

MORRIS COUNTY 2025 OPERATING BUDGET

Board of County Commissioners

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Introduction – February 26, 2025



DOUGLAS R. CABANA



DEBORAH SMITH, CHAIR



JOHN KRICKUS

Commissioners who served on the Budget Committee

2025 Budget at a glance

- 6th straight year of No County Tax Rate Increase
- The budget is structurally balanced and cap compliant
- Ratable base grew by 8.3%
- Average annual budget growth (2.89%) below average annual increase in inflation (4.24%) for past 5 years.
- Second lowest average county tax in New Jersey (Dept. of Community Affairs 2023 Data)

	2024	2025
Introduced Budget	\$365.3M	\$376.6M
Tax Rate Increase	0.0%	0.0%
Strong Ratable Growth	\$117.0B	\$126.8B
County Tax Rate	\$0.240	\$0.232

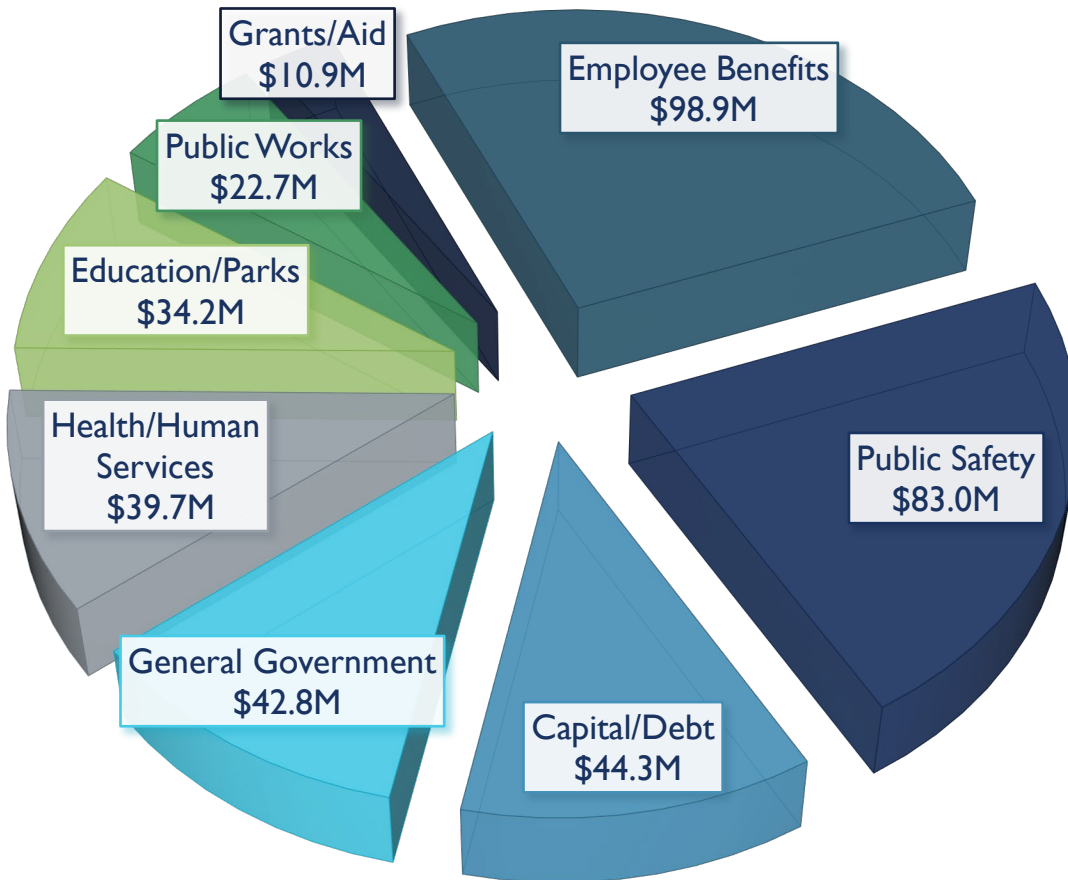
Maintaining a Strong Fund Balance Maintains a AAA Bond Rating

- Morris County earns AAA rating from both Standard & Poor's and Moody's for **49 years**
- At \$69.3M, Year-End Fund Balance is \$6.1M greater than 2023

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Beginning Year Fund Balance	\$56.2M	\$57.9M	\$60.7M	\$63.2M	\$69.3M
Portion Used to Offset Tax Levy	\$28.2M	\$28.2M	\$30.2M	\$30.2M	\$30.7M
Fund Balance Regenerated	\$29.9M	\$31.0M	\$32.7M	\$36.3M	\$30.7M*
Ending Year Fund Balance	\$57.9M	\$60.7M	\$63.2M	\$69.3M	\$69.3M*

*The 2025 Regenerated and Year-End Fund Balance are estimated figures.

Priority Investments in the safety, security and welfare of our residents continue to grow



Budget Area	Percent of Budget
Employee Benefits	26.3%
Public Safety	22.0%
Capital/Debt	11.7%
General Government	11.4%
Health/Human Services	10.6%
Education/Parks	9.1%
Public Works	6.0%
Grants/Aid	2.9%

We are broadening our commitment to Law & Public Safety

A \$5.2M increase in the budget for Law Enforcement makes wise investments:

- Increases the Prosecutor's Office technical capabilities through the application of AI for the processing, storing, and sharing of digital evidence. Investing in cellphone, vehicle, and computer and laptop data extraction tools.
- Focuses on employee recruitment and retention, particularly in our Communications Center. Enhancements undertaken in 2024 and 2025.
- Expands shared services by contracting with Somerset County for the housing of their inmates.
- Continues providing dispatch and other emergency communication services to participating jurisdictions with no increase to shared service cost for eight years



Public Safety services address the needs of municipalities, residents and visitors

Services are currently provided to address the following needs:

- Countywide Interoperable Radio System - all 39 Municipalities
- Countywide Law Enforcement Records Management System - 29 Municipalities
- Full Dispatch Services - 23 Municipalities
- 911 only and Medical Pre-Arrival Directives - 4 Municipalities
- Solely Medical Pre-arrival Directives - 3 Municipalities
- EMS/FIRE Dispatch - 8 Fire Districts/Municipalities

Funding continues for the County's Basic Life Support (BLS) Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Unit, which responded to over 3,764 Emergency calls in 2024.

Daily backup services are provided to local BLS/EMS for all Morris County Municipalities.

The 2025 Budget recognizes that Economic Development and Tourism are essential to Morris County's continued success



Pompton Valley Rail Trail in Pequannock and Wayne

\$900,000 directed to Economic Development and Tourism.

- \$100,000 earmarked to ensure Morris County takes its rightful place at the center of celebrating America's 250th Anniversary – our nation's Semiquincentennial!

Nearly \$9.4M to the Morris County Park Commission, stewards of the largest county park system in New Jersey.

- Additional funds provided in 2025 to maintain the new 5.31-mile Pompton Valley Rail Trail.
- Over 4.8 million, residents and visitors alike, are drawn to nearly 20,450 acres of parkland and 38 facilities.
- Included are National & State Register historic sites, golf courses, educational & recreational facilities, arboreta, 250 miles of trails, conservation areas and an ice-skating arena.

The Preservation Trust Fund has protected and enhanced Morris County for more than 30 years

The Preservation Trust Fund Tax will stay level for 2025, at 5/8 cent per \$100 of total county equalized property valuation. It has financed county park improvements, preservation programs and restoration projects through these popular grant programs:

Orchard Street Cemetery Gatehouse, Dover – 2024 approved Historic Preservation grant



Farmland Preservation

\$169.4M

Open Space Preservation

\$300M

Historic Preservation

\$52.5M

Flood Mitigation

\$10.6M

Trail Design & Construction

\$6.5M



Schiff Preserve Addition, Civile Property, Mendham Twp - 2024 approved Open Space grant

Human Services is a major focus of the 2025 Budget

Homelessness Prevention

\$300,000 sustained in budget to:

- Double the County Emergency Assistance funding line item from \$150,000 to \$300,000.
- Provide \$150,000 in specific homelessness prevention funding.

Other Critical Human Services Highlights

Increased headcount in Office of Temporary Assistance by three to expand capacity to process Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program applications.

Increased headcount in the Office on Aging by one to administer more Jersey Assistance for Community Caregiving clients.



Project Homeless Connect, Jan. 31, 2025



Supporting our municipalities with a wise use of evolving technology

■ Subsidized enterprise arrangement with Nearmap for high resolution aerial mapping. It is an invaluable tool for the municipalities specifically in these areas:

- Engineering
- Public Works
- Law Enforcement
- Planning & Zoning
- Code Enforcement
- Tax Assessment

Education Opportunities are endless in Morris County and the highest rated

County College of Morris – 2025 Allocation increased by \$250,000

- A \$586 million economic impact on Morris County.
- Almost \$4.5M in 2025 Capital Plan for the new Center for Health Professions Building.

Morris County Vocational School District – 2025 Allocation increased by \$175,000

- A blue-ribbon school, and US News/Newsweek top-performing high school in the country.
- County allocation to district operating expenses is up \$400,000 over the last four years to support the Career Training Center slated to open in Fall 2025.



Then Commissioner Director John Krickus speaking at groundbreaking for Career Training Center in 2023 12

At the core of county government, we invest heavily in our infrastructure

2025 Capital Major Components:

- County Roads & Bridges
- Education
- Public Safety
- Human Services
- Law Enforcement
- Technology



Concept design of the planned CCM Center for Health Professions Building

Responsible investment to avoid deferred maintenance costs

Description	Dollars
2025 Full Capital Plan	\$48,585,760
Less Grants	-\$12,787,568
Net 2025 Capital Plan	\$35,798,192

County costs are up, but no increase in the tax rate thanks to prudent fiscal management and a growing ratable base

- Budget increases are being driven by non-discretionary expenses:
 - Insurance costs up \$6.4M; Pension & statutory expenditure costs up \$1.5M
 - State-mandated election processes have increased the county budget by about \$1.5M over the last three years, with a \$450,000 increase in 2025 alone
- However, thoughtful, mission-driven investments continue:
 - Human Service and Public Safety needs prioritized
 - Focus remains on education and training for students and adults
 - County infrastructure maintained
- **No tax rate increase for the 6th straight year.**
- Budget is structurally stable and sustainable, anticipating the challenges of future years.

