



the resource for people with disabilities

Finance & Personnel Committee
200 E Wells St #205
Milwaukee WI 53202

Via e-mail

October 20, 2025

Dear Committee members;

Unfortunately, I did not have an opportunity to attend in-person the listening session on Saturday Oct 18th. Please accept this letter as my comments on the proposed budget.

I work at Independence First, which is a Center for Independent Living that is federally funded and mandated to provide services to people with disabilities in the four-county Milwaukee metropolitan area. We have the goal of empowering people with disabilities to live as independently as possible within the community. One of the most critical ways we do this is to advocate on reducing barriers to accessibility in the community.

The City's budget can obviously be an important tool in removing barriers in the City, and by ensuring future improvements are as accessible as possible. I applaud the progress the City has made in improving the accessibility, and encourage the City to continue to do so.

In particular:

- All departments should keep in mind they have a legal obligation to ensure that programs and services are as accessible as possible. Any contracts and sub-contracts with vendors should include a discussion on how to ensure accessibility.
- Affordable and accessible housing continues to be a barrier for people with disabilities. The City should continue to fund the Housing Trust Fund, and increase its funding if possible. The city should also ensure that other housing-related programs include accessibility provisions.
- The state updated its building code, which includes some significant changes to accessibility requirements. The City should ensure that plan reviewers and inspectors are trained on the new requirements.
- The Election Commission should work on improving accessibility of polling sites. There should be no polling sites that has access barriers, and staff should be

trained on how to properly set up the accessible voting machines and the accessible polling booths. The Wisconsin Election Commission can be a good resource on this, particularly with their accessibility assessments of Milwaukee's polling sites.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brian Peters", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brian Peters
Advocacy & Accessibility Services Specialist
Independence First