*Fiscal Facts by Wisconsin Policy Forum*

**Wisconsin Policy Forum releases updated 2020 Municipal DataTool**

As communities face economic upheaval from COVID-19, the Wisconsin Policy Forum offers new data to bolster Wisconsinites’ understanding of city and village finances throughout the state. The updated 2020 Municipal DataTool includes, for the first time, figures on municipal fund balances, offering a look at potential financial reserves for these governments at a critical time.

The interactive tool includes state data on all 600 municipalities in Wisconsin, from the village of Big Falls (population 57) to the city of Milwaukee. The information is grouped into the following areas: property taxes, spending, debt, fund balances, shared revenue and property values, and income and population. The latest six years of data are provided, enabling users to see trends over time (generally from 2013 to 2018). For each subject, users may choose data from as many as 10 municipalities to compare, as well as compare across all municipalities in a county.

The tool also includes a “Key Findings” section that summarizes statewide findings from the data, which suggest Wisconsin municipalities as a whole significantly bolstered their finances in 2018, which could leave some communities better prepared for fiscal challenges to come. However, these data should be interpreted with caution because the fund balances are, in many cases, not available for addressing lost revenues or higher costs from the coronavirus.

The DataTool is a digital version of *MunicipalFacts*, previously published annually by one of the Forum’s predecessor organizations, the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance. The Municipal DataTool supplements our School DataTool, which provides data on Wisconsin school districts. Both interactive dashboards promote the Forum’s mission of providing policymakers with timely data that they can use to craft informed solutions to pressing policy challenges.

This mission is especially critical today, amidst a difficult year which has seen a global pandemic, an economic crisis, and calls for racial justice. Providing accessible, comprehensive fiscal and demographic data on Wisconsin municipalities will hopefully inform discussions of how public officials and the people they serve will overcome the budgetary, service, and social challenges in our communities.

*This information is provided to Wisconsin Newspaper Association members as a service of the Wisconsin Policy Forum, the state’s leading resource for nonpartisan state and local government research and civic education. Learn more at*[*wispolicyforum.org*](https://www.wispolicyforum.org/)*.*