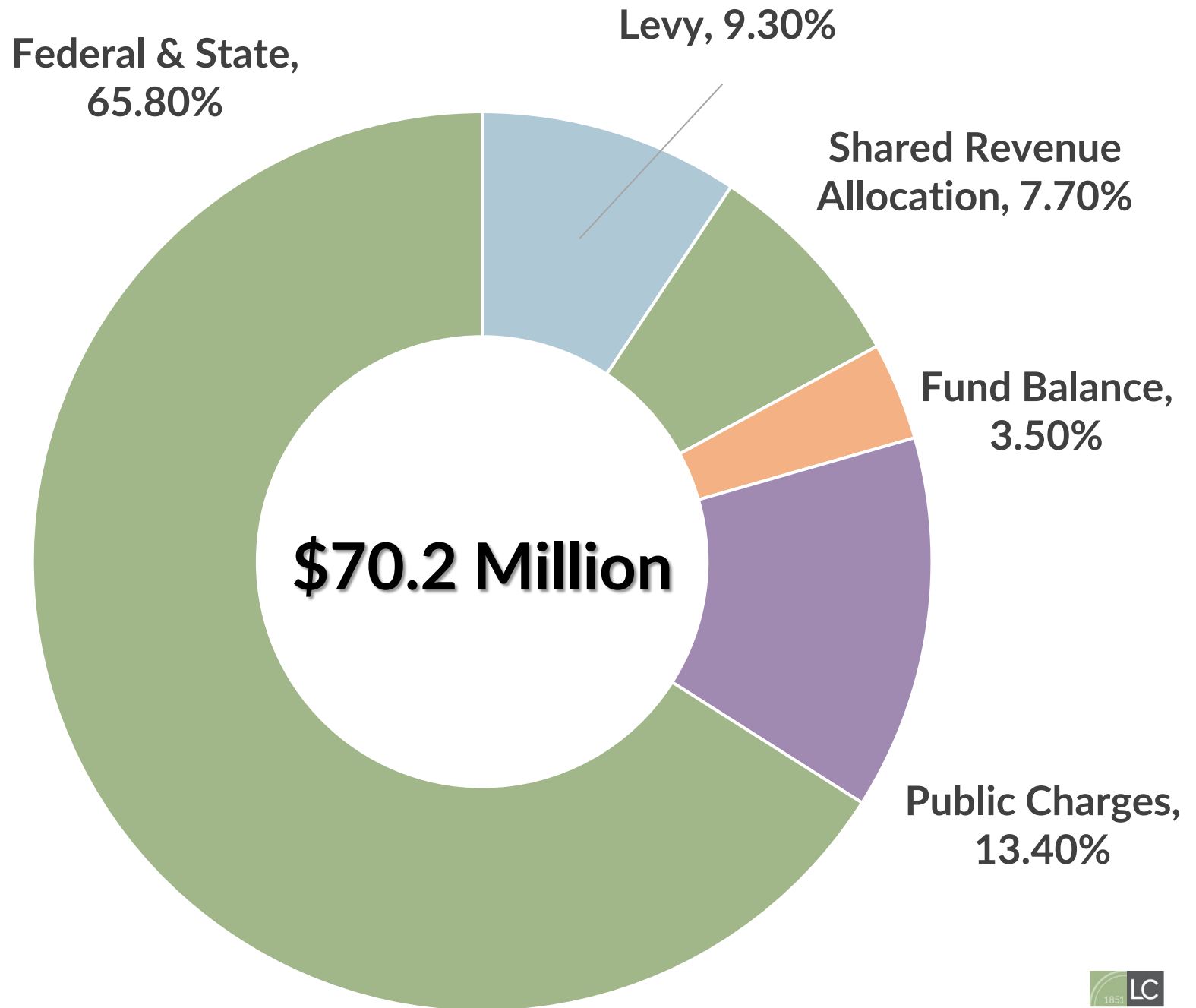
- Utility Tax From State: \$751,000

Total: \$67 million.

2026 Budget
Discretionary
Funding
Allocation



2026 Budget
Human
Services
Budget Detail



2026 Key Budget Takeaways

1. Maintains **exceptional service** to the public.
2. Reduces debt while keeping a strong **fund balance**
3. Supports more than **1,000** family-wage jobs.
4. Advances **Strategic Plan** initiatives to strengthen the economy, improve housing access, promote sustainability, and support public safety.
5. Budget **public hearing and vote** Nov. 10