



# DUPAGE COUNTY

## 2024 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM



**Deborah A. Conroy, Chair, DuPage County Board**  
**Dawn DeSart, Chair, Legislative Committee**



## GOVERNMENT PROFILE

## DUPAGE COUNTY BOARD



### DuPage County Board

**Deborah A. Conroy** **D**

Chair, DuPage County Board  
(630) 407-6060 • [www.dupagecounty.gov/cobrd](http://www.dupagecounty.gov/cobrd)



Jack T. Knuepfer Administration Building

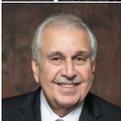
### District 1



**Cindy Cronin Cahill** **R**  
Elmhurst



**Michael Childress** **D**  
Bloomington



**Sam Tornatore** **R**  
Roselle

### District 2



**Elizabeth Chaplin** **D**  
Downers Grove



**Paula Deacon Garcia** **D**  
Lisle



**Yeena Yoo** **D**  
Elmhurst

### District 3



**Lucy Chang Evans** **D**  
Naperville



**Kari Galassi** **R**  
Hinsdale



**Brian Krajewski** **R**  
Downers Grove

### District 4



**Grant Eckhoff** **R**  
Wheaton



**Lynn LaPlante** **D**  
Glen Ellyn



**Mary FitzGerald Ozog** **D**  
Glen Ellyn

### District 5



**Sadia Covert** **D**  
Naperville



**Dawn DeSart** **D**  
Aurora



**Patty Gustin** **R**  
Naperville

### District 6



**Sheila Rutledge** **D**  
West Chicago



**Greg Schwarze** **D**  
Carol Stream



**James F. Zay** **R**  
Carol Stream



# DUPAGE COUNTY

421 N. County Farm Road  
Wheaton, IL 60187

(630) 407-6500 • [www.dupagecounty.gov](http://www.dupagecounty.gov)

## GOVERNMENT PROFILE

## COUNTY FACTS

### DuPage County, Illinois

Incorporated January 1, 1838

#### Cities located entirely or partly in DuPage:

Aurora, Batavia, Chicago, Darien, Elmhurst, Naperville, Oakbrook Terrace, St. Charles, Warrenville, West Chicago, Wheaton and Wood Dale

#### Villages located entirely or partly in DuPage:

Addison, Bartlett, Bensenville, Bloomingdale, Bolingbrook, Burr Ridge, Carol Stream, Clarendon Hills, Downers Grove, Elk Grove Village, Glendale Heights, Glen Ellyn, Hanover Park, Hinsdale, Itasca, Lemont, Lisle, Lombard, Oak Brook, Roselle, Schaumburg, Villa Park, Wayne, Westmont, Willowbrook, Winfield and Woodridge

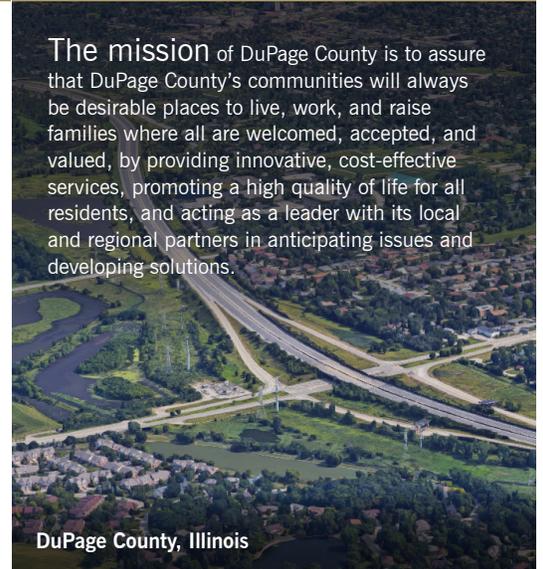
#### Unincorporated communities:

Cloverdale, Eola, Flowerfield, Keeneyville, Lakewood, Medinah, Palisades, Swift, and York Center

#### Townships:

Addison, Bloomingdale, Downers Grove, Lisle, Milton, Naperville, Wayne, Winfield and York

The mission of DuPage County is to assure that DuPage County's communities will always be desirable places to live, work, and raise families where all are welcomed, accepted, and valued, by providing innovative, cost-effective services, promoting a high quality of life for all residents, and acting as a leader with its local and regional partners in anticipating issues and developing solutions.



DuPage County, Illinois

### Demographic Information<sup>1</sup>

- Population
- Total Population: ..... 928,814
- Incorporated Population: ..... 832,363
- Unincorporated Population: ..... 96,451



### Race, Ethnicity, Gender<sup>2</sup>

- Caucasian: ..... 65.0%
- African American: ..... 5.4%
- American Indian/Alaska Native: ..... 0.4%
- Asian: ..... 13.2%
- Hispanic or Latino: ..... 15.0%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: ..... 0.01%
- Other: ..... 3.53%
- Male: ..... 49.5%
- Female: ..... 50.5%



### Education Attainment<sup>3</sup>

- High School Graduate: ..... 93.3%
- Bachelor's Degree: ..... 50.3%
- Graduate or Professional Degree: ..... 19.6%



### Colleges and Universities<sup>4</sup>

- Devry University
- College of DuPage
- Wheaton College
- Benedictine University
- Elmhurst University
- North Central College
- Midwestern University
- National University of Health Sciences
- Lewis University



### Area Information<sup>5</sup>

- Persons per Square Miles: ..... 2,773.4
- Open Space: ..... 20% or 443,060 acres
- Total Area: ..... 336.36 sq. miles
- Total Incorporated Area: ..... 247.58 sq. miles
- Total Unincorporated Area: ..... 88.78 sq. miles
- District 1: ..... 54.81 sq. miles
- District 2: ..... 49.99 sq. miles
- District 3: ..... 53.08 sq. miles
- District 4: ..... 38.64 sq. miles
- District 5: ..... 49.63 sq. miles
- District 6: ..... 90.22 sq. miles



### Financial Information<sup>6</sup>

- County Revenue: ..... \$510.0 million
- Sales Tax Revenue: ..... \$131.3 million
- Property Tax Revenue<sup>7</sup>: ..... \$46.4 million
- Local Gas Tax Revenue: ..... \$37.1 million
- Income Tax Revenue: ..... \$13.9 million
- Funds on Hand: ..... \$98.9 million



### Economic Information<sup>8</sup>

- Unemployment Rate: ..... 3.3%
- Number of Jobs: ..... 632,089
- Office Space Vacancy Rate: ..... 16.9%
- Industrial Space Vacancy Rate: ..... 2.8%
- Bond rating: ..... AAA / AA+<sup>9</sup>
- Housing Units: ..... 344,314<sup>10</sup>
- Median Household Income: ..... \$94,930<sup>11</sup>



<sup>1</sup> ESRI/American Community Survey 2023

<sup>2</sup> ESRI/American Community Survey 2023

<sup>3</sup> 2020 U.S. Census

<sup>4</sup> There are 18 colleges and universities in DuPage County

<sup>5</sup> DuPage GIS Map Book (2022)

<sup>6</sup> DuPage County FY2023 Approved Budget

<sup>7</sup> 2023 County revenue minus Health Department tax levy

<sup>8</sup> Choose DuPage

<sup>9</sup> Maintains AAA bond rating with Standard & Poor's and Moody's and an AA+ rating with Fitch

<sup>10</sup> 2020 U.S. Census

<sup>11</sup> 2020 U.S. Census



# DUPAGE COUNTY

2024 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



## Overview

DuPage County is the second largest county in Illinois with over 925,000 residents. The County is comprised of 9 townships, portions of 39 municipalities, and 336 square miles. DuPage is a major employment center for northeastern Illinois, home to 630,000 jobs, 90,000 businesses, 7 hospitals, 2 national laboratories (Argonne National Laboratory and Fermi National Accelerator), 18 institutions of higher education, 300 miles of bikeways, and 23,000 acres of forest preserve property. Over 20% of the county is open space.

County residents elect the County Board Chair at-large plus nine other Countywide Elected Officials including the Auditor, County Clerk, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Coroner, Recorder, Regional Superintendent of Schools, Sheriff, State's Attorney, and Treasurer. The County Board includes eighteen members who are elected from six County Board Districts (three members per district).

Core county government services include the provision of: public safety/sheriff's office and the operation of the county jail; administration of the 18<sup>th</sup> judicial circuit, the second largest court system in the state (and all related agencies - judiciary, state's attorney, circuit court clerk, public defender, jury commission, probation); construction and maintenance of the county highway and trails system; delivery of public health, environmental health, mental health care, and substance use prevention; assistance with food, emergency shelter, utilities, and transportation services to residents in need; programs for seniors including adult protective services; flood control and stormwater management; job training and job search support; water and sewer services; building and permitting; zoning enforcement; administration of countywide elections; operation of the county nursing home; emergency management and emergency preparedness; and administration of the county animal shelter.

County leaders continue to seek opportunities to share the delivery of public services to minimize the tax burden on residents. DuPage County continues to receive a AAA Bond Rating from two major credit rating agencies. County government also accounts for less than 3% of an average property tax bill.



# DUPAGE COUNTY

## 2024 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



### 2024 Federal Legislative Priorities

- Immigration Reform – the federal government needs to enact comprehensive immigration reform, increase border security, provide resources to address this humanitarian crisis, expedite work permits, and enforce a legitimate process for those seeking political asylum.
- Restore Historic Funding of Community Development Programs – that returns federal dollars back to our communities to improve critical local infrastructure, expand affordable housing opportunities, and support the social service needs of our elderly, and families in crisis.
- Permanently Expand Eligibility for the Community Services Block Grant Program (CSBG) – from 125% of the federal poverty level to 200%, enabling 100,000 DuPage County households to remain eligible for support with basic needs, keeping many families out of poverty.
- Enact a Behavioral and Mental Health Care Infrastructure – to assist counties with the resources and tools necessary to provide appropriate treatment and support to millions of Americans suffering from mental health and addiction issues.
- Enhance funding for our nation’s transportation system – work with states and local governments to modernize our public transit delivery system.
- Expansion and Preservation of Affordable Housing - create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable housing options for all; improve the potential for long-term economic success and a sustained high quality of life for the residents we serve.
- Protect our Residents from Gun Violence – protect our residents from senseless gun violence through the enactment of a federal ban on the sale of assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines.
- Reauthorize the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) – and expand eligibility and remove barriers for the provision of job training and career services for unemployed and underemployed residents.
- Protect the Environmental Health of our Communities – by enacting measures to protect citizens from dangerous chemicals in our air, water and land, address Climate Change, and reduce the amount of waste placed in landfills.
- Provide Noise Relief for communities surrounding O’Hare - soundproof additional schools and residential properties located within the approved noise contour maps.
- Support the Humane Treatment of our Animal Population - strengthen requirements for the licensure of animal dealers and exhibitors under the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and expand the agency’s oversight and enforcement of animal welfare standards.
- Fiscal Responsibility – DuPage County urges Congress to set priorities and to reallocate existing resources to ensure a balanced budget.



# DUPAGE COUNTY

## 2024 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



### **Immigration Reform**

The current influx of migrants along the nation's southern border, roughly 2.5 million in 2023 according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection data, has created a humanitarian crisis. This influx has strained the resources of states and local governments that cannot be sustained indefinitely.

Congress and the Administration need to act expeditiously to fix our outdated and broken immigration system that has not been updated since 1986. A federal spending package should also provide immediate support to increase border security, enforce current limits on migrants, accelerate processing times by enforcing the current (legal) process to screen those seeking political asylum, reduce the time required to receive work permits (an Employment Authorization Document) to help migrants become self-sufficient, and provide federal resources to governmental entities and nonprofits who care for migrants in their communities.

Locally, this influx is impacting the county's safety net, specifically, food banks and other social service agencies are experiencing higher demand for services as the migrant population disperses across the region in need of basic services. Since December 14<sup>th</sup> of 2023, 107 buses and 4,427 passengers have arrived in DuPage County.

### **Restore Historic Funding of Community Development Programs**

Together with the National Association of Counties (NACo), DuPage County urges Congress to increase funding levels for several HUD programs, specifically the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and the HOME Investment Partnership program. For Fiscal Year 2024, recommended funding levels are \$4.2 billion for CDBG (formula funding) and \$1.9 billion (formula funding) for HOME.

The CDBG and HOME programs have been extremely effective federal block grant programs for improving the nation's crumbling infrastructure, expanding affordable housing opportunities, and revitalizing neighborhoods. Despite the success of these programs, since 2000, funding for both programs have declined by 49% and 55% respectively.

In 2003, DuPage County received \$5 million in CDBG funding and \$2.7 million in HOME grant dollars. Conversely, in 2023, the county received \$3.7 million in CDBG and \$1.9 million in HOME dollars. Decreased funding over the years has severely limited the county's ability to foster sustainable and economically resilient communities.

#### **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**

About to enter its 50th year, CDBG remains one of the few programs that returns tax dollars sent to the federal government by county residents back to local communities and remains one of the federal government's most successful domestic programs. DuPage County distributes CDBG funds to municipalities and non-profit agencies to benefit low to moderate income persons and neighborhoods by providing needed infrastructure improvements; public facilities for persons with disabilities and other special needs populations; and to support public services such as case management and housing.

Projects anticipated for 2024 include: \$2.4 million to improve water mains in four communities; \$596,150 to provide public facility improvements to a not-for-profit owned building which will serve as a group home for five adults with developmental disabilities; \$275,483 for income eligible owner-occupied single-family housing rehabilitation throughout the County; and \$535,000 to support staffing for six non-profit agencies providing support services for individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness.



# DUPAGE COUNTY

## 2024 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



### **HOME Investment Partnerships Program**

Provides an estimated \$2 million in annual funding for the acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation of affordable housing. These funds create and maintain affordable rental units for seniors, families, and those in need of supportive housing options. Additionally, these funds are used to provide rental assistance to clients.

### **Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)**

Provides an estimated \$288,000 in annual funding to address the housing and support needs of persons experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

### **LIHEAP (Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program)**

Provides \$2.9 million in annual (federal) funding (the program also receives some state funding), to help low-income households pay their energy bills. At the state level, LIHEAP is seeing a high demand for assistance this year, largely due to soaring energy costs. In 2023, DuPage County processed 7,600 applications but the need was far greater. Both the county and the State of Illinois are urging Congress to appropriate more LIHEAP funds.

### **Weatherization**

Provides \$2.4 million in annual funding (the program also receives some state funding), to support energy efficiency improvements for low-income households. 96 homes were weatherized in 2023. Funding was significantly increased in the Bipartisan Infrastructure bill in acted in 2022.

### **Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)**

Provides \$1.2 million in annual funding to assist households at or below 200% of the federal poverty level (**see below**). Programs that are supported include Information and Referral, Academic Scholarships, Disaster Assistance, and Family Self-Sufficiency. CSBG also supports case management and housing programs operated by Catholic Charities; youth job skills and training programs operated by Outreach and 360 Youth Services; budget counseling and financial fitness by H.O.M.E. DuPage; and provides car seats and an infant pantry by Teen Parent Connection.

### **Permanently Expand Eligibility for CSBG**

The Community Services Block Grant Program helps meet the basic needs of individuals and families living near or at the federal poverty level, including support for clothing and household goods, food, job training, homeless prevention, and assistance with water and sewer bills.

Currently, Continuing Resolutions supporting the operation of the federal government have included a temporary increase in CSBG eligibility from 125% of the federal poverty level to 200%. With rising grocery prices, utility, and housing costs, many more families are at risk of food insecurity and losing their homes.

***Enactment of a permanent eligibility level of 200% of the federal poverty level*** would maintain eligibility for approximately 29% more households (100,000 households) in DuPage County. DuPage urges Congress to enact a permanent increase in the CSBG eligibility level to 200% of poverty guidelines.



# DUPAGE COUNTY

## 2024 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



### Enact a Behavioral and Mental Health Care Infrastructure

Counties play a critical role in the delivery of our nation's behavioral health system, coordinating and providing services, often in county owned community health facilities.

NACo has identified (5) key behavioral health priorities we urge Congress to consider.

1. **Amend the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy (MIEP)** – that currently prohibits the use of federal funds (such as Medicaid) for medical care provided to “inmates of a public institution.” It is estimated that 63% of jail inmates suffer with a substance abuse condition and this policy remains a significant barrier from inmates seeking Medication Assisted Treatment in county jails. MIEP should be amended to allow for Medicaid coverage of incarcerated individuals.
2. **Repeal the Institutions for Mental Diseases (IMD) exclusion** – to reduce barriers for the provision of comprehensive behavioral health treatment and services at the county level to increase access to care for our residents. The federal Medicaid statute prohibits federal reimbursement for care provided at psychiatric treatment facilities with more than 16 beds (Institutions for Mental Diseases, IMDs), limiting access to inpatient mental health services for low-income individuals on Medicaid, especially for those with serious mental illness.
3. **Recruit / Train / Retain Behavioral Workforce** – provide federal funding for programs and initiatives that incentivize individuals to become behavioral health providers. There is already a shortage of mental health professionals across the country, which is expected to decrease by an additional 20% over the next few years.
4. **Support Local Crisis Response Infrastructure** – counties provide local/mobile crisis intervention services to help de-escalate behavioral health crises and connect individuals with community-based treatment services. When provided, these services also reduce emergency room visits and hospitalizations and contribute to lower rates of arrest and incarceration of individuals with behavioral health issues. Counties also support the 988 national suicide prevention lifeline and related services. Under ARPA, Congress provided an enhanced federal matching rate under Medicaid for states to expand access to mobile crisis intervention services that should continue beyond ARPA but also needs to serve populations that are not Medicaid eligible.
5. **Remove Limitations on Coverage for the Treatment of Mental Illness and Addiction** – although Congress passed the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act in 2008, and the Affordable Care Act requires most health plans to cover mental health and substance use disorder services, there are still forms of insurance including Medicare, certain state Medicaid programs, Veterans Administration or short term limited duration health plans, that still place limitations on mental health coverage. Federal laws also do not require parity in reimbursement rates, severely limiting the choice for those needing treatment of in-network mental health care providers.

DuPage County joins NACo in requesting that Congress build upon the success of major investments in mental health and substance use disorder programs over the last few years, by enacting additional behavioral health policies that will improve the stability and health of millions of Americans. The County Board also urges the National Institute of Mental Health to examine the root causes of mental illness.



# DUPAGE COUNTY

## 2024 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



### Transportation

A viable and accessible public transportation system benefits our regional economy, eases traffic congestion, reduces air pollution, improves fuel efficiency, and increases community mobility. Public transit is essential for lower-income households who often have no access to a vehicle and rely solely on public transit to travel to work, school, medical appointments, and other daily necessities.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, the federal government has long provided significant financial support for public transportation. During the coronavirus pandemic when ridership drastically declined, negatively impacting farebox revenue, a major source of funding for transit operations, Congress provided billions in emergency relief funding to transit agencies (\$70 billion onetime supplemental funding in 2020 and 2021) and in 2022, enacted the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which increased the federal government's annual support for public transit through early 2026.

Although traditional transit ridership levels have increased some over the past year, ridership remains at approximately 40% below pre-Covid levels. When the temporary federal funding expires, the three Chicago transit agencies (the Chicago transit system is the second largest transit system in the nation, second only to New York City's subway system), have reported they will face a "fiscal cliff," or budget shortfall of an estimated \$730 million annually. Transit agencies across the nation will also need federal support as they begin to transition to zero-emissions buses and trains.

DuPage County joins our regional partners to ask the federal government to:

- 1. Prioritize Transit Funding.** Prioritize and direct current funding streams to mass transit systems with the greatest infrastructure needs and highest number of passengers. Increase federal support toward the operating costs of these systems.
- 2. Develop MFT Replacement Funding.** Develop innovative funding mechanisms, such as a national per-mile road usage charge and a federal freight transportation fee in the long term. Support authorization of resources to state and local pilot projects that test new technologies for calculating usage and developing equitable pricing models.
- 3. Enable Tolling on Interstate System.** Provide greater flexibility for states and regions to impose user fees by removing federal restrictions on tolling the interstate system and removing interstate system restrictions on commercial activity.
- 4. Prioritize Development of EV Charging Infrastructure.** Plan and implement electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure along major interstate routes for personal and commercial purposes.
- 5. Americans with Disabilities Act and Public Streets.** Formally adopt ADA and PROWAG (Public Right of Way Accessibility Guidelines) standards. Provide states, counties, and cities with funding to accelerate conversion of legacy infrastructure to new standards.

In addition to support of a viable transportation system, DuPage County joins the National Association of Counties (NACo), the National League of Cities (NLC) and the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM), in opposition to any increases to heavy truck size and weight limits. Beyond public safety concerns, a major problem for local governments and taxpayers is the damage these heavier trucks and tractor trailers inflict on our roads and bridges and the resulting financial burden. We urge Congress to consider the impacts of heavy trucks on our roadways and bridges, already in need of repair, and oppose any legislation to increase heavy truck size and weight.



# DUPAGE COUNTY

## 2024 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



### Housing Support

DuPage County faces a severe shortage of 16,000 affordable rental units, with over 20% of DuPage renters allocating more than half their income to rent. Housing affordability is a critical issue to DuPage County and its residents. The lack of available and affordable housing choices makes it difficult for DuPage workers to live near their jobs, or young families to move in to their first home, or seniors to downsize but stay in their home community.

At the local level, DuPage has taken substantial steps toward supporting the development of new housing. Five million dollars in local general revenue funds were set-aside by the County Board in 2024 to support housing initiatives. The County is also currently reviewing its building and zoning codes to identify ways to decrease per units' costs with those savings guaranteed to be passed on to renters and homebuyers. However, despite local efforts, absent additional federal and state resources to construct more affordable housing, the impact local communities can have on housing affordability is limited.

DuPage is sharing best practices with counties around the country through our participation in the National Association of Counties' Housing Affordability Task Force. (NACo) and DuPage County encourages Congress to pass the Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act of 2023 to expand and preserve the nation's affordable housing stock. Since the program's inception in 1986, the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit has financed more than three million homes for low-income households, including veterans, senior citizens, individuals with disabilities, and families with children. Through public-private partnerships, the tax credit provides financing for safe, decent affordable homes in communities where they are most needed. The tax credit is our nation's most successful tool for encouraging private investment in the production and preservation of affordable rental housing and is responsible for nearly all the affordable housing built and preserved in recent decades.

The DuPage Housing Authority (DHA) is the seventh largest public housing authority in the state of Illinois and assists more than 3,200 households through a variety of affordable housing programs funded through the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). DHA has the fourth largest Housing Choice Voucher program in the state of Illinois.

Since 2023, DHA has been fully engaged in the largest and most ambitious affordable housing preservation and expansion in the state of Illinois. Under its innovative Plan Forward, DHA has created locally driven strategies to meet existing obligations and continued growth for the residents it serves. DHA remains committed to expanding and preserving sustainable affordable housing in DuPage County, Illinois:

- Strategic Goal 1: Increase Utilization Rates of Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) Program 96%; Budget Utilization Rate 100%
- Strategic Goal 2: Provide Access to and Increase the Production of Affordable Housing Options through Project Based Vouchers
- Strategic Goal 3: Promote the county's Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program
- Strategic Goal 4: Advance Sustainable Communities
- Strategic Goal 5: Strengthen DHA's Internal Capacity



# DUPAGE COUNTY

2024 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



## Protect Our Residents from Gun Violence

Highland Park Mayor Nancy Rotering recently shared with County Board Members the details of the horrific Highland Park Fourth of July mass shooting in 2022 that killed seven people, left dozens injured, and traumatized its residents and community for generations to come. Unfortunately, the Highland Park shooting was not a unique occurrence in this nation. According to ABC News, in this country, in 2021, there were 690 mass shootings, 645 in 2022, and 630 in 2023.

Since the shooting in Highland Park, the Biden-Harris Administration signed into law the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act in 2022, which provided for enhanced criminal background checks for persons under the age of 21, closed the “boyfriend” loophole, and provided funding for mental health and community-based initiatives. A number of life-saving executive orders have also been issued, addressing ghost guns, firearm suicide and secure storage. As such, DuPage County supports common-sense measures to end senseless acts of gun violence and protect our residents, whether in-state or while traveling out-of-state. These measures include reinstating the federal ban on the sale of assault weapons and large capacity magazines; closing dangerous gaps in our background check system; supporting regulations that prohibit modification of handguns or accessories that make firearms more deadly; increasing the penalties for modification of a handgun, or any crime committed with a gun; strengthening requirements for gun shops to ensure gun sales are done responsibly; and supporting the funding of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the federal agency tasked with enforcing our gun laws.

## Reauthorize the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Workforce development services are critical for job seekers, businesses, and for the overall health of our local and national economy. Through the federal Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), DuPage County provides training, job search, and employment services to hundreds of job seekers and businesses.

Over the past two program years, DuPage County has expended over \$4.3 million on occupational training for job seekers pursuing high-growth career pathways as well as over \$550,000 to pay for incumbent worker training costs of local employers. The average annual salary upon program completion for all WIOA participants in DuPage County is over \$70,000, demonstrating the efficacy of these programs in alleviating poverty and boosting the local economy. Last program year, individuals who completed services saw an average increase in earnings of nearly 30%.

However, a number of federal regulations currently ***act as a barrier***, especially for our youth, to obtain services. ***Expanding eligibility as much as possible will be critical in a post-COVID environment in which every worker’s participation in the labor force is vital.***

To build upon the impact of the federally funded workforce system, DuPage County supports the following modifications to WIOA as part of the reauthorization process.

- The public workforce system must be funded at a level sufficient to meet the requirements of the country’s talent development needs.
- Provide the greatest overall flexibility possible for the Title I program to maximize benefits for all job seekers and to increase inclusivity and accessibility of services.



# DUPAGE COUNTY



## 2024 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- A dedicated funding stream for business services allowing the local areas to respond to the needs of local employers. WIOA emphasizes the importance of employers, yet there is limited funding to help local employers meet their business needs which affects local economies.
- Expand eligibility definitions for Dislocated Worker and Youth grants to provide:
  - Inclusion of all young adults who are disconnected from a career path or education program regardless of household income or presence of other specified barrier (such as young adults who did not complete college and are living at home yet still lack a career path and adequate earning potential);
  - Inclusion as 1D (Dislocated Worker) eligible those who are disconnected from the workforce but have not experienced a layoff (for example, individuals reentering the workforce after an extended period such as returning mothers and caregivers, individuals recently released from the criminal justice system, relocated workers or their spouses); and
  - Remove required math and reading assessments for young adult participants - these requirements are onerous particularly for in-school youth who regularly take other standardized tests.

### **Protect the Environmental Health of our Communities**

Government has a responsibility to protect the health and safety of its citizens - specific environmental concerns are as follows.

#### **Global Warming and Climate Change**

The severity and frequency of extreme weather events including rising temperatures and heavy rainfall, are having a direct impact on DuPage County stormwater operations.

Average annual precipitation in the Midwest has increased by 5% to 10%, rainfall during the four wettest days of the year has increased by about 35%, and flow rates in most streams during the worst flood of the year have increased by more than 20%. These more frequent storm events have increased costs to the county for energy use and maintenance of our flood control facilities. For example, the county's stormwater department recently had to replace two pumps (earlier than anticipated) at a cost of \$400,000 each, in addition to rising electricity costs (for example, it can cost up to \$250,000 to pump water out of the Elmhurst Quarry if at capacity).

As urban flooding becomes more prevalent, property owners are also faced with rising costs. In addition, increased stormwater runoff leads to further pollution, erosion, and threatens water quality. Transportation infrastructure construction will need to account for the increased runoff and the durability of roadways is expected to decline, requiring additional maintenance. Emergency relief from more frequent and more severe weather is also anticipated.

In the U.S., CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions are generated by multiple sectors including transportation, electricity, industry, residential & commercial and other sectors. DuPage has been working to educate residents and businesses on not only the impacts of these emissions but also how they can be reduced. The County's Cool DuPage program worked toward voluntary reductions throughout the area and the 20% reduction from electricity, natural gas and vehicle miles travelled was achieved in 2021. The County will be setting new targets and will be continuing to support a transition to more efficient and renewable energy.



# DUPAGE COUNTY

## 2024 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



In 2023, the County joined other communities in the region to adopt the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus' Greenest Region Compact. The County will be using the Compact and the Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region to prioritize actions and identify regional partnerships. The County would benefit from bipartisan funding for programs that can collectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Recycling, Composting and Packaging**

Waste is another large contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. The County has been advocating for feeding people, food waste reduction, food scrap composting and recycling. The benefits expand over resource conservation, soil improvement to greenhouse gas emission reduction. Recently, the County has been developing resources about the management of batteries to prevent unnecessary fires and unhealthy air pollution. DuPage has also been working to increase the 9% recycling rate for plastics that was determined by the U.S. EPA. In addition to increasing recycling, the County is supporting efforts that reduce the consumption of single use plastics and plastics overall. Recent studies have identified micro and nano plastics in drinking water resulting in health impacts.

Federal and state investment in the research, technology and collection of waste items including lithium batteries, solar panels, smoke detectors, sharps, and in particular carpet, would also benefit our environment.

In addition, packaging has become a source of significant waste and is causing contamination issues within the existing recycling system. Ensuring that packaging is recyclable, compostable and includes post-consumer recycled content supports the County's solid waste management goals. Efforts continue in Illinois and across the nation to enact the elements of an extended producer responsibility bill that supports sustainable materials management.

### **Clean Drinking Water**

The recently enacted Bipartisan Infrastructure Law included \$11.7 billion for clean water projects under the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, \$5 billion for Water Infrastructure Improvement Grants to address emerging contaminants, \$3 billion in funding to states for lead service line replacement, and \$15 billion for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund for projects to replace lead service lines.

DuPage County continues to seek opportunities to obtain a clean, safe, and sustainable water source for property owners by converting properties in unincorporated areas from private wells to Lake Michigan water. Last year, the County allocated \$1 million of ARPA funds for a new initiative, the Water Connection Assistance Grant program, to help homeowners with conversion/connection costs.

DuPage County advocates that Congress pursue legislation that reduces human impact on climate and the overall environment. The County encourages Congress to pass legislation that supports a just transition to cleaner power while ensuring the electric grid can support the growth in demand. DuPage also supports efforts to reduce Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) in products, drinking water, soil and in the overall environment. These chemicals are commonly called "forever chemicals" due to their long-term persistence in the environment and health impacts range from developmental effects in children to increased risk of certain types of cancers.



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Continued investment in the recycling system would also benefit the County. Legislation and programs that back the responsible collection of various categories of waste including but not limited to batteries containing lithium, compressed gas tanks and medical sharps, would aid in the County's goals to increase recycling and properly manage waste. As the United States moves to cleaner transportation and buildings, Congress should enhance their investment and leadership in electric vehicles, EV ready infrastructure, transportation systems and energy efficiency and provide reasonable outlets for small businesses and local governments that generate hazardous waste.

Additionally, the federal government should continue to appropriate funds to invest and improve our nation's drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure and expand eligibility under the state revolving loan program (that is also underfunded to meet current demand) to include wastewater projects. Pending regulations for nutrient removal will require significant upgrades and costs to the nation's treatment plants.

### **Provide Noise Relief for Communities Surrounding O'Hare**

O'Hare International Airport remains one of the busiest airports in the world and in 2023, the O'Hare Noise Hotline received a total of 255,618 noise related complaints.

To date, under the O'Hare Residential & School Sound Insulation Program, 3,600 homes in DuPage County and 27 schools have been soundproofed. Under the new Environmental Analysis resulting from the OHARE21 program, the 65 decibel DNL now expands west into Itasca and unincorporated DuPage, which results in an additional 646 homes that are eligible for remediation.

Thousands of DuPage County residents continue to be negatively affected by noise pollution and public health concerns living under the footprint of O'Hare. DuPage County urges Congress, the FAA, and the City of Chicago to expand its mitigation program to include additional homes in order to offer some measure of relief to impacted residents on the west side of O'Hare.

### **Support the Humane Treatment of our Animal Population**

DuPage County Animal Services (DCAS) operates an open-admission shelter in Wheaton that is required by state statute to accept any companion animal surrendered to the facility, both stray and owner-relinquished. DCAS works to: prevent and control the spread of rabies; rescue and shelter stray and unwanted animals; provide veterinary medical and surgical care to treat illness and injury to shelter animals; perform spay/neuter procedures to control the animal overpopulation; and promote responsible pet ownership through humane education programs. DCAS ended 2023 with a Live Release Rate of 92%. The Live Release Rate is the percentage of animals saved by the shelter; reunited with their owners, transferred to a rescue, or adopted.

Last year, over 2,000 animals entered DuPage County Animal Services, some surrendered due to illness or significant behavioral problems as many were sourced from commercial breeding facilities. According to the Humane Society, there are an estimated 5,000 puppy mills in the Midwest, with 99% of puppies being sold in pet stores coming from puppy mills. Animals from these facilities often live under poor sanitary conditions, lack adequate veterinary care, and socialization, resulting in sick and unwanted animals that end up in the County's animal shelter.



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The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is charged with ensuring that animals raised in commercial breeding facilities are protected against harm and neglect by conducting inspections and issuing penalties and fines for noncompliance. According to the Humane Society of the U.S., the current licensing process for commercial breeders, circuses, petting zoos, and other animal dealers is broken and perpetuates the inhumane treatment of countless animals. The USDA recently removed from its website thousands of inspection reports, continues to routinely renew licenses even if violations exist, announces inspections ahead of time and fails to enforce proper animal welfare standards.

The Animal Welfare Enforcement Improvement Act (H.R. 3859), introduced by Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, seeks to revise the USDA licensing process for animal dealers and exhibitors, expand the agency's oversight and enforce animal welfare requirements. The bill also authorizes the USDA to suspend the licenses of dealers or

exhibitors whose violations present a risk to animal welfare among other provisions. DuPage County supports this legislation and other measures at the federal and state level to provide for the humane treatment of our animals.