NDACo
NORTH DAKOTA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES



ANNUAL REPORT

Prepared by
NDACo Staff

2026

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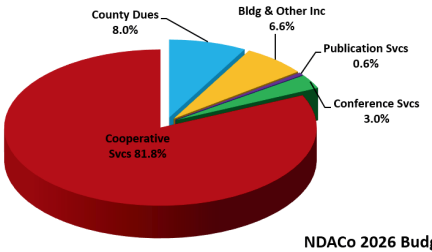
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Scan to view our annual report video

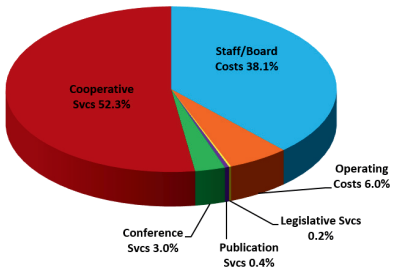


Aaron Birst, NDACo Executive Director

NDACo 2026 Budgeted Revenues - $9,141,810



NDACo 2026 Budgeted Expenses - $9,216,650



Key Highlights

This year was guided by a simple commitment: listen first. Through county tours, conversations with elected officials and employees, and ongoing engagement across North Dakota, we gained a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing counties today. From budget pressures and 9-1-1 funding to emerging technologies and workforce needs, county voices helped shape our priorities and our work. Just as important, those conversations highlighted the problem solving and dedication happening every day in county government across the state.

The stories in this report reflect how counties achieved more by working together. Through training and professional development, shared services, advocacy, networking opportunities, and programs that returned resources directly to local governments, counties strengthened their ability to serve residents and meet evolving community needs.

The accomplishments highlighted in these pages are the result of county officials and employees investing in one another, sharing expertise, and working collectively to strengthen all 53 counties.

The financial stewardship shown at the left reflects a deliberate investment in county services, advocacy, education, and emerging priorities. While budgeted expenses exceeded projected revenues, resources were directed toward programs and initiatives designed to strengthen county government, expand member support, and address evolving needs across North Dakota's 53 counties.

Listening to You. Reaching You. Representing You. Connecting You. Committed to You.

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REACHING *You*

When counties have the tools and support, they can do more for their communities. NDACo strives to deliver practical resources, cost savings and education that help counties operate efficiently and serve residents well.

Indirect Cost Program

MORE DOLLARS BACK TO COUNTIES

15% Increase in reimbursements returned to counties

By bringing cost allocation services in-house, we helped counties identify more eligible costs and return more resources to local government.

GIS Services

DATA. MAPPING. SOLUTIONS.

- Contracted with 9 counties for GIS support
- Liaison with NDIT's State Parcel Program
- Training on new mapping software
- More GIS reps to the Annual Conference

GIS SUCCESS STORY!

Scan to watch how McKenzie County is elevating community programs with GIS

SCAN TO WATCH

ILG Training

LEARNING TODAY.
STRONGER TOMORROW.

50+ Training events and webinars

4000+ County officials and employees trained

Practical education for the people who keep counties moving.

County Employer Group

GREATER VALUE THROUGH COLLECTIVE ACTION

Depending on county participation, our discount programs helped reduce workers compensation premiums by **30-45%**

37 counties participated in our quarterly Learning Management System program which allows significant cost savings on workers' compensation coverage.



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REPRESENTING *You*

NDACo advocates for county priorities, engaging in the legislative process and working to ensure county perspectives are heard on the issues that matter most. Here are some of the areas of focus we continue to champion:

Flexibility within Budget Limitations ("Caps")

Requesting costs related to health insurance, elections and corrections being exempt from the 3% cap calculation

Streamlining Road Funding

Supporting a more dependable distribution method for local road funding, removing the bureaucracy and unpredictability of grant funding

Protecting Local Control

Promoting the importance of local control especially in decisions on ordinances and permitting of data centers and industrial developments

Enhancing 9-1-1 Funding

Seeking additional funding to address the rising costs of providing local 9-1-1 services



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CONNECTING *You*

Counties have a stronger voice when we collaborate and learn together. NDACo brings county officials, employees, and our staff together through conferences, training, webinars, and peer networks to solve challenges and advocate for our local governments.

PEOPLE.
IDEAS.
SOLUTIONS.





> *"I truly cannot express how much I appreciate your willingeness to make phone calls, reach out to multiple agencies, and continue searching for solutions. Knowing that you're advocating on our behalf and leaving no stone unturned means more than you know."*
>
> *- Stark County Employee*





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LISTENING TO *You*



COUNTY TOURS

Challenges We Heard

- 3% budget limitations concerns
- Sustainable 9-1-1 funding
- Data centers, battery storage and emerging technology impacts

Successes We Saw

- Maximizing operational efficiencies amidst constraints
- Sustained critical emergency response and recovery
- Merging team research for effective planning

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COMMITTED TO *You*

As county needs evolve, NDACo remains committed to providing resoures, expertise, and support in key areas that help counties serve their residents and build safer and stronger communities.

New Employees

Welcoming new additions to our team to better serve counties in key areas:

- Member Services & Events Coordinator **Carla Arndt**
- Communications Specialist **Maxine Herr**
- 9-1-1 Project Manager **Jill Breuer**
- Accounting Assistant **Sandi Wade**



Welcome!

Vision Zero & Traffic Safety

6 Outreach Coordinators across ND

NDACo also provides legal guidance and resources to law enforcement and prosecutors on impaired driving laws and procedures.

The # of Vision Zero Program schools **19**

↑**6** from 2025



Public Health

6 Counties Receive Rural Health Transformation Program Grants

Kidder - Rolette - Steele - Nelson/Griggs - Traill

Successful "Learn & Lead" Projects

- Farm to Table Gardens - **Cavalier County**
- Greater **Grand Forks** Milk Depot
- Hantavirus Exposure Response - **Sargent, Cavalier, Nelson/Griggs**
- Opening of TR Presidential Library - **Southwestern District Health Unit**

Juvenile Justice

NDACo is working collaboratively with state and local entities to find solutions to the growing need for juvenile detention as well as less restrictive, yet secure, alternatives.

4 The # of juvenile detention facilities available to ND counties.



ACROSS THE 53

WHERE COUNTY VOICES BECOME ACTION.

KEEP UP WITH
ACROSS THE 53 —
SAVE THIS PLAYLIST!



County government works because dedicated public servants show up every day to solve problems and deliver services. The accomplishments highlighted throughout this report reflect what is possible when North Dakota's 53 counties work together, share expertise and invest in a stronger future for local government. NDACo is proud to serve our counties where they are, and support them where they're going.

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