

**County of Berks**  
**Friendly Understandable Financial Statement (FUFS)**  
**For the Year Ended December 31, 2023**



**Prepared by the Office of the Controller**

**Joseph E. Rudderow III, Controller**

## **CONTROLLER'S GREETING**

It is an honor to serve as your newly elected Controller. I officially took office on January 2, 2024, preceded by Sandy Graffius who was county Controller for 20 years. Sandy left the Controller's Office fully staffed and ready to continue the great work of our row office. Sandy was very dedicated to the County of Berks, committed to working with the Commissioners, every row office, the Courts, and every department in County Government to ensure the success of the Controller's office on behalf of the citizens of Berks County. Congratulations Sandy Graffius on a job well done.

First and foremost, as elected County Controller, serving the citizens of the County of Berks will always be my number one priority. My Oath of Office affirms my commitment to the Constitution of the United States, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the discharge of the duties of my office with fidelity.

Secondly it is important to develop the Controller's Office to perform at the highest level possible through additional education, certification, and improved training of the existing staff and/or attracting new talent to join the Controller's office. Having a trained professional staff to perform the necessary audits, prepare the annual comprehensive financial report and process accounts payable will foster improved efficiencies, greater accountability, financial accuracy, and transparency.

The role of the Controller's office is to be independent of County government yet within County government. The Controller works with other elected officials and county employees but must remain independent on behalf of the taxpayer. The Controller is a row officer who is elected and answers directly to the public. It is very important that our audits and financial statements reflect an independent review of the county.

The FUFs (Friendly Understandable Financial Statement) is designed to be in a simple and easy to understand format. The FUFs allows the public to have a broad overview of the finances of the county without all the detail. Because the FUFs does not contain material disclosures, financial statements, notes and schedules it does not meet Generally Accepted Accounting Principles that are found in the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) for governments.

Both reports (FUFs) and the (ACFR) are available electronically on the County of Berks website at <https://www.berkspa.gov/departments/controller> select financial statements on the left-hand side.

Sincerely,

Joseph E. Rudderow III  
Controller of Berks County



# Serving Our Citizens...

## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



From left: Dante Santoni, Jr.  
Michael S. Rivera, Vice-Chair  
Christian Y. Leinbach, Chair

- Constitutes the County’s chief governing body and manages County finances and property.
- Approves the annual budget, fixes County tax rates and authorizes expenditures.
- Supervises the conduct of elections, the prison system, and the maintenance of county infrastructure.



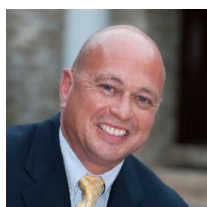
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## Elected Officials/ Row Officers



**Joseph E. Rudderow, III**  
Controller

- Reports on the County's financial condition and fiscal affairs.
- Audits county departments, tax collectors and Magisterial District Judges offices.
- Certifies all bills, claims and demands against the County.



**Mitchell R. Darcourt**  
Treasurer

- Serves as custodian of the County money.
- Collects real estate taxes, fees and receipts.
- Issues licenses for Bingo, Small games of chance, hunting, fishing, dog and pistol permits.



**Fred Sheeler**  
Recorder of Deeds

- Records all County deeds, mortgages and real estate transactions along with Notary Public Commissions, renewals and changes.
- Collects real estate transfer taxes and affordable housing fees.



**John T. Adams**  
District Attorney

- Chief law enforcement officer of the County.
- Protects citizens by ensuring all laws of the Commonwealth of PA are upheld.
- Works with law enforcement to keep Berks County safe and secure.



**Eric J. Weaknecht**  
Sheriff

- Serves civil and criminal process documents and enforces both the Pennsylvania Crimes Code and Motor Vehicle Code.
- Protects citizens by ensuring all laws of the Commonwealth of PA are upheld.
- Organized into 6 divisions: Civil, Court, Patrol, Central Booking, K-9 and Warrants.



**John A. Fielding, III**

Coroner

- Investigates sudden, unexplained and unnatural deaths occurring in the County.
- Investigates approximately 4,200 deaths each year with approximately 90% being of natural causes.



**Beth A. Jones**

Clerk of Courts

- Prepares and maintains the records for the Criminal division of the Court of Common Pleas.
- Administers oaths and affirmations and certifies/ distributes orders of the Court.
- Prepares bills of costs for the defendants and disburses fines, costs and restitution.



**Suzanne Myers**

Register of Wills

- Determines if documents should be received as last will of the decedent.
- Handles administration of the estate and the probate process.



**Jonathan Del Collo**

Prothonotary

- Acts as the Chief Clerk and recordkeeper, processor for all civil case filings.
- Records all judgments, orders and decrees of court to respective parties and counsel.

## **BERKS COUNTY SERVICES**

### **General Government- Administration**

Includes services provided by the Commissioners, Controller, Treasurer, Recorder of Deeds, Budget, Election Services, Information Systems, Human Resources, Maintenance, and others.

### **General Government- Judicial**

Includes the Courts, and services provided by the District Attorney, Public Defender, Clerk of Courts, Prothonotary, Sheriff, District Justices, Coroner, Register of Wills, and others.

### **Berks Heim (610) 376-4841 [www.berkspa.gov/departments/berks-heim-nursing-home](http://www.berkspa.gov/departments/berks-heim-nursing-home)**

Provides quality, individualized, long term residential healthcare for the elderly of the County with emphasis on the social, emotional, and physical well-being of residents.

### **Children and Youth (610) 478-6700 [www.berkspa.gov/departments/children-and-youth](http://www.berkspa.gov/departments/children-and-youth)**

Provides services to protect children and assure their physical and emotional well-being, as provided by law, and to preserve, strengthen and empower their families.

### **Area Agency on Aging (610) 478-6500 [www.berkspa.gov/departments/aging](http://www.berkspa.gov/departments/aging)**

Provides comprehensive and coordinated services to meet the needs of county residents aged 60 and older, or those eligible physically disabled age 18 to 59.

### **Library System (610) 378-5260 [www.berkslibraries.org](http://www.berkslibraries.org)**

Consists of 19 libraries with 23 locations spread throughout the county. Berks County government provides approximately 43% of the funding and the Commonwealth provides roughly 24%. The remaining 33% of funding is raised through local support and fundraising.

### **Council on Chemical Abuse (610) 376-8669 [www.cocaberks.org](http://www.cocaberks.org)**

Supports drug and alcohol prevention and intervention for all Berks County residents, and treatment services for persons of low and moderate income.

### **Employment and Training (610) 988-1300 [www.careerlinkberks.com](http://www.careerlinkberks.com)**

Provides work force resources for job seekers and employers through Berks Career Link.

### **Parks & Recreation (610) 372-8939 [www.berkspa.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation](http://www.berkspa.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation)**

Provides recreational opportunities and educational programs for its 9 county-owned parks.





# Berks County's 2023 Fiscal Results

## TOP CREDIT RATING

On May 13, 2024 Moody's reaffirmed Berks County's Aaa bond rating, the highest credit rating attainable. Obligations are judged to be of the highest quality, with minimal risk.



## WHY DOES BERKS COUNTY HAVE THE TOP RATING?

The following excerpts are from the Moody's latest credit rating report.

*Berks County has "excellent financial management"*

*Berks County maintains an almost "fully funded pension plan"*

*Berks County has "solid reserve levels"*

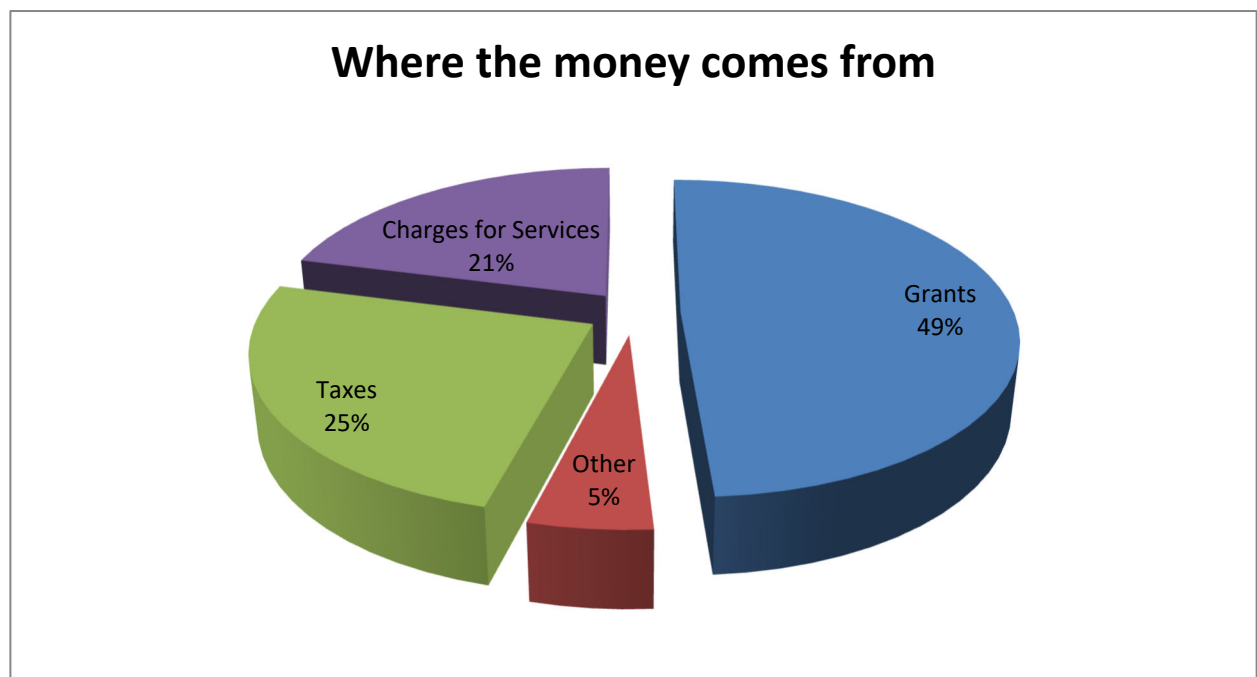
*Berks County employs "strong fiscal practices"*

*Berks County maintains a "low debt level and is declining"*

*Berks County has "minimal fixed costs and a growing tax base"*

**SOURCES OF REVENUES (where the money comes from)**

Revenues totaled \$633.8 million for 2023, while total expenses were \$609.3 million. Revenues were up \$11.5 million over the prior year, primarily due to increased investment earnings from more favorable rates. Expenses were up by \$25.5 million as a result of increased debt service payments by drawing down on bond liabilities. The state and federal government gets billed by the Departments and pays back the County for paying these bills up front. The County’s money comes from federal and state program grants (the largest segment at 49% of revenues), property and hotel taxes (at 25% of the total) and charges for services performed by operating departments of the County (the remaining 26%). With such a large dependence on federal and state grants to fund social programs, it leaves the County very susceptible to budget cuts at the federal and state levels. When this happens, it would then be up to the Commissioners to decide whether to provide for these programs out of future saved funds, increase taxes to pay for the programs, downsize the programs or eliminate selected ones entirely.

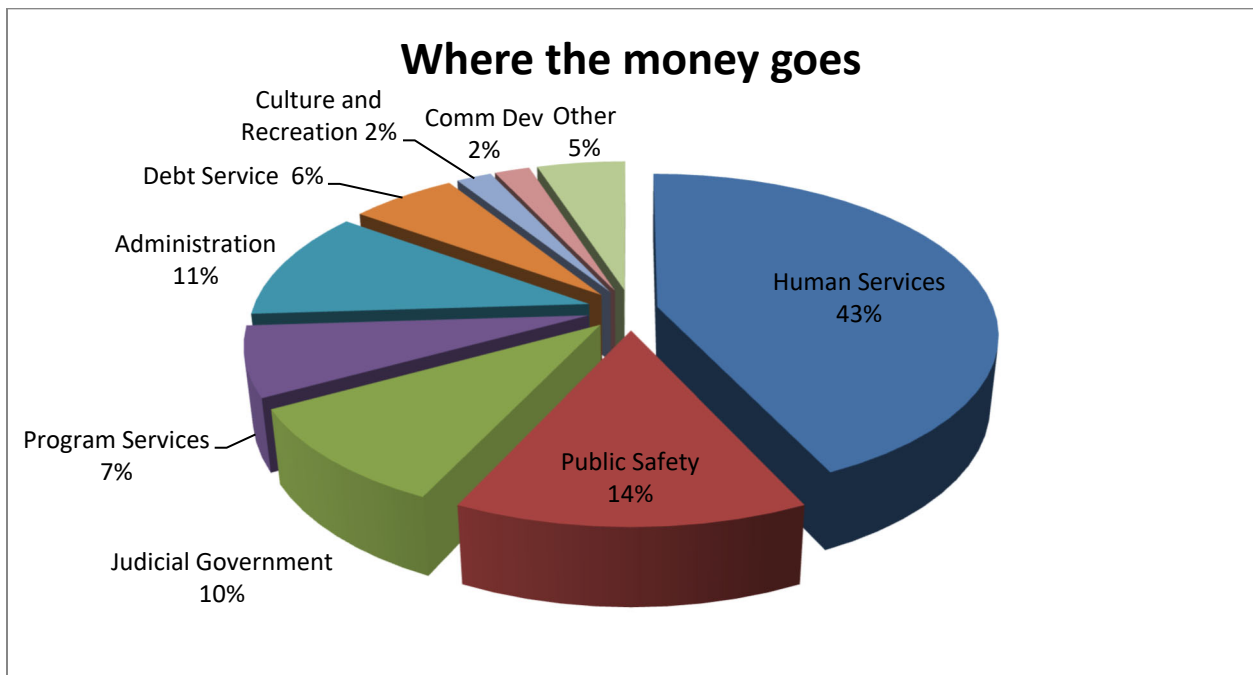




## **COUNTY EXPENSES (where the money goes)**

As with most counties in Pennsylvania, the Human Services function is by far the single largest area of expense for Berks County (43% of total expenses). Expenditures in the area include Children and Youth Services, Health Choices, Mental Health/ Developmental Disabilities, Area Agency on Aging, Domestic Relations, Employment & Training, and Drug and Alcohol Prevention. Many of these expenditures are dictated by mandates (demands) coming down from federal and state governments beyond the County's control. The problem is, when the federal and state budgets are cut the county must come up with the money to fund these mandates. Judicial, Courts and Public Safety functions account for another 24% of total expenditures.

The Board of Commissioners has actual "control" over no more than 25% of the discretionary County expense budget. It is with this in mind that elected officials must constantly monitor local activities as well as those in Harrisburg and Washington. Decisions made outside of Berks County affect us greatly. That's why the County's elected officials are in regular contact with state lawmakers and government associations to stay informed about pending legislation and present local views of importance to federal and state decision makers.



## **FINANCIAL OVERVIEW**

Berks County is fortunate to be on a sound financial footing as we report the results of operations for the calendar year 2023. Property tax rates remain unchanged at 7.657 mills. The County's overall net position (total assets plus deferred outflows of resources, less total liabilities, less deferred inflows of resources) for 2023 increased by \$29.1 million to \$475.9 million. It is necessary to remember that included in net position are capital assets (buildings and bridges) and restricted funds (funds set aside for special projects) that are not available for spending on daily operations.

<b>Assets</b>	<b><u>2023</u></b>	<b><u>2022</u></b>	<b><u>2021</u></b>
Cash and Investments	\$ 255,743,848	\$ 251,217,978	\$ 195,342,565
Other current assets	106,753,246	94,775,872	87,745,446
Total current assets	362,497,094	345,993,850	283,088,011
Noncurrent assets	386,112,031	418,008,713	471,782,491
Total assets	748,609,125	764,002,563	754,870,502
Deferred outflows of resources	43,554,182	114,368,825	25,091,012
<b>Liabilities:</b>			
Current liabilities	129,805,340	161,688,536	146,014,957
Noncurrent liabilities	184,742,498	231,130,543	161,217,477
Total liabilities	314,547,838	392,819,079	307,232,434
Deferred inflows of resources	1,672,867	38,720,509	55,383,509
Net position	<u>\$ 475,942,602</u>	<u>\$ 446,831,800</u>	<u>\$ 417,345,572</u>

**COUNTY OFFICIALS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS:**

<u>OFFICE</u>	<u>OFFICIAL</u>	<u>PHONE</u>
Commissioner, Chair	Christian Y. Leinbach	(610) 478-6136
Commissioner, Vice-Chair	Michael S. Rivera	(610) 478-6136
Commissioner	Dante Santoni, Jr.	(610) 478-6136
Controller	Joseph E. Rudderow III	(610) 478-6150
Clerk of Courts	Beth A. Jones	(610) 478-6550
Coroner	John A. Fielding III	(610) 478-3280
District Attorney	John T. Adams	(610) 478-6000
Prothonotary	Jonathan K. DelCollo	(610) 478-6970
Recorder of Deeds	Fred Sheeler	(610) 478-3380
Register of Wills	Suzanne Myers	(610) 478-6600
Sheriff	Eric J. Weaknecht	(610) 478-6240
Treasurer	Mitchell R. Darcourt	(610) 478-6640

**OTHER DEPARTMENTS:**

Agriculture Department	(610) 378-1844
CareerLink	(610) 988-1300
Election Services	(610) 478-6490
Emergency Services	(610) 374-4800
Library System	(610) 378-5260
Parks & Recreation	(610) 372-8939
Purchasing	(610) 478-6168
Veterans Affairs	(610) 378-5601
Solid Waste Authority	(610) 478-6362

**PENNSYLVANIA STATE HOTLINES:**

Child Abuse	(800) 932-0313
Crisis & Suicide (Berks)	(610) 236-0530
Elder Abuse	(800) 490-8505
Welfare Fraud	(800) 932-0582

## Fraud, Waste, and Misuse Hotline



### NOTICE TO ALL COUNTY EMPLOYEES and the GENERAL PUBLIC

- Report Suspected Fraud and Theft
    - Information Is Confidential
      - Remain Anonymous
- (610) 478-6066**

(Secured and Monitored by The County of Berks Human Resources Department)

**For additional information, please contact:**



Joseph E. Rudderow III, Controller  
County of Berks  
610-478-6150 Ext. 6155  
[jrudderow@berkspa.gov](mailto:jrudderow@berkspa.gov)

