

MORRIS COUNTY 2026 OPERATING BUDGET

Board of County Commissioners

Stephen H. Shaw, Director

John Krickus, Deputy Director

Douglas R. Cabana

Thomas J. Mastrangelo

Christine Myers

Tayfun Selen

Deborah Smith



Introduction – February 25, 2026



Commissioners who served on the Budget Committee

DOUGLAS R. CABANA

DEBORAH SMITH, CHAIR

JOHN KRICKUS

2026 Budget at a glance

- 7th straight year of No County Tax Rate Increase
- The budget is structurally balanced and cap compliant
- Second lowest average county tax in New Jersey (Dept. of Community Affairs 2025 Data)

	2025	2026
Introduced Budget	\$376.6M	\$407.3M*
Introduced Budget minus grants to date	\$370.7M	\$383.0M
Tax Rate Increase	0.0%	0.0%
County Tax Rate	\$0.232	\$0.218

***2026 Budget increase artificially inflated by early authorization of \$18.4M more in grants than in 2025.**

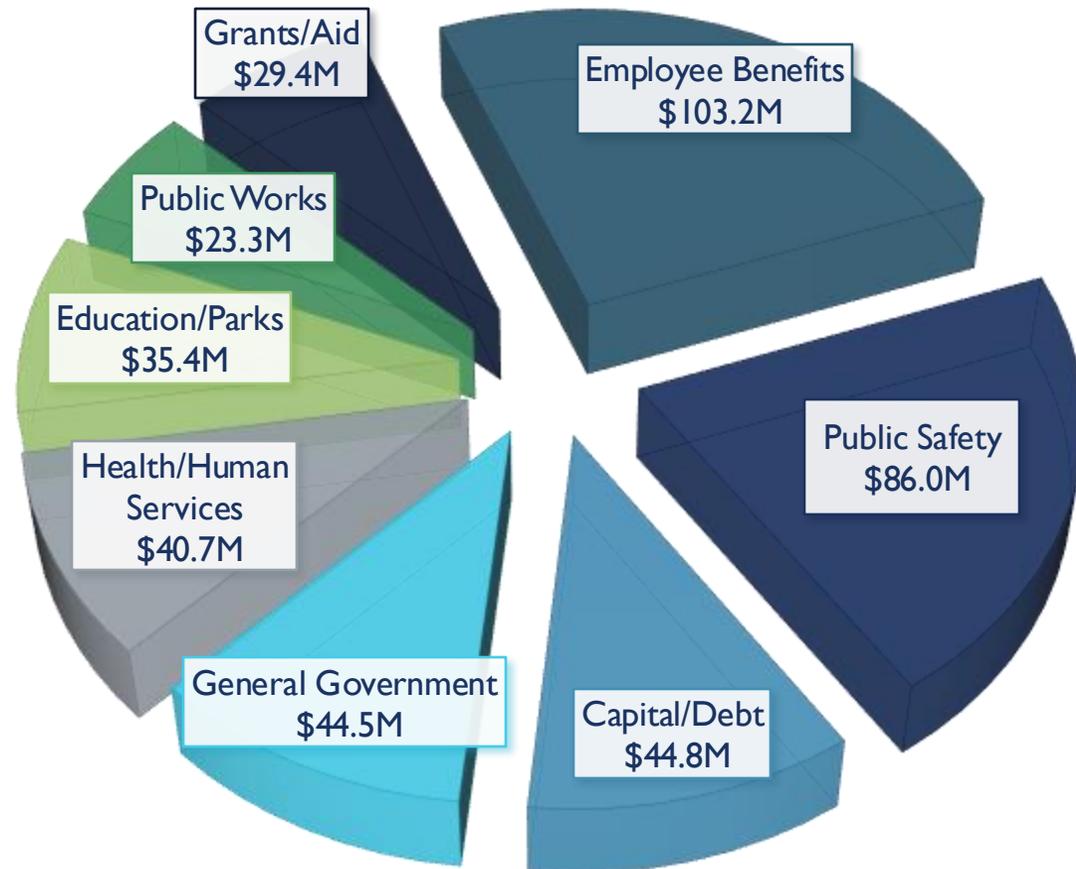
Maintaining a Strong Fund Balance Preserves a AAA Bond Rating

- Morris County earns AAA rating from both Standard & Poor's and Moody's for **50 years**
- At \$77.4M, 2025 Year-End Fund Balance is \$8.1M greater than 2024

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Beginning Year Fund Balance	\$57.9M	\$60.7M	\$63.2M	\$69.3M	\$77.4M
Portion Used to Offset Tax Levy	\$28.2M	\$30.2M	\$30.2M	\$30.7M	\$31.6M
Fund Balance Regenerated	\$31.0M	\$32.7M	\$36.3M	\$38.8M	\$31.6M*
Ending Year Fund Balance	\$60.7M	\$63.2M	\$69.3M	\$77.4M	\$77.4M*

**The 2026 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	25.3%
Public Safety	21.1%
Capital/Debt	11.0%
General Government	11.0%
Health/Human Services	10.0%
Education/Parks	8.7%
Grants/Aid	7.2%
Public Works	5.7%

Education Opportunities growing in Morris County

County College of Morris – 2026 Allocation increased by \$930,000

- The College has a \$586 million economic impact on Morris County.
- The new Center for Entrepreneurship & Culinary Science opens this year!
- More than \$5.5M in 2025 and 2026 Capital Plans for the new Center for Health Professions Building. A ribbon cutting is anticipated by January 2027.



Construction of the Center for Health Professions at the County College of Morris underway, October 15, 2025.

Center for Entrepreneurship & Culinary Science at the County College – ribbon cutting anticipated March 5, 2026.

A TOP-NOTCH HIGH SCHOOL WITH UNMATCHED OPPORTUNITIES

Morris County Vocational School District – 2026 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 \$575,000 over the last five years to support the Career Training Center which opened in Fall 2025.
- The top photo is from December 4, 2025 Open House when student ambassadors led tours of state-of-the-art classrooms designed for hands on training in medical and dental assistance, artificial intelligence, renewable energy, supply chain management, and other emerging fields.



Navigating Hope continues to be a priority in the 2026 Budget

A team of six county employees works with our service partner, Family Promise, aboard two mobile units to bring the service of our Office of Temporary Assistance out into the community. Navigating Hope partner's closely with the Sheriff's Office Hope One Team. The 2025 Point-in-Time count saw a 9% reduction in homelessness in Morris County.

Other Homelessness Prevention

\$300,000 increase sustained in the 2026 budget to:

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



Project Homeless Connect, January 28, 2026

We are expanding our commitment to Law & Public Safety

A \$3.0M 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.
- Provides Basic Life Support Emergency Medical Services back-up to all municipalities with an average of five ambulances around the county during the day and two in the evenings. 3,717 emergency calls were responded to in 2025.

Deaths due to drug overdoses are down 66% in Morris County from 2024 to 2025.



Communication is key when it comes to Public Safety

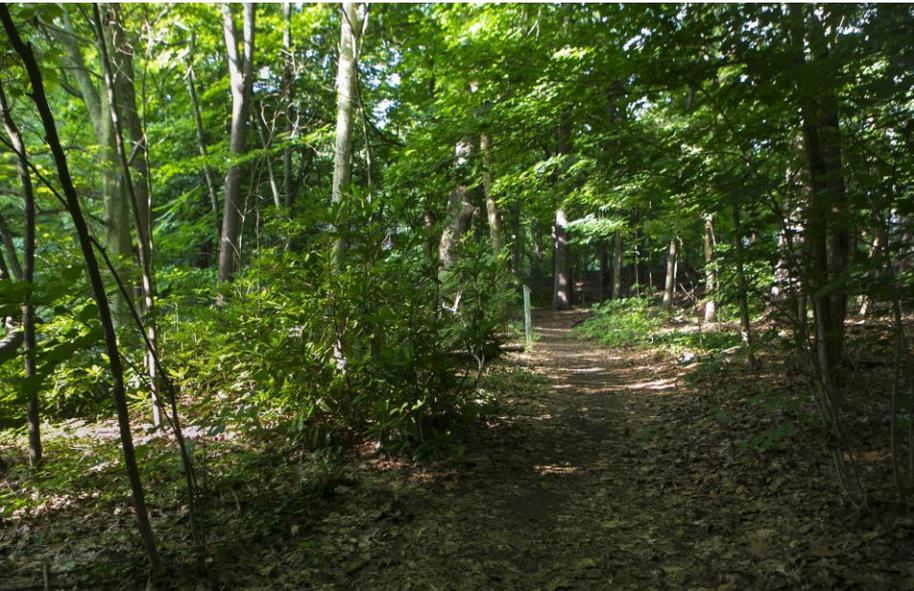


Dispatch and other emergency communication services are provided to participating jurisdictions. The County has kept fees flat for local jurisdictions for nine years.

- 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 - 2 Municipalities
- Solely Medical Pre-arrival Directives - 3 Municipalities
- EMS/FIRE Dispatch - 4 Fire Districts/Municipalities

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

The Preservation Trust Fund Tax will stay level for 2026, at 5/8 cent per \$100 of total county equalized property valuation. It has financed projects through these popular grant programs:



Drew Forest, Madison Boro – 2023 & 2024 approved Open Space grants

Farmland Preservation

\$169.4M

Open Space Preservation

\$307M

Historic Preservation

\$56M

Flood Mitigation

\$10.6M

Trail Design & Construction

\$7.8M



St. Francis Property, Denville Twp - 2025 approved Open Space grant

The park system in Morris County is unmatched

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

- Funding sustained to maintain the new 5.31-mile Pompton Valley Rail Trail.
- Nearly 20,611 acres of parkland and 39 facilities.
- Included are National & State Register historic sites, golf courses, educational & recreational facilities, arboreta, 264 miles of trails, conservation areas and an ice-skating arena.



The 5.1-mile Pompton Valley Rail Trail ribbon cutting May 29, 2025

Morris County welcomes the celebration of the nation's 250th and FIFA World Cup in 2026



Anniversary of the Revolution

Celebrating 250 Years of Revolutionary
History in Morris County



**NEW YORK
NEW JERSEY**

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

2026 Capital Major Components:

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

The Courthouse Expansion Legacy Project broke ground on January 19, 2026, to ensure Morris County remains a legal center of northern New Jersey.



Resurfacing on Glen Alpin Road in Harding Twp, 2025

Responsible investment to avoid deferred maintenance costs

Description	Dollars
2026 Full Capital Plan	\$50,043,899
Less Grants	-\$13,145,191
Net 2026 Capital Plan	\$36,898,708

Budget is structurally stable and sustainable, anticipating the challenges of future years

- \$24.3M in grants have been authorized ahead of budget introduction. At introduction in 2025, only \$5.9M of grants were authorized. Grants do not impact the county tax levy, however the 2026 Budget presents artificially higher due to this timing.
- Budget increases are being driven by non-discretionary expenses:
 - Salary increases due to 2022-2024 inflation spikes up \$4M
 - Insurance costs up \$3.4M
 - Pension & statutory expenditure costs up \$1.2M
- However, thoughtful, mission-driven investments continue:
 - Education and Training remains focus – Aid up \$1.1M
 - Public Safety and Human Service needs are prioritized
 - County infrastructure is maintained

