



**County
of Will**

Fiscal Year 2022

Federal Priorities

Will County, Illinois

COUNTY OF WILL

302 N. Chicago Street, Joliet, IL 60432

Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant
Will County Executive



Mimi Cowan
Will County Board Speaker

To the Illinois Congressional Delegation,

Will County is pleased to present to you its Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Federal Agenda. As the national agenda continues to focus on economic growth and the health of the American people, our 2022 Federal Agenda also reflects those issues as they affect our residents.

Included in this document are an examination of authorities, regional priorities, federal programs and County projects all linked to action Will County would like to see the Biden Administration and the 117th Congress take in FY 2022.

One focus of the Federal Agenda is transportation and infrastructure. As the home to two intermodals, making Will County the largest inland port in the nation, improving area infrastructure is a vital piece of keeping goods moving across the country. That makes Will County infrastructure important to the economy nationwide. The County is acutely interested in any action on a large infrastructure package.

Federal funding is vital to many Will County programs that affect low- and middle-class households. These programs provide healthcare for those who otherwise can't afford it, help with rent, fight food insecurity, and creating affordable housing, to name a few. Will County continues to be a careful steward of these funds, often leveraging them to procure other funds, giving each dollar extra value. We ask that the funding stay the same or increase for these domestic discretionary programs in FY 2022.

Will County has presented a precise, focused agenda, which we hope will be of benefit as the 117th Congress works through FY 2022. The County strives to be proactive with its federal agenda, but is always interested in the congressional delegation's insight and assistance in identifying available grant opportunities and other programs that may fit our need.

Will County appreciates all the Illinois Delegation has done and continues to do for our county.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant
Will County Executive

Mimi Cowan
Will County Board Speaker

WILL COUNTY BOARD

DISTRICT	COUNTY BOARD MEMBER	COMMITTEES
1	Sherry Newquist	Diversity & Inclusion Committee Legislative & Judicial Committee Public Works & Transportation Committee – Vice-Chair
1	Judy Ogalla <i>Minority Whip</i>	Executive Committee Finance Committee Land Use & Development Committee Legislative & Judicial Committee
2	Amanda Koch	Land Use & Development Committee – Vice-Chair Legislative & Judicial Committee
2	Jim Moustis	Executive Committee Finance Committee Public Works & Transportation Committee
3	Raquel M. Mitchell	Diversity & Inclusion Committee Public Health & Safety Committee
3	Margaret Tyson <i>Majority Whip</i>	Diversity & Inclusion Committee – Chair Executive Committee Finance Committee – Vice-Chair Public Health & Safety Committee
4	Kenneth E. Harris	Diversity & Inclusion Committee Executive Committee Finance Committee – Chair Land Use & Development Committee
4	Jacqueline Traynere	Capital Improvements Committee Finance Committee Land Use & Development Committee
5	Gretchen Fritz	Capital Improvements Committee Diversity & Inclusion Committee
5	Meta Mueller <i>Majority Leader</i>	Capital Improvements Committee Executive Committee – Vice-Chair Public Health & Safety Committee – Vice-Chair Ex-Officio Member Of All Committees
6	Don Gould	Capital Improvements Committee Public Works & Transportation Committee
6	Joe Van Duyne	Capital Improvements Committee – Vice-Chair Executive Committee Public Works & Transportation Committee – Chair

WILL COUNTY BOARD

7	Steve Balich	Land Use & Development Committee
7	Mike Fricilone <i>Minority Leader</i>	Executive Committee Finance Committee Ex-Officio Member Of All Committees
8	Herbert Brooks, Jr.	Capital Improvements Committee – Chair Executive Committee Public Works & Transportation Committee
8	Denise E. Winfrey	Diversity & Inclusion Committee – Vice-Chair Executive Committee Legislative & Judicial Committee – Chair Public Works & Transportation Committee
9	Annette Parker	Capital Improvements Committee Executive Committee Public Health & Safety Committee
9	Rachel Ventura	Executive Committee Finance Committee Public Health & Safety Committee – Chair
10	Natalie Coleman	Capital Improvements Committee Legislative & Judicial Committee – Vice-Chair
10	Tyler Marcum	Executive Committee Finance Committee Land Use & Development Committee – Chair Legislative & Judicial Committee
11	Julie Berkowicz	Capital Improvements Committee Diversity & Inclusion Committee Legislative & Judicial Committee
11	Mimi Cowan <i>Will County Board Speaker</i>	Executive Committee – Chair
12	Frankie Pretzel	Finance Committee Public Works & Transportation Committee
12	Tom Weigel	Land Use & Development Committee Legislative & Judicial Committee Public Works & Transportation Committee
13	Mica Freeman	Public Health & Safety Committee Public Works & Transportation Committee
13	Debbie Kraulidis	Legislative & Judicial Committee Public Health & Safety Committee

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AUTHORIZATIONS

Enhancing County Infrastructure

Infrastructure Priorities, Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Other Infrastructure Packages

Federal infrastructure policy was expected to be front and center in 2020 with the 2015 federal surface transportation law, Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, having expired on Sept. 30, 2020. While significant work was done by several House committees with jurisdiction over infrastructure policy and investment, most notably the House Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) Committee, the Coronavirus pandemic and 2020 Presidential Election complicated efforts to enact meaningful infrastructure laws that would bring new federal investments and policies. Will County looks forward to engaging with the Biden Administration and Congress on an infrastructure package and/or a surface transportation bill in 2021.

Will County did support many of the legislative items included in the House passed Moving Forward Act, H.R. 2, which provided roughly \$1.5 trillion in federal infrastructure investment in surface transportation, education, clean energy, water infrastructure, and several other areas of infrastructure policy.

Robust funding of surface transportation programs is necessary if the United States is going to effectively move past the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. While the Moving Forward Act did not address the sustainability issues that have required the regular infusion of general fund dollars into the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) to keep it solvent, an important priority for Will County, it did provide roughly \$500 billion in funding for surface transportation programs and included several innovative policy solutions.

Future economic growth in the Will County region is tied to efficient movement of goods and how that plays into the region's overall resilient infrastructure system. Will County was heartened to see the Moving Forward Act included significantly more funding for the National Highway Freight Program as well as for the Projects of National & Regional Significance, known as INFRA, the federal discretionary freight project program. Within the freight funding programs, Will County was also supportive of more dollars being allocated to both urban and rural freight corridors and the removal of the cap on funding multimodal freight projects. Should freight programs receive funding at these levels, and with these policy changes, in either an infrastructure/economic stimulus package or the authorization of the surface transportation law, our region will be well positioned because of freight congestion in the County and around the intermodal yards.

Transportation is a critical link in the Will County region's continued development. Investments in transportation that maintain and enhance an efficient and high-quality transportation system within the community and provide access to other business markets are critical for continued growth of the County's economy. Federal funds to preserve existing system assets and to expand the system to support economic success must be increased significantly. Will County supports dedicated funding for bridge replacement and improvement, congestion mitigation, improving safety, and reducing permitting requirements. The County also strongly supports multimodal freight options while targeting performance-based investments that can lead to pollution reductions.

Will County is a vital part of the United States freight system with five major interstates, multiple regional and Class I railroads, intercity and commuter rail services, inland waterways, aviation facilities and major intermodal freight yards – the largest Inland Port in North America is located in the County.

The County and State of Illinois continue to educate elected officials and stakeholders through the findings detailed in the 2017 Community Friendly Freight Mobility plan that examined how the region must address the congestion issues through the strategic planning of future infrastructure investments.

Will County has recently invested resources with other local stakeholders on additional studies to better understand the region's infrastructure. The County is planning to utilize new data and information to assist with future planning decisions through the Will County – Joliet Intermodal Transportation Master Plan, the Western Will County Truck Routing and Communities Study (Truck

Routing Strategy), and the Will County Freight Transportation and Land Use Strategy (Land Use Strategy) Study.

Will County Infrastructure Plans and Studies

The Will County Community Friendly Freight Mobility Plan identifies and provides guidance for local freight policies, programs, and investments, while also creating a mechanism for evaluating and prioritizing freight-related projects, recognizing six key areas: safety, mobility, preservation enhancement, workforce, economic competitiveness, and community livability. With support from state, county, and local organizations and input from the public and other stakeholders, the comprehensive Freight Plan provides recommendations to:

- Improve freight mobility and access,
- Embrace new trends, such as e-commerce,
- Grow the local economy and skilled workforce,
- Enhance the quality of life for Will County residents, and
- Comply with federal rules to ensure funding eligibility.

The County's freight study is a helpful tool for identifying which projects are most critical to the region (the study identified 25 tier 1 freight-related projects) based on criteria such as preservation enhancement, safety, mobility, economic competitiveness, community sensitivity, and environmental sensitivity. This information will be helpful to the White House, U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and Congress as they look for quality projects to fund from the next surface transportation reauthorization bill or potential infrastructure bill.

The County is also in the middle of three other infrastructure related studies.

- The Will County – Joliet Intermodal Transportation Master Plan, which builds on findings and recommendations in the Freight Plan. The County is partnering with the City of Joliet, IDOT and private industrial interests in the intermodal area to develop a transportation improvement program that will identify and prioritize projects that will ease congestion and improve safety. Projects are being identified using the goals and priorities developed in both the Freight Plan and the County's long-range transportation plan, Will Connects 2040.
- The Western Will County Truck Routing and Communities Study (Truck Routing Strategy) will aid in developing east/west truck routes to help move freight from warehouses / intermodal developments in Will County to interstate highways. CMAP has identified Will County as one of the fastest growing freight land use clusters and a critical component to the regions' freight hub.
- The Will County Freight Transportation and Land Use Strategy (Land Use Strategy) Study will examine how to best support corridors in areas with high truck traffic, rail and/or industrial and commercial land uses. The intent is to maximize compatibility and avoid conflicts in freight-supportive areas when planning for potential land uses and community facilities.

Surface Transportation Reauthorization/Infrastructure Package Priorities

- Fund critical regional projects, through both formula and discretionary programs, such as the widening of I-80, the Houbolt Bridge Extension Public-Private Partnership, Laraway Road Corridor, Weber Road Phase I – (Airport Road to 135th Street), Laraway Road Phase I – (Cedar Road to US Route 45/LaGrange Road), Manhattan-Monee Road Phase I – (Center Road to Monee Corporate Limits), Gougar Road Phase I – (Laraway to Francis), which may include crossing improvements, and IDOT – 1-55 Lorenzo Road and Route 129.
- Provide significant increases to the federal formula program designed to target freight system improvements, increasing funding for INFRA, the freight funding discretionary program, and CRISI, the discretionary grant program that funds capital projects that will improve passenger and freight rail transportation systems. Increasing the INFRA multimodal cap to at least 50 percent. Creating other opportunities to provide strategic investments to address increased growth and decrease freight congestion in Will County. In 2018, two freight projects in the County, one at I-80 and US 30, and the other in Plainfield at IL Route 126 and 143rd, received \$34.3 million and \$20 million, respectively, in federal freight formula dollars.
- Prioritize funding allocated to surface transportation projects that target freight system improvements.

- The reauthorization/infrastructure package should recognize the significant resources required to operate and maintain transportation assets and provide incentives to project sponsors to use innovative technologies, materials and strategies that will reduce on-going costs, improve safety, increase efficiency, and provide a longer useful life.
- Address the long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) to ensure that federal surface transportation programs remain sustainable and robust.
- Provide greater transparency to U.S. DOT's INFRA, BUILD and CRISI decision-making processes, so that applicants and interested stakeholders gain a better understanding of where the DOT is prioritizing these dollars and what makes a successful application.
- Increase in the percentage of funding that is sub-allocated to local governments with an emphasis for federal formula and discretionary dollars to be allocated to local projects based on consistent and thoughtful analysis and metrics.
- Provisions addressing highway safety near intermodal yards.
- Significant funding plus-ups for all federal surface transportation programs, but especially for the freight formula program and competitive freight grant program.
- Reauthorizing the surface transportation law prior to its expiration on Sept. 30, 2021. Relying on stopgap measures causes delays and creates uncertainty for our nation's highways, bridges, railroads, waterways, freight yards and aviation facilities and makes it difficult for state and local transportation agencies to plan infrastructure investments.
- Robust funding including the creation of a multi-billion-dollar discretionary grant program for bridge projects and related infrastructure for both state and local governments.

Future County Investments

Municipal Bonds Critical to Will County Development

Will County is competitive when leveraging bonds for critical municipal facilities. Since 2015, the County has utilized nearly \$300 million in bonds to finance a public safety complex, courthouse, and a health department facility. The \$32.3 million public safety complex was completed in November 2017, and is the home of the sheriff's department, the newly consolidated Laraway Communications Center, and the offices of the Emergency Telephone System Board, which oversees the county's 911 system. Both the \$205 million, 365,000 square-foot, 10-story courthouse and new start-of-the-art health center opened in 2020.

Congress and the White House maintained the tax-exempt treatment of municipal bonds in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. This commitment allows local governments to utilize this vital tool to make key investments in their communities at the lowest possible costs.

In future developments of tax legislation, either through technical corrections of the 2017 Act, or by introducing standalone tax extenders legislation, the County continues to support making it less costly for local governments to borrow money to fund capital projects whether through tax-exempt municipal bonds or through other financing tools, such as private activity bonds.

Another significant tool the County utilizes is the State and Local Tax (SALT) deduction. The deduction makes it possible for state and local governments to increase revenue to fund critical projects while lessening the impact for individuals and households. The 2017 Act capped the deduction at \$10,000, which hurts state and local governments. There has been discussion early in the 117th Congress to increase the cap or eliminate the cap altogether. Will County supports increasing the cap, which directly impacts households and communities.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Coronavirus Response, Relief and Recovery

Addressing the community, health, and financial challenges that have resulted from the Coronavirus pandemic are top priorities for Will County. This includes, but is not limited to, stopping the spread, swift vaccine rollout, safely reopening the community, and sustainable economic recovery. The Coronavirus-relief packages passed in the 116th Congress provided much needed assistance and relief to the county.

Will County was a direct recipient of Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) from the CARES Act and used the \$120 million allocation to establish resilient and comprehensive emergency response systems, increase testing, and purchasing necessary PPE. The County also allocated CARES funding to local governments, including cities and villages, fire districts, parks, and school districts. Financial assistance was provided to small businesses and non-profits impacted by COVID-19 as well. Funding was also used for veteran housing support and homeless prevention efforts. Local governments across the country had significant responsibilities related to responding to the pandemic. We support additional direct federal allocations to state and local governments that can be used to for various COVID-19 related expenses, such as replacing lost revenue that resulted from the pandemic, which will help keep state and local government workers employed and crucial services open. As a responsible recipient of CRF dollars, we hope our success shows County governments should continue to receive direct allocations of federal relief funding.

Will County is a part of Illinois Region 7 and as of March 22, 2021 has a positivity rate of 3.4 percent, 67,374 residents have confirmed cases of COVID-19 and there are 933 confirmed deaths.

Will County has developed a vaccination program which utilizes a collaborative partnership between the county Health Department and more than 30 providers including local hospitals, EMS providers, pharmacies and other healthcare providers. The vaccination program is based on recommendations and requirements from the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and is a phased approach with set priority groups.

The following federal programs have been critical throughout the pandemic:

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program
- Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) Program
- FEMA Public Assistance Program
- HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME)
- Homeless Assistance Programs (including the Continuum of Care (CoC) and Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Programs)
- Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loans
- Section 8/Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program
- Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) Program
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program

Additional comprehensive Coronavirus-relief is necessary to continue to support vaccine rollout, acquire PPE and testing, provide economic relief, and support local governments. In future Coronavirus-relief legislation we support the following:

- Direct funding for State and Local Governments – especially to Counties – that can be used for revenue loss resulting from the pandemic.
- Ensuring financial resources for unemployed individuals or those at-risk of unemployment through the continuation of additional funding in the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program through the duration of the public health crisis.
- Appropriating emergency funding for childcare programs including Head Start and Early Head Start to prevent parents from having to choose between their children or work.
- Expanding paid sick leave and paid family leave tax credits for county government employees.

- Allocating additional funding to the Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loans that support small businesses and impacted industries, so those businesses stay open and limit job loss.

Opioid Epidemic – A Public Health Challenge

The COVID-19 crisis has created additional challenges for people with an opioid use disorder. COVID-19 related shelter-in-place orders have pushed people into isolation, decreased already limited access to treatment and disrupted daily support systems. The behavioral health community is raising alarms that the current climate is a risk factor for substance use relapse and mental health crisis. It is likely that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and subsequent disruptions in health care and social safety nets combined with social and economic stressors and the presence of fentanyl will fuel the opioid epidemic.

Will County drug overdose deaths began to rise again in 2019 and continued in 2020, prior to the declaration of the COVID-19 National Emergency in the United States in March. The increases in drug overdose deaths appear to have accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic with a more than 20 percent increase in Illinois (CDC, 2021). The largest increase recorded from March 2020 to May 2020, occurred with the implementation of widespread mitigation measures for the COVID-19 pandemic. The most recent provisional data available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) indicate that approximately 81,230 drug overdose deaths occurred in the United States in the 12-months ending in May 2020. This represents a worsening of the drug overdose epidemic in the United States and is the largest number of drug overdoses for a 12-month period ever recorded. (<https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/2020/pdf/CDC-HAN-00438.pdf>).

Trends by Cause of Overdose Deaths

Synthetic opioids are the primary driver of the increases in overdose deaths. The 12-month count of synthetic opioid deaths increased 38.4 percent from the 12 months ending in June 2019 compared with the 12-months ending in May 2020 (Figure 1). The increase in synthetic opioid-involved overdoses is primarily linked to illicitly manufactured fentanyl. The opioid epidemic has also been complicated by increasing use of methamphetamine and cocaine in combination with opioids. (*MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* 2020; 69 (35): 1189 – 1197. doi:10.15585/mmwr.mm6935a1). Overdose deaths involving cocaine increased by 26.5 percent from the 12 months ending in June 2019 to the 12 months ending in May 2020 (Figure 1).

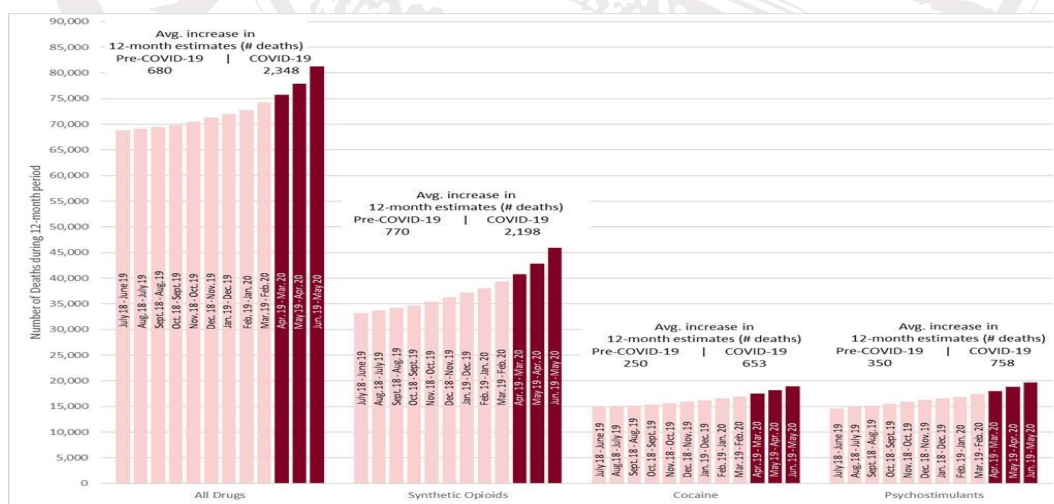


Figure 1: Twelve-month provisional^a drug overdose death counts for all drugs^b, synthetic opioids^c, cocaine^d, and psychostimulants^e, for 50 states, the District of Columbia, and New York City: 12-months ending in June 2019 to 12-months ending in May 2020^f

In 2019, Will County reported **123** opioid related overdose deaths and in 2020 preliminary data shows a 21 percent decrease in overdose deaths. In contrast we saw a **35 percent increase in nonfatal overdoses** in 2020 compared to 2019. The data from the Illinois Department of Public Health shows a sharp uptick in hospitalizations and Emergency Department activity in the first and second quarter of 2020.

WILL COUNTY: FATAL OVERDOSES BY YEAR					
Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	102	126	124	105	123

WILL COUNTY: TOTAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT (ED) ACTIVITY AND HOSPITALIZATIONS FOR OVERDOSES BY YEAR						
Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Q1 / Q2 2020
Overall Totals	349	556	547	521	509	290
EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT (ED) ACTIVITY						
Total	195	387	383	397	382	230
Heroin	134	282	304	301	264	165
Other Opioids	61	105	79	96	118	65
HOSPITALIZATIONS						
Total	154	169	164	124	127	60
Heroin	41	44	51	46	55	25
Other Opioids	113	125	113	78	72	35

We identified early on that COVID-19 was negatively affecting our substance use disorder community. In response, we launched two new programs directly aimed at getting naloxone into the hands of as many people as possible in Will County. Naloxone is a prescription medication approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) designed to reverse an opioid overdose. We targeted the locations where the largest number of overdoses were occurring. Individuals in long-term recovery staff the Rapid Response Naloxone Program Team funded by a grant from the Illinois Department of Human Services. Our partnerships in this venture have grown to include our local food banks, motels and homeless encampments.

Our second strategy was in response to the change in regulations that permitted take-home dosing of methadone. SAMHSA and the DEA have relaxed regulations on Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs) to enable increased telehealth and take-home doses during this public health emergency (ASAM's COVID Guidance for OTPs). In response, the Illinois Department of Human Services provided additional funding to supply two kits with four doses of Narcan to all methadone patients in Will County.

COVID-19 has introduced a number of key challenges to receiving treatment; it has also been accompanied by changes favoring access to care. These changes include (1) reducing financial barriers to treatment and naloxone through the emergency expansion of Medicaid, (2) easing of restrictions on the dispensing of methadone (e.g., take-home doses for 14-28 days instead of daily directly observed dosing), and (3) expanding the role of telemedicine in the care of patients with opioid use disorder (e.g., buprenorphine initiation and follow-up by video or telephone visit). Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act was associated with increased buprenorphine use and naloxone prescribing. Ultimately, the population effect of these policies will depend in part on state, clinic, and clinician implementation and the availability of sufficient infrastructure to meet need. Medication to treat opioid use disorder is consistently underused, and many counties in the

U.S. have a shortage of opioid use disorder treatment. (Sept. 18, 2020. doi:10.1001/jama.2020.18543). Will County is one of those counties.

Change and Innovation Required

Now more than ever, assistance is needed with linkages to housing and social services programs. Many individuals with a substance use disorder struggle with life skills - stable employment, housing, and food insecurity, and ultimately a downward spiral that increases relapse risk and damage to recovery. Such prospects underscore the urgent need for emergency pathways, including through Medicaid waivers, to housing and social services.

Will County Office of Substance Use Initiatives and Will County Workforce Services received the

US Department of Labor IL Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant Program (IOCDWG) Grant to create temporary disaster relief employment (Recovery Coaches) to alleviate the effects of the opiate crisis in Will County. We have partnered with nine behavioral health agencies and placed nineteen recovery coach trainees. This program has helped people struggling with the changes to care created by the COVID-19 epidemic. The Recovery Coach team is comprised of dislocated workers and incumbent workers (currently underemployed or unemployed) who want to support individuals struggling with opioid addiction.

Access to care for Medicaid patients or uninsured is challenging and COVID-19 temporarily forced the closing of the treatment center that cares for these patients. Not only inpatient care but outpatient care was stopped without warning. Upon reopening, capacity was cut by 50 percent due to public health mitigations. This situation has exacerbated the lack of accessible services. As we responded to the pandemic we stopped responding to the opioid epidemic.

The COVID-19 crisis has created many additional challenges for patients with opioid use disorder, including those seeking treatment with medications for OUD. Some of these challenges include closure of substance use treatment clinics, focus of emergency departments on COVID-19 patients, social distancing and shelter in place orders affecting mental health, bystander overdose rescue, threats to income and supply of substances for people who use drugs. While the initial changes in regulation allowing buprenorphine prescribing by telehealth are welcomed by providers and patients, many additional innovations are required to ensure that additional vulnerabilities and hurdles created by this pandemic scenario do not further fan the flames of the opioid epidemic (2020 May 12: 10.1097/ADM.0000000000000684).

Virtual connections to care seem the safest strategy to both initiate and continue care. Rapid changes in regulations have allowed for immediate deployment and learn-as-you-go strategies for telehealth platforms. In many cases, these platforms only require that a patient have a computer or phone and a health system account. Unfortunately, that creates a large divide between the socially vulnerable patients most at risk and the patient population that receives highly reimbursed care from the health system with ready access to their clinicians via email, phone, or telehealth appointments. In many cases, health insurance companies dictate care rather than behavioral health physicians. This is often the biggest barrier to care. Medicaid patients are the most vulnerable.

Although the pandemic threatens everyone, it is a particularly grave risk to the millions of Americans with opioid use disorder, who — already vulnerable and marginalized — are heavily dependent on face-to-face health care delivery. Rapid and coordinated action on the part of clinicians and policymakers is required if these threats are to be mitigated. Now more than ever Emergency Departments (ED) need to provide care after an overdose and not just stabilization. The standard practice of care in an ED is not consistent, which continues the stigma that people with substance use disorder don't deserve best practice. The COVID-19 pandemic strikes at a moment when our national response to the opioid crisis was beginning to coalesce, with more persons gaining access to treatment and more patients receiving effective medications). COVID19 threatens to dramatically overshadow and reverse this progress.

Those in recovery are uniquely challenged by social distancing measures. Social distancing will increase the likelihood of opioid overdoses happening when there are no observers who can administer naloxone to reverse them and thus when they are more likely to result in fatalities. Persons

who are isolated and stressed — as much of the population is during a pandemic — frequently turn to substances to alleviate their negative feelings. Those in recovery will face stresses and heightened urges to use substances and will be at greatly increased risk for relapse.

The following policies and funding are very important:

- Continue funding The Illinois Department of Human Services/Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery (IDHS/SUPR), which administers the Drug Overdose Prevention Program (DOPP), the grants that expand the provision and use of naloxone and overdose prevention education that have funded Will County's program for the last five years.
- Expand locations in which overdose prevention education and take-home naloxone are provided, especially in Emergency Departments after an overdose and jails when people with an opioid use disorder are released.
- Require payment for peer recovery support specialists to promote engagement in treatment and long-term recovery.
- Expand access to and provision of evidence-based treatment for substance use disorders.
- Repeal the "inmate exclusion" that bars the use of federal Medicaid matching funds from covering healthcare services in jails and prisons and remove the inmate limitation on benefits under Medicare. Continuation of healthcare coverage during detention and incarceration will facilitate treatment continuity and retention, possibly with the same addiction treatment provider.
- Incentivize through training grants preparation of psychiatrists, psychologists, and advanced nurse practitioners specializing in behavioral health.

Successfully linking and retaining individuals in care and treatment requires comprehensive approaches to expanding access, such as: eliminating caps on the number of patients who can be treated by a prescriber; expanding community outreach, social services, and telemedicine; by more emergency department physicians obtaining waivers to initiate medication treatment for patients with opioid use disorder who are discharged from the emergency department; and eliminating the barrier of requiring a waiver to prescribe buprenorphine in the first place.

Agricultural Exports

Will County remains one of the fastest growing counties in Illinois by total population numbers and has remained a major hub in the national transportation system with five major interstates, multiple regional and Class I railroads, inland waterways, aviation facilities, and intermodal freight yards. These factors have resulted in Will County being one of the largest Inland Ports in the world and a vital part of the global supply chain. The County's inland ports are an agricultural export hub for the entire Midwestern United States. In the past, more than 85 million bushels of grain were shipped out to foreign markets through two local intermodal facilities (the Joliet UP intermodal yard and the Elwood BNSF intermodal yard). These figures represented approximately 20 percent of all corn and soybean exports from Illinois. Unfortunately, with recent trade disputes, these numbers have fallen.

The large growth in agricultural exports in the region over the last decade plus has made developing freight goods movement networks critically important. Investment in the region to relieve congestion and traffic bottlenecks must be a regional and national priority due to the amount of freight traffic and exports going through the County. These investments are also critical to keeping motorists safe navigating both the highway and local road systems.

The recommendations that came out of the September 2017 Will County Community Freight Mobility Plan will help address the strain from the growth in freight goods traffic and the dangerously high levels of congestion and bottlenecks. The Freight Plan provides guidance for local freight policies, programs and investments, while also creating a mechanism for evaluating and prioritizing freight-related projects, recognizing six key areas: safety, mobility, preservation enhancement, workforce, economic competitiveness, and community livability. The county is also proceeding with additional infrastructure studies and planning which should provide key information to local decision makers when planning for future investment.

Chinese Tariffs

Illinois is the largest U.S. soybean producer and China is the largest soybean importer. In recent years, the United States and China instituted a series of retaliatory tariffs against one another. While the Trade Deal Agreement from 2020 prevents future damage from the trade war, it does not undo the past damage. There has been an irreparable impact on farms across the United States from China's increased tariffs on our soybeans, corn, wheat, and other agriculture products. Conversely, the increased prices in Chinese chemicals necessary to kill crop pests and increase yields has impacted the past few harvests. In Will County, the impacts are seen by farmers who are storing their yields in silos, delaying the sale of their products until they are more competitive globally. These farmers are risking delaying their income and increasing the likelihood their yields could rot, making them unsellable. The trade war has been somewhat mitigated by a Phase I trade deal between the two countries and some funding out of the market facilitation program (MFP). The region's farmers are hoping that the Biden Administration can address many of the issues that impacted commodity prices as a result of the Chinese tariffs and natural disasters.

American agricultural exports are not as competitive as they were before the retaliatory tariffs with China. American farmers are spending more money to produce products that cost considerably more to export into China.

It is important now, more than ever, for American agricultural exports to resume its competitive position in international markets. Will County hopes the Biden Administration can reverse the damage that resulted from the tariffs. Farmers and regional export businesses will have to work diligently and swiftly to resume contracts with Chinese importers, which were cancelled due to high tariffs.

DuPage River Study

The DuPage River and tributaries drain approximately 353 square miles in suburban Cook, DuPage and Will counties in Metropolitan Chicago. The study area has experienced rapid development over the past two decades, and currently includes 40 communities affecting approximately 4.3 million people. Major storm events occurred in the basin in 1996, 2008, 2009, and most recently in April 2013, resulting in significant overbank flooding in more than 20 communities, significant damage to residential and non-residential structures and critical infrastructure, and the closure of two major interstate highways (I-80 and I-55) for several days.

In August 2019, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago District, approved the DuPage River, Illinois Feasibility Report, and Integrated Environmental Assessment.

The feasibility study investigated flood risks within the DuPage River watershed in northeastern Illinois and identified potential solutions to mitigate those risks.

The study sought to address impacts of flooding to structures, infrastructure, and the transportation system. In addition, there continues to be some concern regarding the health and safety of residents due to impacts on water and sewage systems from the high river and groundwater levels.

The Recommended Plan includes two structural components and 38 nonstructural components (likely acquisition of 6 structures, elevation of 9 structures, flood proofing of 23 structures). Of the 38 nonstructural components, 33 are within Will County.

Table 5-1. Summary of Nonstructural Components of NED Plan

Plan Name	Alternative Measure Counts			Total	Description
	Buyout	Elevations	Dry Floodproofing		
EBNS2	1	4	0	5	5 industrial buildings in Lisle (1), Bolingbrook (3) *, and Glen Ellyn (1) *
LCNS1	0	0	4	4	4 industrial buildings in Plainfield*
DUNS1	3	0	4	7	7 industrial buildings in Plainfield*
DUNS2	1	0	1	2	2 industrial buildings in Plainfield*
DUNS3	1	5	7	13	2 residential buildings, 2 institutional (church), and 9 industrial buildings in Shorewood*
IMNS1	0	0	4	4	4 residential buildings in Channahon*
SJNS1	0	0	3	3	3 residential high-rise condominium buildings in Lisle
Total	6	9	23	38	

Note: Asterisk (*) denotes projects in Will County

Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DuPage River, IL Feasibility Report, and Integrated EA

Current Status

Will County secured language in the Fiscal Year 2020 Energy & Water Appropriations spending bill that directed the Army Corps to expedite the implementation of the feasibility study, “[t]he Corps is encouraged to expedite the implementation of feasibility studies approved in 2019 under section 206 of the Flood Control Act of 1958.”

In FY 2021, Will County budgeted roughly \$427,000 in local match to pay for implementation of these projects. It is estimated that the total local match needed for all of the construction projects under this study is roughly \$2,475,000. It is anticipated that the construction costs will be spread over the next five fiscal years, FY 2023-FY 2027. The County has been making annual programmatic requests to its congressional delegation for Army Corps Continuing Authorities Program (CAP) funding to enact components from the Recommendation Plan, as well as to support other potential projects, and will continue to do so in FY 2022.

FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Will County Emergency Management

Emergency Management Performance Grant Program (EMPG)

The EMPG program provides funding on a matching basis via the states to help support local emergency management programs. The program has existed in one form or another for more than 40 years. There are three issues of importance to Will County regarding this program:

1. Ensure that EMPG remains distinct from other funding programs so it may continue to be directed specifically to emergency management programs. There have been efforts in recent years to “bundle” EMPG with other homeland security-related grant programs.
2. Increase the level of EMPG funding. The program is intended to fund up to 50 percent of eligible administrative costs for a local emergency management program. However, typical funding levels allow Will County to receive funding for approximately 15 percent of its eligible costs.
3. Add requirements for states to provide a greater portion of funding to local programs. The states, including Illinois, are allowed to determine the funding amounts they will pass through to local emergency management programs. As their budgets tighten, they will find it more difficult to pass funding to the local programs. This is especially an important point in Illinois. With state budget issues over the last couple years, it has become more difficult for local EMAs to receive federal dollars. The EMPG program was funded at level funding. in Fiscal Year 2021 at \$355 million. Will County requests funding be maintained or increased in Fiscal Year 2022.

Port Security Grant Program (PSG)

The PSG program provides funding for various initiatives intended to help prevent, detect, deter, and respond to threats to the nation's ports and waterways. Will County has successfully obtained grant funding for various projects over the course of several federal fiscal years. These projects have benefitted Will County and improved our readiness posture in several key areas.

PSG is one of the few homeland security-related grant programs to which Will County may directly apply without going through the State. Over the last several fiscal years, including FY 2021, PSG funding has remained stagnant at \$100 million per year. Will County encourages the continued funding of the PSG program at \$100 million in FY 2022.

Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Grant Program (HMEP)

The HMEP program provides funding for planning and related preparedness activities for hazardous materials fixed facilities and transportation risks. HMEP funding is administered through the State. Program changes at the Federal and State levels have caused this funding to fluctuate from year to year. Funding is also allocated based on somewhat subjective criteria. Will County would like to see changes in the program to allocate funding to counties based upon the degrees of fixed facility and transportation risk. In FY 2021, HMEP funding was increased by over \$6 million to \$124.98 million. The County supports the continued or increase in funding of HMEP at \$124.98 million in FY 2022.

Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI)

The UASI program provides funding directly to designated major urban areas for use in supporting homeland security-related initiatives. The Chicago Metropolitan Area is designated as a "Tier I" Urban Area and received between \$54 million and \$68 million in FY 2020, according to the Department of Homeland Security Target Allocation Bulletin.¹

Based upon prior federal policies governing the UASI program, the entire Chicago Metropolitan Area, except for Chicago and Cook County, were excluded from participation in the program. Subsequently, federal policies were changed, making it possible for Will County to be included in the Chicago Tier I Urban Area. However, the current federal policies leave the decision to add jurisdictions to the Urban Area that is the direct recipient of the funding. Since it would be financially disadvantageous for Chicago and Cook County to add other jurisdictions to the Chicago Urban Area, they continue to exclude Will County.

Changes in federal policy, either through existing authority or modified through legislation or an appropriations bill, are needed to require the Chicago Urban Area to incorporate Will County into the Chicago Urban Area Working Group (UAWG). Will County may wish to pursue this initiative in concert with other counties in the Chicago Metropolitan Area. UASI received a \$40 million increase in FY 2021, totaling \$705 million. Will County supports maintaining or increasing the funding level in FY 2022, as well as the incorporation of Will County into the Chicago Urban Area Working Group.

Will County Community Health Center

The Will County Health Department and Community Health Center focuses on traditional public health programs, multi-disciplinary behavioral health programs and comprehensive primary healthcare services delivered through a public entity model Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC).

The organization depends on a variety of federal funding, the most significant of which includes: Title X family planning funding, Women, Infants and Children (WIC) funding, Maternal and Child Health Block Grant funding, Vaccine for Children (VFC) funding, Emergency Preparedness and Response funding, and Community Health Center 330 Grant funding.

¹ IB No. 446: Fiscal Year 2020 Notices of Funding Opportunity (fema.gov)

The Will County Health Department has an annual budget of roughly \$30 million. The FQHC receives roughly \$10 million in annual federal funding. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) resulted in the uninsured population in Will County going from 50 percent to roughly 30 percent.

Outside of this necessary and critical federal funding to serve the community, the biggest concern for the Will County Health Department is lack of funding and understanding of how important it is to address behavioral and mental health issues. Behavioral health is a difficult issue because it has not been a priority in the medical community until very recently and many people's insurance does not cover these types of services. The Will County Health Department believes that behavioral health should be more closely integrated with primary care. Currently, behavioral health wait times are too long, and people are unable to get into see doctors and counselors. The Health Department strongly believes there is a correlation between chemical abuse in the community and behavioral health problems. The majority of the time, only treatment can address these serious issues, which is why Will County supports the Biden Administration and 117th Congress prioritizing a robust policy response and funding for mental and behavioral health.

Community Development Programs

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) was allocated \$3.475 billion for FY 2021, level funding from FY 2020.

As overall funding levels continue to be a challenge for many domestic discretionary federal programs, it is important to protect the CDBG program because of the positive and direct impact it has on a community's ability to fund unique housing, infrastructure, and economic development needs. Many of the beneficiaries of the program also happen to be low- and moderate-income households. Will County hopes that the CDBG program is spared from any cuts in the FY 2022 spending bill and believes the County provides a strong example of what can be accomplished on a local level through the leveraging of CDBG dollars.

CDBG in Will County

Since 1982 when Will County first qualified as an entitlement community, approximately \$78 million federal CDBG funds have been invested in the County's long-standing neighborhood improvement projects that could not be supported by the local tax base. The major program goal is "to benefit low- and moderate-income" households. Implicit in this program goal is the reality that low-income neighborhoods do not generate a sufficient tax base necessary to pay for the many neighborhood improvements. That being the case, CDBG leverages local and other federal funds to bring about the necessary improvements.

Over the past 20 years, the Will County CDBG entitlement grant has leveraged funds at a 4.4 to 1 ratio. In other words, an annual grant of \$2 million has generated other public and private funds of \$8.8 million into these same neighborhoods.

Will County has focused its priorities on neighborhood improvements that concentrate on unincorporated "fringe" neighborhoods that border incorporated municipal boundaries, but that are not served by those municipalities. Almost every township in the County has a "fringe" neighborhood that has received benefit from this program.

Impact of CDBG Cuts in Will County

Any loss in funding to the CDBG program may force the County to scale back its focus on large-scale sewer and water projects. Even with full funding, projects of this nature take years to materialize.

Projects such as the replacement of substandard drinking water systems in the Lockport Heights subdivision of Homer Township take 5 to 7 years to fully fund at current funding levels. If substantial cuts are made to the CDBG program, this type of project becomes impossible to fund. Most often, these types of projects impact between 150 and 350 homes per project. Another multiyear project that is currently funded by CDBG is the transfer of water and sewer service from Township services to City of Joliet services, which includes 890 homes. This is a multijurisdictional project and is necessary to ensure safe water and sewer service to residents of unincorporated Fairmont. We expect

the demand for this type of relief to increase in the years to come in unincorporated areas of Will County. Many unincorporated areas are served by local water and sanitary districts that are not funded to the level they need to be to ensure proper capital improvements. Years of disinvestment lead to aging systems and infrastructure. Because these areas are often low-income areas, the local tax base is also low and there is limited ability for residents to shoulder any increases in monthly payments. But for CDBG funds, these type of infrastructure improvements would not be possible.

Affordable housing is also a critical need in the County. One particular population that is growing is the senior population and the need for affordable housing options are limited for those that want to downsize in the County. In an effort to help seniors “age in place,” CDBG funds are used to fund a Safe @ Home program that pays for home repairs and rehab such as roof repairs, HVAC, accessibility, and plumbing help income eligible elderly stay safely housed. Since 2016, 110 seniors were assisted in Will County.

In addition to public infrastructure improvement projects, CDBG also allows for 15 percent of the allocation to be used for public service projects. CDBG funds are used to support non-profits that serve low-income populations. Examples of projects include homeless prevention programs, Guardian Ad-litem training program for abused and neglected children, food pantry assistance and housing counseling programs for foreclosure prevention and homebuyers. Will County strongly supports an increase in CDBG funding for FY 2022 so that important projects for low-income individuals can be completed.

HOME Investment Partnership Program

The HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) provides formula grants to states and localities that communities use - often in partnership with local nonprofit groups - to fund a wide range of activities, including building, buying, and/or rehabilitating affordable housing for rent or homeownership or providing direct rental assistance to low-income people.

Will County has been awarded just under \$18 million in HUD HOME funds since the program’s inception in 1992. The County uses HOME funds for activities supporting affordable housing, including acquisition, construction, rehabilitation, home buyer assistance, and tenant-based rental assistance. HOME funds have allowed Will County to leverage over \$27 million in private investment, create opportunities to revitalize and build affordable housing projects. A \$500,000 HOME award generated \$12 million in Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and private funds to redevelop a bankrupt senior housing development at McKenzie Falls, which is a senior housing development in the Village of Bolingbrook. HOME funds were also used in Shorewood Horizon affordable housing senior development, and Liberty Meadows affordable housing development in Joliet. More recently, a \$200,000 HOME investment provided gap financing to a \$9 million project for a much needed 25-unit permanent supportive housing development in New Lenox.

HOME funds are also used to provide affordable homeownership options to low-income households through single family housing development and down-payment assistance. The County partners with Habitat for Humanity for development of affordable homes and each HOME investment leverages between 25 and 50 percent of donated time and material.

HOME funding has been level at \$1.35 billion since FY 2020. The County supports Congress and the Administration funding HOME at the same or greater amount in FY 2022. Steady funding for the program will allow low-income areas in the County that need community development assistance to move forward with critical projects.

Homeless Emergency Solutions Grant/Emergency Solutions Grant

Will County has been awarded just under \$2.5 million in HUD HOME funds since the program’s inception in 1990.

HUD’s McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants program is at the core of federal efforts to end homelessness. Each year, HUD awards Homeless Assistance Grants to communities that administer housing and services at the local level. Advocates in the industry are seeking support for at least \$3.415 billion for Homeless Assistance Grants in FY 2022 and the County supports that request.

The Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program and the Continuum of Care (CoC) program fund are the cornerstones of the system to end homelessness. The ESG grant funds street outreach, homelessness prevention and diversion, emergency shelter and rapid re-housing. The CoC program funds permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing, transitional housing, and coordinated entry.

Homeless Services Grants and Housing Vouchers in Will County

The Continuum of Care, which serves Will, Kendall and Grundy counties, has successfully brought in approximately \$4 million annually through competitive application to assist in ending homelessness. The County's ESG funds are used in tandem with the CoC funds for homeless prevention by providing much needed rental assistance to households at risk of homelessness. In 2019, Will County had 1,300 individuals experiencing homelessness and the results of the 2021 annual Point in Time count are being tabulated. To effectively end homelessness, the Continuum of Care system needs continued funding with increases to account for changing market conditions and limited affordable housing stock.

In 2019, the Housing Authority of Joliet received \$400,000 to fund 50 households with disabilities through mainstream vouchers. Twenty-five of the vouchers were provided to the Continuum of Care under a partnership agreement. The Housing Authority of Joliet administers nearly 1,845 housing choice vouchers, 205 project-based vouchers throughout Will County, manages 350 units for senior/disabled, 12 family units and more recently has developed mixed income housing adding additional housing options in the County.

HUD Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program combines Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) rental assistance for homeless veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). VA provides these services for participating Veterans at VA medical centers (VAMCs) and community-based outreach clinics. In 2017, the Continuum of Care was recognized for being the 50th in the country to effectively end homelessness among Veterans. This recognition could only be made possible with resources to support housing for Veterans. In the past 4 years, 96 Will County veterans received HUD VASH vouchers. The County supports additional VASH Vouchers for Will County veterans to ensure we can continue to meet the needs of veterans in the community.

Will County Workforce Investment Board Programs

Funding for workforce programs in Will County under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) ranges from approximately \$4.2 million to \$5 million per Program Year (July 1 – June 30). These funds are used to provide workforce services and training to low-income adults and youth and dislocated workers. Services include, but are not limited to, occupational skill training, job search assistance, resume preparation, job search workshops, math and reading skill enhancement and work readiness training. Additionally, funds were previously used to assist Will County businesses with training that they need for their current workforce to ensure that local companies remain productive and competitive, and most importantly, that they stay in business.

Program	PY20	PY19	PY18	PY17	PY16	PY15
Adult	\$ 1,650,071	\$ 1,612,931	\$ 1,634,538	\$ 1,688,884	\$1,642,465	\$1,709,653
Dislocated Worker	\$ 2,185,784	\$ 2,785,187	\$ 2,298,959	\$ 2,638,659	\$2,258,026	\$2,431,487
Youth	\$ 1,708,090	\$ 1,671,110	\$ 1,688,706	\$ 1,784,716	\$1,736,848	\$1,807,285
Total	\$ 5,543,945	\$ 6,069,228	\$ 5,622,203	\$ 6,112,259	\$5,637,339	\$5,948,425

WIOA related programs in Will County are administered through a partnership between the Workforce Investment Board of Will County, the Will County Executive and the Will County Board. The Workforce Investment Board is made up of a diverse group of business and community leaders in Will County and they set the policies for the WIOA programs offered in the County. These local programs are developed to ensure that the residents and employers of Will County are the focus of

the funds and that there is flexibility to change those programs and initiatives to meet rapidly changing local workforce needs.

The County strongly supports robust funding of WIOA-related programs because of the direct impact it has on its employment base and economy. The WIOA State Formula Grant program received \$3.562 billion in FY 2020. Will County hopes that WIOA related programs will receive at least \$3.562 billion in FY 2021.

WIOA was signed into law in 2014 and replaced the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. There were discussions about reauthorizing WIOA in 2020, but the Presidential Election and other legislative priorities prevented action on this workforce law.

Will County is supportive of the Biden Administration and the 117th Congress reauthorizing WIOA and have included legislative recommendations for consideration below. Priorities one and four have the most impact on how workforce programs operate in Will County, as they would make changes to how the Will County WIB would spend its local funds, so there are fewer dollars going to programs that do not always directly benefit Will County customers (users of the workforce programs).

- 1) Require that a mandatory legislative percentage contribution from each WIOA partner be paid to the local workforce board to support the operations of the one-stop center. Currently all partners are required to pay for the operations of the center, but the amount each pays is negotiated locally, which results in WIOA Title 1 (Workforce Services Division) paying for many costs for which the other partners do not want to pay.
- 2) Remove the administrative burden and cost of One Stop Operator (OSO) procurement by eliminating the requirement to bid this function. Allow the local workforce board and Chief Elected Official to appoint the One-Stop Operator. If the OSO is procured, allow performing One-Stop Operators to be reappointed after the initial procurement based on their performance.
- 3) Remove the incumbent worker limitation of 20 percent and allow local workforce boards to determine the percentage of adult and dislocated worker formula funds set aside for incumbent worker training based on local need. Eliminate the six-month employment requirement for incumbent worker training.
- 4) Allow local workforce boards the flexibility to determine the percentage of youth funds.
 - a. allocated to work-based learning. Current legislation requires that 20 percent of all youth funds be spent on work-based learning – this requirement is unnecessary and results in less youth funding available for short-term skills training, which has more impact on a youth's ability to get and keep a job.

COUNTY PROJECTS

Transportation

The rapid growth of Will County's population and continued economic development opportunities related to the freight industry have brought challenges to balancing the region's growth while ensuring a high quality of life.

The following projects will address some of the most significant challenges the County encounters due to a rapidly expanding freight-based economy while also preparing the County for future opportunities and economic growth both at the state level and nationally.

- Widening of Interstate 80
 - Near-term Improvements to improve facility condition and safety.
 - Long-term Improvements to further improve facility condition and safety and increase capacity.
- Laraway Road Widening and Modernization, Gougar Road to Spencer Road.
 - The project will add a lane in each direction and incorporate intersection and safety improvements.
- Houbolt Bridge Extension Public-Private Partnership.
- Weber Road Phase I - Airport Road to 135th Street.

- Laraway Road Phase I –Cedar Road to US Route 45/LaGrange Road .
- Manhattan-Monee Road Phase I – Center Road to Monee corporate limits
- Gougar Road Phase I – Laraway to Francis, which includes constructing a new bridge that would improve grade crossing safety.
 - The grade crossing safety improvement project has been recommended to be included in the Illinois Commerce Commission's FY 22-26 Crossing Safety Improvement Program 5-Year Plan.
- Improved East-West connectivity in Eastern Will County between IL 394 and Interstate 57.
- IDOT
 - 1-55 Lorenzo Road and Route 129 interchange reconstruction and I-55 add lanes.
 - IL 53 Intersection safety improvements, Doris Avenue to North River Road.

Interstate 80

This is a Tier 1 project in the Will County Community Friendly Freight Mobility Plan, included in Will Connects 2040 long-range transportation plan and is part of CMAP's On To 2050 Regional Long-Range Plan.

Interstate 80 is an important link in the nation's interstate system, connecting California to New Jersey, and is an important east-west corridor for moving freight across the country and through Chicago. An important finding in the Will County Freight Study was that more than 63 percent of goods moved through Will County did not originate or end here. Thus, the movement of goods through the County demonstrates the regional and national role that Will County highways play in the larger economy.

16-mile corridor of I-80 through Will County from US Route 30 to Ridge Road carries more than 110,000 vehicles, of which up to 30 percent are trucks. Within the two-lane corridor, there are eight interchanges, over 40 structures, and four waterway crossings. In the center of the project is the Des Plaines River Bridges.

Significant population and employment growth in the region and Will County have contributed to increased travel demand through the corridor. The segment of I-80 through Will County is the only location in the country to have a reduced 45 mph speed limit and is a recognized bottleneck for national freight movement.



Since 2002, two rail intermodal terminals have been operating in Will County, attracting new warehousing and distribution facilities to the area. Container trucks access Will County's Inland Port from I-80 at Illinois 53, an interchange not designed for large trucks and currently a high accident location. Plans to construct a new bridge over the Des Plaines River directly connecting the northern end of the Inland Port with the existing Houbolt Road interchange upgrade and extension is moving towards reality as an alternative point of access from I-80 directly to the intermodal campus. Future projections show truck traffic volumes growing dramatically on I-80 through Will County in future years without new east west alternatives.

IDOT expects to complete Phase I for the long-term improvements on I-80 this spring. Funding for design engineering, right of way acquisition and utility relocations is a priority to move the segments to construction as quickly as possible. Estimates for the realignment and replacement of the Des Plaines River Bridges is approximately \$300 million. This segment alone would provide significant safety and operational benefits.

Will County supports the future programming of additional funds to construct add-lanes on I-80 from Route 30 to Ridge Road in order to provide safer and more efficient travel for the public and to accommodate significant truck traffic traveling through the Midwest.

Prairie View Landfill Gas Upgrading System

The Prairie View Landfill produces biogas that the County is working to upgrade to produce renewable natural gas (RNG) with the intention of injecting the RNG into a nearby natural gas pipeline grid for use as a transportation fuel. This prime opportunity not only mitigates methane emissions going into the air, but it presents a prime opportunity for the County to generate additional revenue and to reduce vehicle emissions through replacement of diesel fuel with renewable compressed natural gas (RCNG). The County will produce an estimated 7.7 million diesel gallon equivalents (DGE) of renewable fuel annually based on projections and can reduce CO2 emissions by approximately 60,000 metric tons annually. The County is hoping to capture up to 6,900 standard cubic feet per minute (scfm) of landfill gas. The cost to build out the plant upgrades is roughly \$40 million plus pipeline and interconnect costs of \$6 million - \$7 million. The County came to an agreement with Waste Management (WM) to obtain all landfill gas rights.

The County also approved an agreement that will provide a fixed and variable rate of revenue for 10 years to finance the RNG Plant and provide non-taxpayer revenue to the County's budget. Additionally, the County approved agreements to build the RNG Plant, Pipeline, and Interconnect location.

The County is concerned with the high number of Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) Small Refinery Exemptions (SRE) that have been granted in recent years. These waivers reduce the amount of biofuel required to entice the nation's fuel supply, effectively lowering the availability and price of each Renewable Identification Number (RIN). Each time the EPA grants a new waiver, the Renewable Identification Number (RIN) price is reduced. The County hopes the Biden Administration does not grant unnecessary waivers to large producers, essentially undermining the purpose of the RFS, which happened regularly in the last Administration. Strong annual renewable volume obligations (RVO) set by the USEPA would also provide stability to RIN markets. Strengthening of the RFS, especially beyond 2022, by the Biden Administration would also provide more investment into renewable fuels, green infrastructure, and give the County more revenue certainty for the project.

Will County estimates that it would lose \$12 million/annually if it were not able to sell its RNG. By reducing the number of waivers provided, and using the program for its original intent, the RIN price can begin to return to its true market value. This would result in greener, more environmentally conscious gas consumption nationally as well as increased revenues for the County. RNG projects could be financed more easily if the Federal Government provided grants and other incentives.