

The Way We Pay for Critical Local Services is Broken

We Need YOU To Tell The Story

Wisconsin local leaders; you know better than anyone how Wisconsin's one-two punch of levy limits and declining shared revenue is strangling your ability to sustain police, fire, EMS, public works and the other essential services provided by local government.

It's time to start telling that story; and we need your help to do that. We need you to tell legislators, local service clubs, citizens, area businesses, and the media (whoever will listen) that **"The system of paying for essential services is broken and it's up to the Wisconsin Legislature to fix it."**

This messaging guide will help you tell the story.

How to tell your story:

1) Put together the story of a recent budget cut, staff reduction, services you've deferred, or other "belt-tightening" you've had to do in the last couple of years. Keep it local, make it specific and make it simple.

EXAMPLE: In the last budget, the city eliminated two positions in the police department and stopped doing nuisance building inspections.

EXAMPLE: The village is struggling to find volunteers to adequately staff its ambulance service and therefore needs to shift to a full-time professional staffing model, but the village can't afford this change due to levy limits.

2) It's not just your community. Tie your story to the bigger picture by using one or more of these facts:

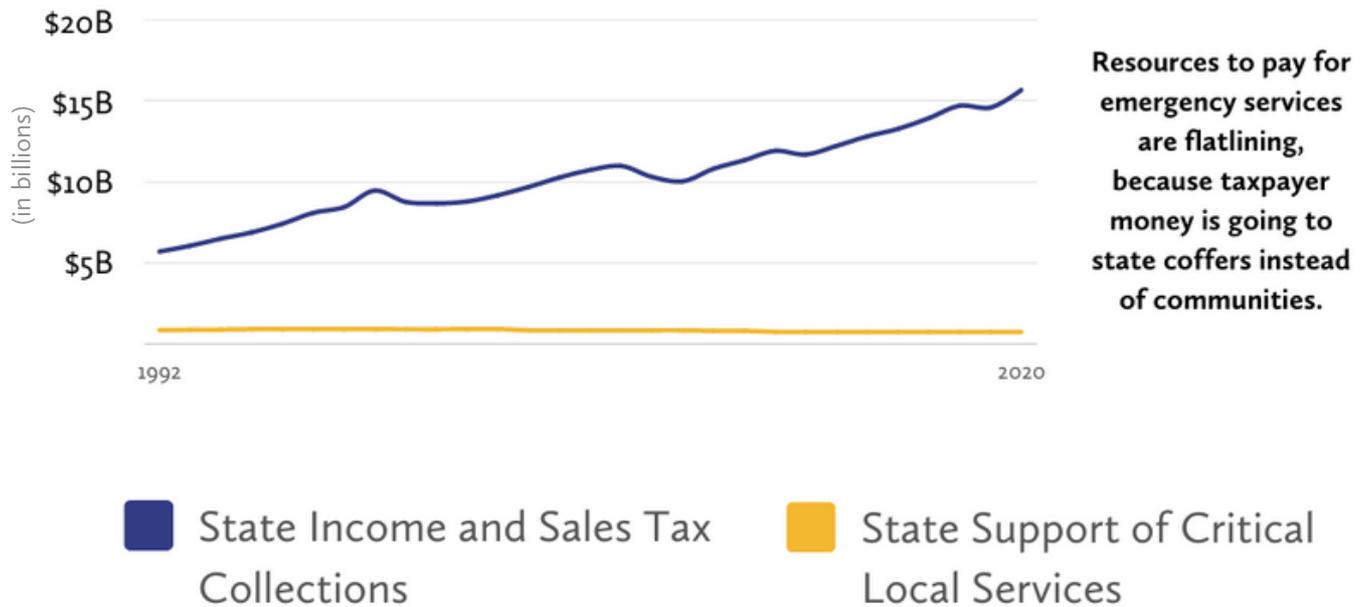
- Between 2018-19: 253 municipalities in Wisconsin cut law enforcement funding
- Between 2018-19: 59 communities reduced the number of officers on the street
- Between 2018-19: one in three Wisconsin municipalities cut back on fire protection.
- State tax revenues have tripled in the last thirty years, but the share of those taxes going to support police, fire, EMS and other local services has actually gone DOWN. (See graph).

3) Tell it, tell it, and tell it again. Use these talking points in your meetings with the Governor, with state legislators, with candidates for state office, with area businesses, with local media and in your speeches to local service groups. Repeat it a dozen times.

The League is working for you

The League is working with state lawmakers, counties, towns and first responder organizations to find a solution to this broken funding system. We are working with a team of finance experts on options. There are many solutions to this critical problem, but everything starts with defining the problem. And for that, YOU are the best spokesperson. Please help.

State Support of First Responders is Flatlining



Data Source: Legislative Fiscal Bureau.

Questions?

This is the League's highest legislative priority, and we will do whatever is needed to help you tell this important story. If you need advice, examples, or other ideas please contact the following League staff: Jerry Deschane (608-347-1792), Curt Witynski (608-267-3294) Toni Herkert (608-716-8215) or Gail Sumi (608-267-4477).