



The Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force is the voice of the community on issues related to the quality and responsiveness of mental health and substance abuse disorder services.

Wisconsin State Budget: Share Your Priorities *(April 13 2021)*

The state budget funds many programs and services that are important to people with mental health needs and substance use disorders: mental health services, treatment for addiction, housing transportation, long term care, special education, and much more. April is an important time to share your priorities for the Wisconsin Biennial Budget with state legislators. The Mental Health Task Force is sharing some opportunities for you to provide input on the budget:

Joint Finance Committee Budget Hearings

The Wisconsin Legislature's Joint Finance Committee is holding in-person public hearings on the 2021-23 state budget and one virtual hearing. Four public hearings have been scheduled and posted on the [JFC Committee website](#). Each hearing will last from 10 AM – 5 PM. The remaining April 2021 hearings include:

- Wednesday, April 21, The Hodag Dome, Rhinelander, WI
- Thursday, April 22, UW-Stout, Menomonie, WI
- Wednesday, April 28, 2021 Virtual Budget Hearing - [Registration](#) begins **Mon. 4/19 – first-come, first-serve!**

TIPS ON SHARING YOUR BUDGET PRIORITIES:

Speak at a Joint Finance Committee Budget Hearings

- You can attend a Joint Finance Committee hearing and register to speak, or you may submit your comments in writing. If you decide to attend in person, be prepared for a long day. Traditionally the hearings draw large crowds.
- Speakers (virtual and in-person) will be given two minutes to speak to make sure the committee is able to hear from everyone.
- Those wishing to testify at the virtual hearing will be required to register in advance, details to come on the registration process.
- Check out the [Joint Finance Committee Public Comment website](#) for details about the hearings.
- If you need disability related accommodations to participate, contact the offices of the Committee co-chairs, [Rep. Born](#) and [Sen. Marklein](#) with your request as soon as possible.
- Be prepared! Two minutes goes by quickly. Share your story and explain how this issue relates to your life, or the lives of people you care about.

Submit Written Comments

- You may submit written comments on the budget at any time on the JFC Committee Public Comment website at: www.legis.wisconsin.gov/topics/budgetcomments.

These comments are downloaded daily so this can be a timely way to share budget priorities.

- You also have the option to email your comments to the committee at budget.comments@legis.wisconsin.gov.
- Share your budget priorities with your State Assembly Representative and State Senator. You may email them, or contact their office and ask to schedule a call with your legislator or their staff. To find contact information for your legislators, you can call the Legislative Hotline at 1-800-362-9472 or use the "Who Are My Legislators?" on [Wisconsin State Legislature Home Page](#)

State Budget Resources

These resources can help you learn about proposals in the state budget:

- Survival Coalition's 2021-2023 Governor's Budget Bill Comprehensive Budget Summary. ([View PDF](#))
- DRW Training on the Biennial Budget for Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force: <https://www.milwaukeeemhtf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/MHTF-2021-2023-State-Budget-Training-Presentation-acc.pdf>
- Disability Rights Wisconsin's biennial budget priorities (View PDF [here](#)).
- View [the 2021-2023 Executive Budget in Brief here](#).
- View [the full Budget Bill \(SB 111\) here](#).
- View information about mental health and other budget proposals on [the WI Department of Health Services website](#).
- March 15th Virtual Town Hall: Governor Evers' 2021-23 Budget Request: Wisconsin Department of Corrections <https://vimeo.com/524264443>
- 2021 Joint Committee on Finance website with links to Committee Members and Committee meetings: <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2021/committees/joint/2293>
- WisconsinEye provides coverage of budget related press conferences, as well as the budget hearings, agency briefings, and JFC meetings: [Budget 2021 - WisconsinEye \(wiseye.org\)](#) You may need to set up an account.

Badger Bounceback Sessions:

Register at <https://evers.wi.gov/Pages/BudgetListeningSessions.aspx>

Justice Reform & Marijuana Legalization April 14, 2021 @ 6pm. Will cover topics such as addressing racial disparities in our justice system, legalizing medical and recreational marijuana, investing in treatment, rehabilitation, and other alternatives to incarceration, and programming to support safe community reentry.

This is a great chance to share your support for TAD:

Support for TAD (Treatment Alternatives and Diversion)

The Governor's budget includes \$15 million to expand the TAD program (Treatment Alternatives and Diversion). Wisconsin's TAD programs offers treatment as an alternative to incarceration and in doing so it significantly reduces both recidivism and costs. However, it is not open to people without substance abuse issues, including

people who have a mental health diagnosis. Governor Evers has included additional funding for TAD in the second year of his budget proposal as well as broadening the scope of the program to allow funding for Mental Health Treatment Courts. Micah/WISDOM is circulating a letter to the Committee, which we are attaching here. They are asking Clergy, Congregations, Community Leaders, and Organizations across the state to sign on to it. Please consider signing on. Go to <http://bit.ly/signon4TAD> to view the letter and to sign on.