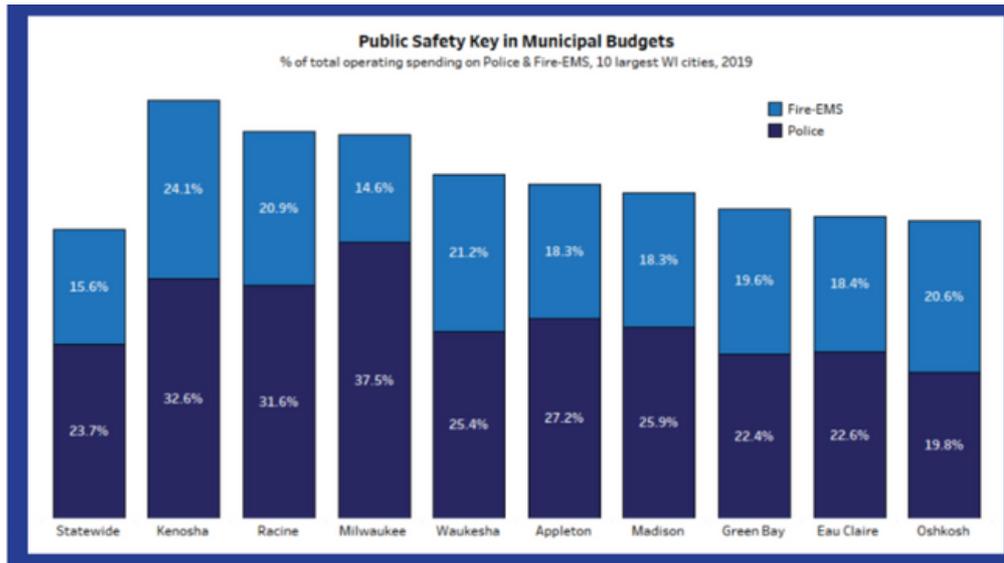


# What Matters: Funding Critical Local Services

## Police and Fire/EMS Services

- Wisconsin is the only state in the country that funds critical first responder services largely from property taxes. We cannot rely exclusively on property taxes to fund these critical services that enable our society to function.
  - Nearly 80 percent of the emergency medical services in Wisconsin are owned, operated, or supported by city, village, and town governments.



Source: Wisconsin Policy Forum, August 2021

- Cities and villages need reliable, growing, and diverse sources of revenue to continue to serve the needs of residents including the ability to provide public safety services.
  - Wisconsin municipalities currently receive most funding from two sources: property taxes and shrinking state aid (in the form of shared revenue).
- State aid programs that help pay for city services need to be better funded and redesigned.
  - Over the last 20 years, state aid for police, fire, and other critical services has been steadily declining in real dollars, while inflation has caused average prices to increase by 51 percent.
  - Since 2011, shared revenue decreased by 9 percent while the cost of maintaining spending on police, fire, and EMS increased by almost 17 percent.

**Funding local governments is in need of serious repair and reform:**

**Since 2011**

shared revenue has decreased by 9% while the cost of operating police, fire and EMS has increased by 16.7%.



**Over the last 20 years**

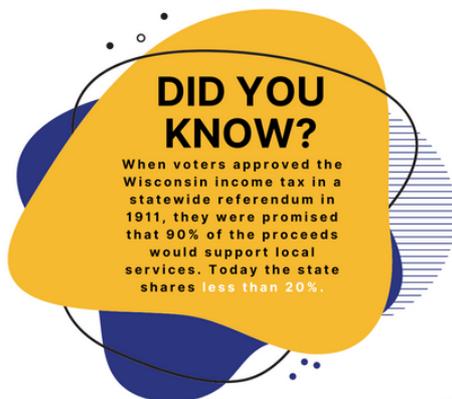
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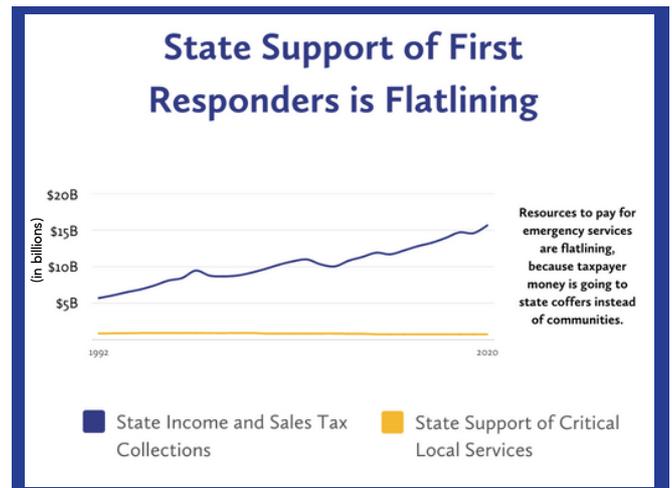
Source: Legislative Fiscal Bureau, January 2021

## Reforming Funding

- Our current system of funding local governments needs serious repair and reform, and we must find new ways to properly fund local governments.
- No other state places such an overwhelming majority of the local government and school funding burden onto property taxes.
  - According to a February 2019 report by the Wisconsin Policy Forum, Wisconsin municipalities rank seventh nationally for being most reliant on property taxes to pay for local services.
- Over reliance on property taxes to pay for K–12 schooling, county government and municipal services places too much of a burden on residential property owners and small businesses.
  - Homeowners in many communities have no capacity for paying higher property taxes.
  - Currently, 68 percent of the statewide property tax levy is paid by homeowners.



Source: Legislative Fiscal Bureau Memo



Data Source: Legislative Fiscal Bureau

For more information, contact Jerry Deschane, Executive Director, or Toni Herkert, Government Affairs Director, for the League of Wisconsin Municipalities at [jdeschane@lwm-info.org](mailto:jdeschane@lwm-info.org) or [therkert@lwm-info.org](mailto:therkert@lwm-info.org).

The League of Wisconsin Municipalities advocates for Wisconsin's cities and villages, large and small, urban and rural, speaking up for local democracy and common-sense citizen led government. Learn more at <http://www.lwm-info.org/>