

# Franklin County Residents' Guide to the 2021 Approved Budget

*Service. Progress. Excellence.*



Franklin County  
**BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS**

**Kevin L. Boyce**



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# ABOUT FRANKLIN COUNTY

Franklin County is one of the region's most diverse in socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and educational attainment. Home to the City of Columbus, which serves as the County seat, Franklin County benefits from a broad base of industries, including trade & logistics, finance, education, healthcare, and government. The Franklin County Board of Commissioners governs in an environment of continual growth and must consider this impact while developing the annual budget.

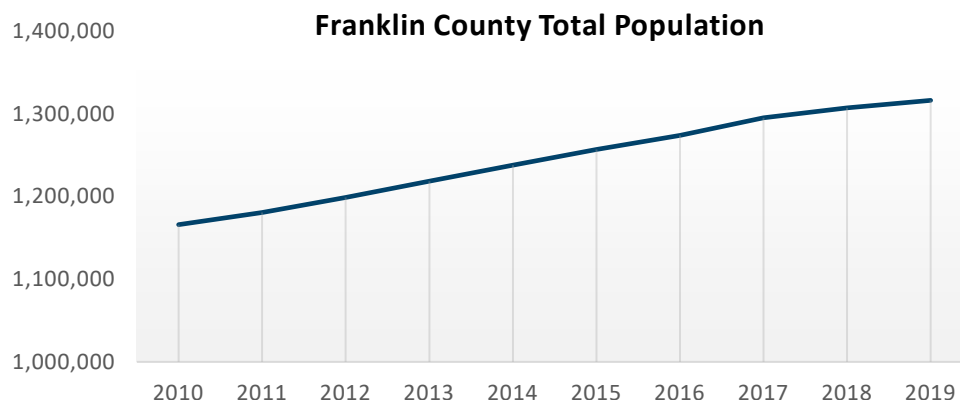
As Ohio's most populous county, Franklin County's residents represented 11.3% of the state's population in 2019. Since 2010, Franklin County's population has grown by more than 150,000 individuals, or 12.9%, to over 1.3 million residents. There is little indication that this trend will slow over the next decade.

While Franklin County has seen population growth and increasing opportunities, not everyone has benefited. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the poverty rate for all people in Franklin County was 13.4% in 2019. Even more distressing are the racial and other disparities—the poverty rate for African Americans is twice the County average, and 18.4% of all children in Franklin County are living in poverty. Disparities will only worsen as an additional 8 million Americans fell into poverty amid the pandemic.

## FRANKLIN COUNTY GOVERNANCE

The Board of Commissioners is Franklin County's taxing, budgeting, and purchasing authority. While the Commissioners establish the County budget, the independent agencies largely determine how they will spend it. The Commissioners have oversight of departments that provide building and zoning, human services, employment services, economic development and planning, water and sewer services, and environmental services.

Franklin County is governed by a complex organization of elected officials. Executive and fiduciary powers rest with a three-member Board of Commissioners. Eight other elected officials perform Ohio Revised Code mandated administrative functions as leaders of their respective offices. Other elected officials serve on the judiciary and independently appointed boards. An appointed County Administrator runs the County's daily operations, administers board directives, and prepares the County's operating and capital budgets with the support of the Office of Management & Budget. In addition, Administration is responsible for leading agency directors, coordinating county entities, and ensuring the Board's contractual obligations are properly performed.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1

## FRANKLIN COUNTY BUDGET PROCESS

### January – December

Office of Management & Budget (OMB) analysts monitor adherence to budget & performance targets throughout the year.

### May – June

Budget instructions are released. Agencies identify strategic initiatives and operational performance measures, which are linked to the Board of Commissioners' Core Principles, for each program in their Strategic Business Plan. Strategic Business Plans and baseline payroll information are reviewed by OMB staff.

### July – September

Budget requests are submitted. OMB staff meets with agencies to review the prior and current year expenditures, and what resources will be needed to accomplish their performance targets in the upcoming year. Briefs are prepared and presented to County Administration.

### October – November

County Administration and OMB develop budget recommendations for each program, ensuring the most cost-effective use of available resources. The Recommended Budget is presented to the Board of Commissioners and followed by a series of public meetings in which agencies present their budgets and performance measures.

### December

After any revisions are made, the Approved Budget is voted on and adopted by the Board of Commissioners.

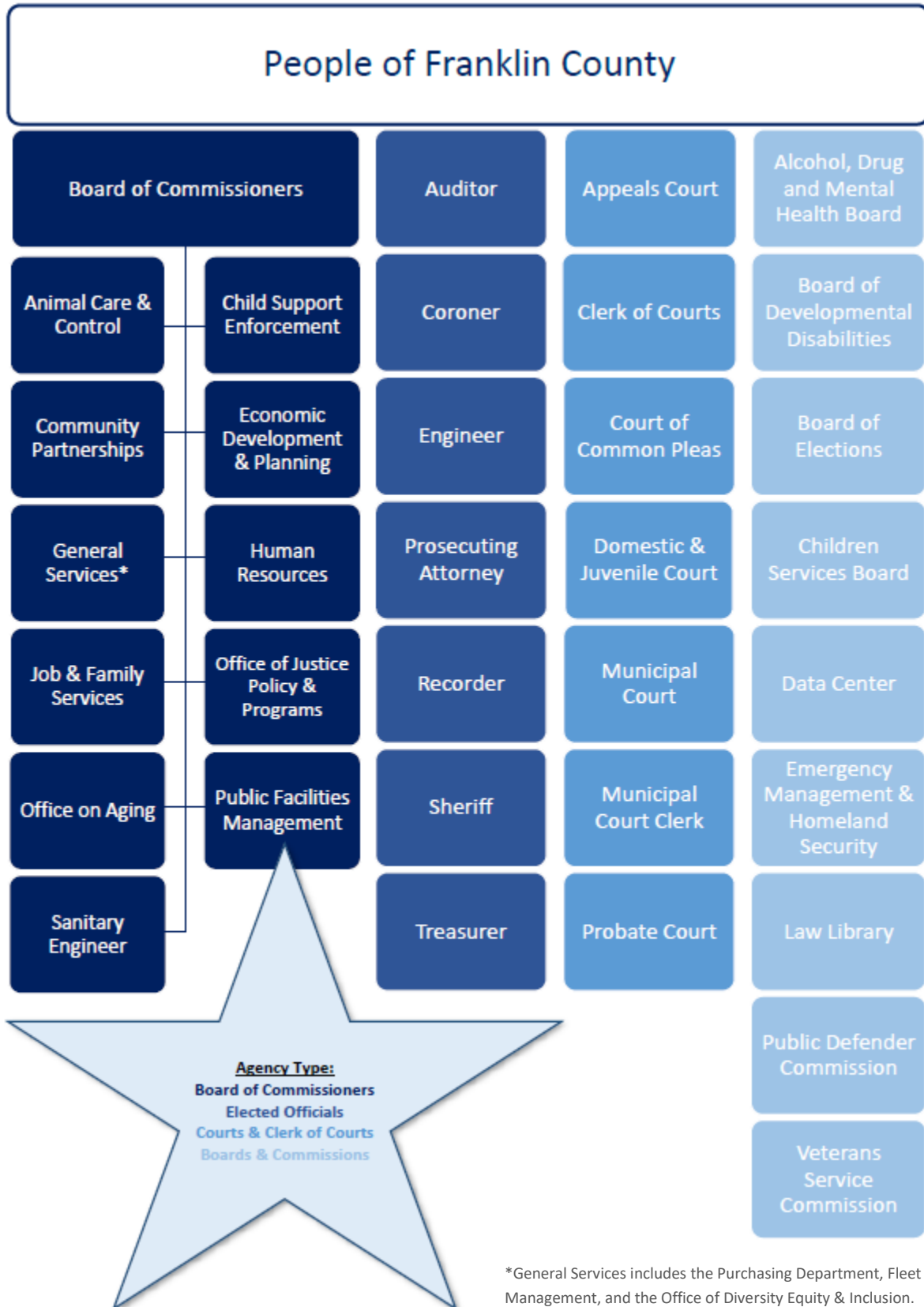
## HOW IS THE COUNTY'S BUDGET STRUCTURED?

Budgets are organized by funds. Funds can incorporate one or many programs across one or more agencies. There are 90 funds with appropriations in the 2021 Approved Budget. The General Fund is the chief operating fund for the County and includes all revenues unless they are required to be accounted for in another fund. Special Revenue Funds receive revenues from tax levies, grants, and federal and state social service programs – the largest of which are the Board of Developmental Disabilities Fund, the Children Services Levy Fund, the Public Assistance Fund (Job and Family Services), and the Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Levy Fund. Other Funds include Capital Project Funds (which pay for the acquisition or construction of major capital items), Debt Service Funds (which pay the principal and interest on County-issued bonds), and Internal Service & Enterprise Funds (which support business-like activities for internal and external customers).

Budgets are further separated by 35 agencies (see page 3) and divided into programs, which group together the revenues and expenses to provide a particular service or type of service. Line items (object codes) are grouped into roll-up categories with other similar expenses, such as Personal Services, Fringe Benefits, and Materials & Services. Appropriations, or the authority to make expenditures for specified purposes, are made at the fund/agency/roll-up level, which means that an agency has some flexibility in spending across programs to meet changing needs during the year, as well as between the line items within the category. Additions to or transfers between the categories require the approval of the Board of Commissioners.

Additional information regarding the Franklin County 2021 Approved Budget and budget process, including recordings of the public budget hearings, details of all agency budgets and performance measures, and links to agency websites, can be found online at <http://budget.franklincountyohio.gov/>

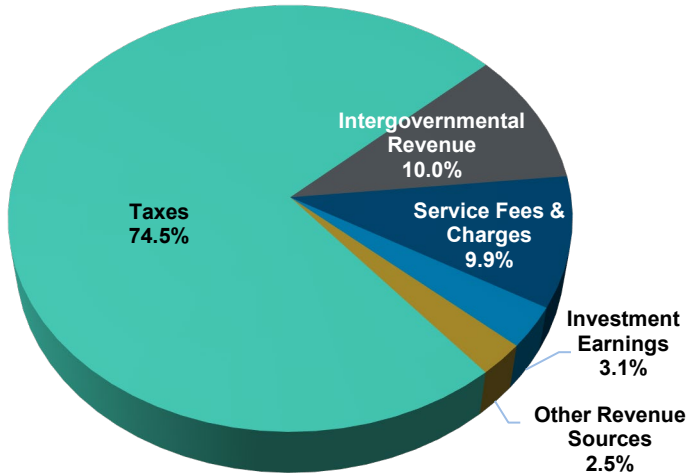
# FRANKLIN COUNTY AGENCIES



# FRANKLIN COUNTY GENERAL FUND

## 2021 General Fund Approved Budget

Total Revenue by Source  
\$461.4 million



Note: Other Revenue Sources includes Licenses & Permits, Fines & Forfeitures, Miscellaneous Revenue, Interfund Revenue, and Other Financing Sources.

General Fund revenue in the 2021 Approved Budget is expected to be \$461.4 million. The main source of revenue is the Sales Tax, which comprises nearly 66% of the General Fund revenue.

However, sales tax revenue in the 2021 Approved Budget is \$10.5 million less than the 2020 budget (\$303.5 million vs. \$314.0 million). Sales tax revenue is not expected to return to pre-pandemic levels until 2022 at the earliest.

The State Public Defender's reimbursement rate was reduced to 70%, however, the impact was minimal due to the County's conservative estimates.

### HOW IS MY DOLLAR USED?

The 2021 Approved Budget contains \$493.0 million in General Fund Appropriations. Examples of General Fund supported services are pictured at right.



## 2021 General Fund Expenditures (\$493.0 million)

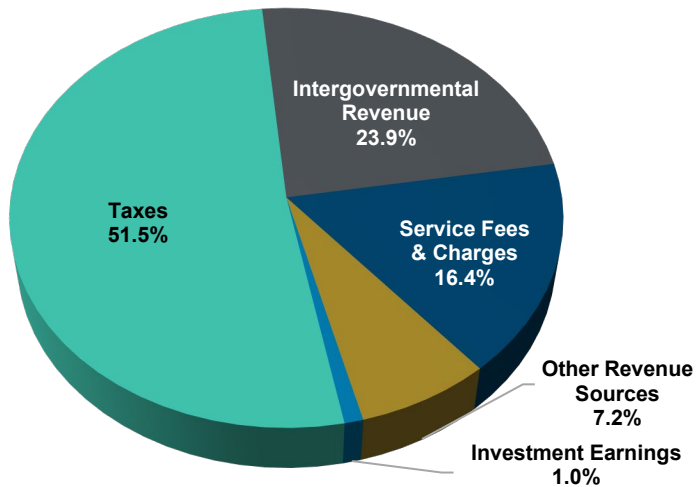




# FRANKLIN COUNTY ALL FUNDS

## 2021 All Funds Approved Budget

Total Revenue by Source  
\$1.49 billion



Note: Other Revenue Sources includes Licenses & Permits, Fines & Forfeitures, Miscellaneous Revenue, Interfund Revenue, and Other Financing Sources.

Two major revenue sources in the \$1.49 billion 2021 All Funds Approved Budget are taxes and intergovernmental revenue. Taxes include the County sales tax and real estate tax levies. All levies in Franklin County are assessed on residential, agricultural, commercial, and industrial properties. Current Franklin County property tax levies support services such as mental health and addiction treatment, supportive care for seniors, children services, and the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium. Intergovernmental revenue includes funds from federal, state, and other local governments. Other sources include license and gas taxes as well as revenue from the operations of casinos in Ohio.

## 2021 All Funds Expenditures (\$1.78 billion)

### HOW IS MY DOLLAR USED?

The largest portion of the All Funds Budget is dedicated to Social & Human Services. The total approved budget for all County funds in 2021 is \$1.78 billion. Some of the services provided in the All Funds Budget include:

Social & Human Services, 42.2%

General Government & Economic Development, 17.8%

Facility & Capital Projects, 9.7%



Road & Bridge Repair 3.0%

Justice & Public Safety, 19.2%

Reserves & Debt, 8.0%



County road, bridge, & path maintenance and construction



Vehicle and watercraft title issuance and management



Dog Shelter & Adoption Center operation



Services for seniors & residents with developmental disabilities



Mental health and substance use disorder treatment



Foster care system, child welfare & child support enforcement

## SERVING, SUPPORTING, AND UPLIFTING ALL RESIDENTS

The [Rise Together Blueprint](#) remained in the forefront in 2020, particularly in the midst of the pandemic. The Commissioners took direct action to support the plan's goals including the following:



- **Declared racism a public health crisis** – Both the Franklin County Board of Health and the Board of Commissioners declared racism a public health crisis. This act acknowledges that racism is a root cause of poverty resulting in disparate outcomes in health, education, employment, housing, and criminal justice.
- **Established Family Stabilization unit** – The Commissioners voted to create a unit that will collaborate with the courts, social service agencies, and higher education to create an integrated network of support for families, providing wraparound assistance, while tailoring approaches to meet the unique needs of each family.
- **Continued investment in Workforce Training** – The Commissioners continued funding programs that increase access to high-paying jobs. Programs such as Building Futures and Roads2Work help low-income residents from underrepresented populations obtain the skills and certifications required to secure employment in lucrative trades.
- **Funded school health center** – In partnership with Heart of Ohio Family Health Center, the Commissioners funded a school-based health center at Whitehall Yearling High School.

The 2021 Approved Budget builds on this year's progress by funding initiatives as outlined in the pages to follow.

### COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS & CATALYST GRANTS

During 2020, Community Partnerships offered funding opportunities for both current and new grantees throughout the County.

#### Catalyst Grants

- The Catalyst Grant program focuses on meaningful change in the priority areas of Economic Security, Personal and Family Empowerment, Emerging and Basic Needs, and Community Enrichment. Thirteen three-year grants were awarded through an open grant review process in 2019. The 2021 Approved Budget includes funding for the third and final year of the Catalyst Grant awards.

#### Community Partnerships

- For 2020 grants, all nonprofit and governmental entities operating in Franklin County for at least 3 years were eligible to apply for Community Partnership funding. The County awarded \$6.4 million to 26 entities that seek to create economic opportunities for residents and businesses, protect the environment, increase access to affordable healthcare, stabilize families, and keep neighborhoods safe. To provide stability during the pandemic, the 2021 Approved Budget funds current grantees for an additional year.

# COLLABORATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## INVESTMENTS IN CENTRAL OHIO

As part of the [Economic Development and Planning Strategic Plan](#), Franklin County's commitment to regional objectives and sustainable economic development remains unchanged. The 2021 Approved Budget contains funding for this work, including support for:

- **Experience Columbus** - The tourism sector supports nearly 78,000 jobs in Columbus and Franklin County, making it a critical investment. Prior to the pandemic, the Greater Columbus Region welcomed 41.1 million visitors each year, who spent \$7.0 billion at area businesses.
- **One Columbus** – As the economic development organization for the 11-county Columbus Region, One Columbus strives to make Central Ohio the most prosperous region in the United States. Working with state and local partners, the organization focuses on helping existing businesses, attracting new businesses, and supporting newly formed enterprises.
- **Confluence Village & Community Sports Park** - The 2021 Approved Budget includes funding for the development agreement supporting Confluence Village and Community Sports Park. It is estimated the project and associated development will support upwards of 1,300 full-time equivalent positions including new facility positions and construction.



## EQUITY ALLIANCE

In 2020, the Columbus Urban League and One Columbus formed the Franklin County Business Growth and Equity Alliance. This partnership will focus on implementing economic equity and shared prosperity strategies that improve outcomes for African American businesses diminished historically by systemic racism and more recently, the disproportionate impact of COVID-19.

The Board of Commissioners provided \$2 million in CARES Act funding to establish the Franklin County Community Equity Fund to respond to the urgent need for business stabilization resulting from COVID-19. Long term, the Equity Alliance seeks to strengthen the county's entrepreneurial ecosystem by developing more sustainable community assets, such as a new Community Development Financial Institution, that will bring needed options for access to capital closer to the Black community in Franklin County.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

To expand housing opportunities, the Board of Commissioners entered into an agreement in 2020 with the Central Ohio Community Land Trust to facilitate the reclamation, rehabilitation, and reutilization of vacant, abandoned real property. The Central Ohio Community Land Trust has committed to the construction of 20 new affordable homes. The 2021 Approved Budget includes \$15.6 million for these initiatives.





# SMART JUSTICE

The Franklin County Office of Justice Policy and Programs, or JPP, is the lead agency in support of programs under the Commissioners' vision of smarter and more equitable justice. In addition to expanding the award-winning [Pathways program](#), JPP has:

- Received \$900,000 through the Office on Violence Against Women to support implementation of the Blueprint for Safety Initiative. This initiative promotes a coordinated community response that leverages information sharing among service providers to increase victim safety.
- Successfully integrated the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Franklin County into JPP. This change will ensure CASA's the long-term viability and will allow the organization to focus on the recruitment, training, and support of Guardians ad Litem to abused and neglected children in the Franklin County Domestic and Juvenile Court.



**Learn more about CASA and apply to become a Guardian ad Litem at <https://casa.franklincountyohio.gov/>**



## OPIATE PREVENTION & TREATMENT

Families in Franklin County continue to be impacted by the opiate epidemic. According to the Franklin County Coroner's Office, there were 597 drug overdose deaths in 2019, a 14% increase from the year before. The rise of the COVID-19 pandemic has also seen a growing concern for managing stress, mental health, and substance abuse. During the first six months of 2020, preliminary reports from the Coroner's Office indicate the number of overdose deaths increased by 73% from 2019.

The 2021 Approved Budget includes support for a full-time Overdose Investigation & Intervention Specialist. This new position is necessary to meet the operational demands required for performing quality overdose investigations and will be fully funded in 2021 by the Overdose to Action Grant.

## NEW CRIMINAL JUSTICE CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The 2021 Approved Budget includes \$3.3 million to assist in the implementation of the new case management system. This multi-year project will consolidate eighteen County systems to create an integrated, secure case management system that provides reliable, efficient, and accurate results to the public and increases the residents' access to justice. During 2021, Phase 2 will begin with configuration, data conversion, testing and training on the new system for the Probate Court.



# SUSTAINABLE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

## FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY

Through a combination of prudent financial planning and federal support, the County was able to avoid a significant draw down of General Fund reserves during 2020 due to support from the Coronavirus Relief Fund.

The 2021 Approved Budget presents a fiscally strong and sustainable Franklin County. While the General Fund ending cash balance will dip in 2021 by approximately \$32 million, this draw down will be from cash reserves saved from prior years. The County's \$62.5 million rainy-day fund will remain intact.

## EQUITY & INCLUSION

As part of the Rise Together Blueprint for Reducing Poverty, the Commissioners have committed to a series of immediate action steps beginning with training and a community discussion on the role of race and racism in poverty and an internal review of county policies. In addition to making racial equity the County's latest core principle, the following structural changes were made.

Human Resources	Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion
The 2021 Approved Budget includes the creation of a Diversity Equity and Inclusion Administrator housed in Human Resources that will establish and lead the Race Equity Council which will advocate for an inclusive culture that inspires a diverse and talented team. The Council will set measurable goals to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in Franklin County's workforce while embracing differences, encouraging conversations, and raising awareness.	The 2021 Approved Budget includes funding to support the first ever Franklin County Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion within General Services - Purchasing. During 2021, the Chief Economic Equity and Inclusion Officer will work on initiatives such as advancing the work of the Franklin County Equity Alliance.

## COVID-19 RESPONSE



Franklin County worked with elected officials, the courts, and other agency partners to keep the business of County government open throughout the pandemic. Operational changes to enhance safety included a reduction in the number of staff in County facilities, increased use of telework and the limit of in-person meetings; investing in network infrastructure and telework equipment; establishing protocols for social distancing, including the installation of barriers where keeping six feet apart is not possible; and increased cleaning.



## A Message from the County Administrator

I am pleased to present to the residents of Franklin County the 2021 People's Guide to the 2021 Approved Budget. While the past year was quite challenging for us all, we look to the new year with great opportunism and energy to serve. I thank the Franklin County Office of Management & Budget for all their excellent fiscal work on the behalf of the residents of Franklin County.

*Every resident, every day.*

### **County Administrator**

Kenneth N. Wilson

### **Deputy Administrators**

Joy Bivens

Erik J. Janas

Kris Long

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*"If you want to lift yourself up,  
lift up someone else"*

*-Booker T. Washington*

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