

2026 ADOPTED BUDGET

MANAGER'S MESSAGE

Thank you for reviewing the 2026 Sedgwick County Adopted Budget. This \$622.4 million final budget was developed amid ongoing economic uncertainty, driven by real time reductions in state and federal funding as we worked through the process.

During the budget retreat and the subsequent budget hearings, the Board of County Commissioners emphasized the following priorities for 2026 budget development:

Bring in a **balanced budget**.

Continue emphasis on **staffing stability** regarding reasonable compensation and benefits for employees.

Prioritize mission-critical county services, such as Emergency Communications, and look for service improvements.

Do NOT capture all available valuation increases and **reduce the county mill levy** again in fiscal 2026.

To appropriately balance the budget, we took the following actions:

Decreased crime prevention funds and culture/arts/entertainment subsidies by \$560,000

Transitioned COMCARE property tax-funded items to CCBHC funding redirecting almost \$366,000

Increased revenue projections due to stronger growth in certain key areas by \$300,000

Raised valuation capture from 5.0 to 5.5 (\$950,000)

During budget adoption, the BOCC took further actions:

Paid off the Exploration Place Funding agreement with one-time cash to free up \$1.7M in property tax funds for the 2026 budget year.

Reduced the auto license subsidy by \$500,000

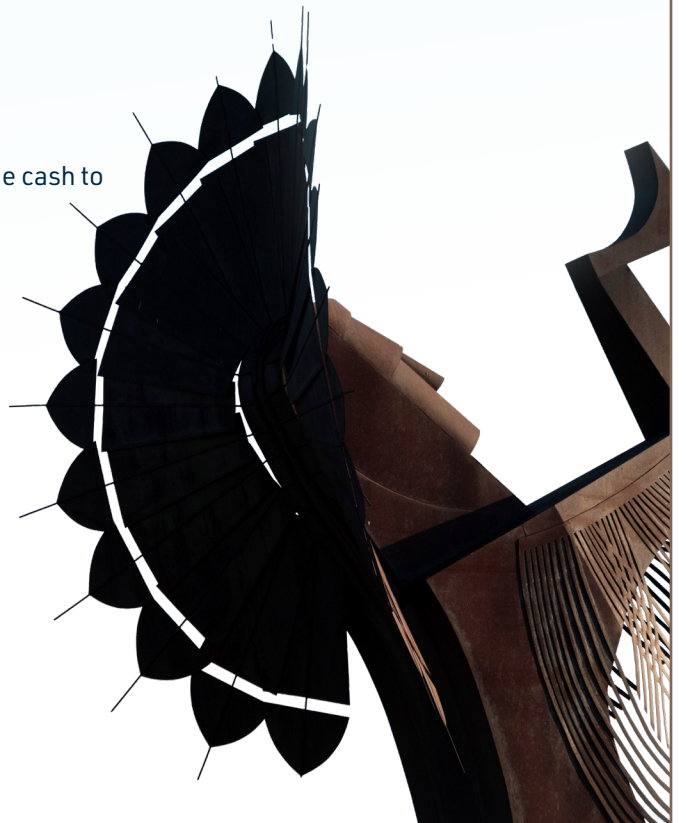
Cut the 911 accreditation manager position removing \$87,979

This in turn allowed the Commission to:

Reduce captured valuation rates down from 5.5% to 4.3%

Further lowered the county mill levy

- 2025 mill levy = 28.701
- 2026 recommended mill levy = 27.881
- 2026 final budget adoption = 27.567



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Despite this austerity, the adopted budget gives all county employees a salary increase in 2026 with a commitment of an additional \$10.3M toward compensation to help keep this organization competitive with nearby local governments and the State of Kansas government employees.

This budget also added 20 call taker/dispatcher positions to the Emergency Communications Department to support the separation of "call taking" from dispatching and to further enhance service delivery to first responders in the field. Additionally, the budget added seven "Engagement Care Specialist" positions to COMCARE, one position to the Aging and Disabilities Department to support grants and financial management, and an additional part-time position to Strategic Communications to help ensure effective public service.

The adopted 2026 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget includes almost \$10.3 million for drainage projects and infrastructure repair to county facilities – including an addition to the Regional Forensic Science Center.

Almost \$4 million of this amount is for Building Automation System and HVAC upgrades to the main courthouse complex, Public Safety Building, and other ancillary county buildings such as the K-State Research and Extension Center of Sedgwick County and the Historic Courthouse. The CIP contains an additional \$24.9 million for road and bridge projects throughout the county to ensure sound infrastructure.

The 2026 adopted budget was formulated from the feedback we heard from our citizens and elected officials.

Over \$10 million of decision packages recommended by county department heads and elected officials were not included in the budget so we could maintain a flat budget and reduce the property tax mill levy by not capturing all property valuations. During our entire budget process we encouraged other government entities to take similar action in hopes of helping ease the property tax burden on all members of our community.

