



# **FUND BALANCE POLICY**

**CROW WING COUNTY  
BRAINERD, MINNESOTA**

**Adopted by County Board  
July 9, 2013  
Amended November 26, 2019  
Reviewed December 12, 2023**

**Our Vision:** Being Minnesota's favorite place.

**Our Mission:** Serve well. Deliver value. Drive results.

**Our Values:** Be responsible. Treat people right. Build a better future.

**FUND BALANCE AND RESERVES POLICY**  
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**I. FUND BALANCE POLICY STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide the basis for a stable financial environment for the County's operations that allows the County to provide quality services to its residents in a fiscally responsible manner designed to keep services and taxes as consistent as possible over time. This policy is meant to serve as the framework upon which consistent operations may be built and sustained.

**II. SCOPE**

This Fund Balance Policy applies to all governmental-type funds of the County, except where noted otherwise.

**III. FUNDING FLOW ASSUMPTION**

The County considers restricted fund balance to be spent before unrestricted fund balance when an expenditure is incurred for purposes for which both restricted and unrestricted (Committed, Assigned, Unassigned) amounts are available. Similarly, within unrestricted fund balance, the Committed, Assigned, and Unassigned amounts will be spent in that order when expenditures are incurred for a purpose for which amounts in any of those unrestricted fund balance classifications could be used.

**IV. RESERVE TARGET LEVELS**

The Office of the State Auditor of Minnesota recommends local governments that rely significantly on property taxes maintain an unrestricted fund balance of approximately 35-50% of fund operating revenues or no less than five months of operating expenditures in their general fund and special revenue funds.

**A. GENERAL FUND**

At the end of each fiscal year, the County will maintain an Unassigned portion of fund balance in a range equal to 35-50% of the General Fund operating expenditures for the next year. In addition to working capital needs this accommodates emergency contingency concerns. This reserve will mitigate risks from unpredictable revenue shortages and uncontrollable costs.

**B. SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS**

**1. COMMUNITY SERVICES SPECIAL REVENUE FUND**

At the end of each fiscal year, the County's Community Services Fund will maintain an Assigned portion of fund balance for working capital in a range equal to 20-30% of the subsequent year's budgeted expenditures.

**2. HIGHWAY SPECIAL REVENUE FUND**

At the end of each fiscal year, the Highway Fund will maintain an Assigned portion of fund balance for working capital in a range equal to 12-20% of the subsequent year's budgeted expenditures, excluding local option sales tax; however, the minimum fund balance shall not be below two million dollars.

**C. CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND**

At the end of each fiscal year, the Capital Projects Fund will maintain an Assigned portion of fund balance of at least \$2.2 million. This will allow the County to have funds immediately available for capital improvements in the event County Program Aid is suddenly reduced or eliminated.

In the event that the minimum fund balance levels of the General, Community Services, Highway, or Capital Projects Funds fall above or below the desired range, the Finance Director shall report such amounts to the County Administrator and the County Board as soon as practical after the end of the fiscal year.

**V. FUNDING THE TARGET AMOUNT**

Funding of reserve targets will generally come from excess revenues over expenditures or one-time revenues.

**VI. AUTHORITY OVER RESERVES**

Use of reserves for a special circumstance or emergency situation requires approval of the County Board. Use of reserves as part of a budgeted expenditure requires County Board approval as part of the annual budgeting process.

**VII. REPLENISHMENT OF RESERVES**

Should the actual amount of reserves fall below the targeted range, the County shall create a plan to restore balances to the appropriate levels.

**VIII. EXCESS RESERVES**

**A. GENERAL FUND**

Should the actual amount of reserves rise above the targeted range, any excess funds will remain Unassigned pending the County Board's final decision concerning transfer to another fund or additional General Fund Commitments. Excess fund balance dollars shall be used in the following financially prudent ways:

- (1) Restore fund balances to minimum approved levels in Special Revenue funds;
- (2) Capital and technology improvements in the Capital Projects Fund;
- (3) Additional Highway infrastructure projects in the Highway Fund;
- (4) Pre-funding or buying down of long-term liabilities;
- (5) Debt retirement/refunding;
- (6) Cost avoidance projects and productivity enhancement projects (one-time projects);
- (7) Litigation;
- (8) Local match for grant involving multiple departments;
- (9) Other one-time or short-term purposes deemed to be fiscally prudent for the County.

**B. SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS**

**1. COMMUNITY SERVICES SPECIAL REVENUE FUND**

Should the actual amount needed for working capital rise above the target range, any excess will automatically be transferred to the General Fund during the year-end close process and classified as Unassigned. Additionally, transfer in and transfer out corresponding budget adjustments will be made by Financial Services. The transferred funds will remain in the General Fund pending recommendations and final County Board action concerning reallocation and use of the fund balance resources.

**2. HIGHWAY SPECIAL REVENUE FUND**

Due to the cyclical nature of highway expenditures, working capital ranges may vary year to year. At the end of the fiscal year, the Finance Director and the County

Engineer will assess the Highway Fund's fund balance in relation to spending intentions identified in the Highway Improvements Plan (HIP). If necessary, the Finance Director may recommend a transfer to another fund based on this analysis. Such transfers will be approved by the County Administrator.

Transfer in and transfer out corresponding budget adjustments will be made by Financial Services. The transferred funds will remain where transferred pending recommendations and final County Board action concerning reallocation and use of the fund balance resources.

**C. CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND**

Should the amount of reserves rise above the amount needed for subsequent year projects and Assigned fund balance target levels, the County shall advance future projects as identified in the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), and as authorized by the County Board. Alternatively, the County Board may elect to expend funds under the financially prudent methods identified in VIII.A.

**IX. PERIODIC REVIEW OF TARGETS**

During the biennial review and renewal of this policy, the Budget Committee, with assistance from Financial Services as necessary, shall evaluate the target reserve levels set forth in this policy. Amendments may be made by approval of the County Board.

**X. SPECIFIC FUND BALANCE CLASSIFICATIONS**

The County shall report all fund balance classifications in accordance with GASB Statements. In addition, the County will report certain funds as follows:

**A. DEBT SERVICE FUND WORKING CAPITAL**

At the end of each fiscal year, the portion of Debt Service Fund fund balance that is allocated to pay the next upcoming principal and interest payments will be classified as Restricted, per bond covenants, and the remainder will be reported as Assigned. However, when bonds/notes are fully retired, any remaining fund balance related to the bond issuance will be transferred to the General Fund.

**B. CAPITAL PROJECT FUND**

At the end of each fiscal year, the County will report Assigned fund balance in the Capital Projects Fund for future capital projects according to the County's Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).

**C. PERMANENT FUND**

The Environmental Trust Fund shall report the Environmental Trust Corpus as Nonspendable fund balance pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 373.475. Interest accrued on this amount shall be reported as Restricted for Environmental Uses.

**XI. FUND BALANCE POLICY ADOPTION**

The County's Fund Balance Policy shall be adopted by resolution of the County Board. The policy shall be reviewed on a biennial basis by the Budget Committee and any modifications made thereto must be approved by the County Board.