

Cook County Ranked First in Per Capita Spending for General Government in 2020 by State Auditor

By Steve Fernlund

The Minnesota Office of the State Auditor reports that in 2020 Cook County ranked first of 87 counties in per-capita spending for General Government. Cook (pop. 5,600) spent \$806 per capita (per person). Neighboring Lake County (pop. 10,905) came in at 13th place spending \$452 per capita.

The State Auditor has been analyzing and reporting on local government revenue and expenditures for many years.

In a January 15, 1998 editorial, the Minneapolis Star Tribune called out Cook County for its number-one ranking in the 1997 report. In 1997 Cook County spent \$379 per capita on General Government. The next highest county in 1997 was \$233, 39% less.

“General Government” excludes spending for Public Safety, Highways, Sanitation, Human Services, Health, Culture and Recreation, Conservation, and Economic Development. In Cook County, General Government spending is less than a quarter of its \$19.9 million total expenditure (\$3,562 per capita). Lake County spent a bit over \$26 million or \$2,391 per capita.

Cook County also took first place in Net Tax Levy per capita at \$1,901 (\$10,645,113), more

than double Lake County's per capita Net Tax Levy of \$981 (\$10,695,588) which put Lake County in 13th place.

Total revenue per capita of \$5,203 (\$29.1 million) put Cook County first again. Lake County's total revenue of \$3,689 per capita (\$40.2 million) earned them 7th out of 87 counties.

In the itemized expenditure reports, Cook County spent more per capita than Lake County except for Health and Culture & Recreation. This could be explained by accounting differences between the two counties.

Total expenditures, not including capital outlays which are predominantly for highways, roads, and bridges, for Lake County were \$26 million, \$2391 per capita ranking them 7th. Cook County ranked first again (on a per capita basis) with \$19.9 million in total expenditures, \$3,561 per capita.

Including capital outlays and debt service, Lake County expenditures were \$36.9 million, or \$3,386 per capita while Cook County reported \$26 million, or \$4,666 per capita.

The State Auditor also reports on and ranks income and expenditures for cities.

Grand Marais, with a population of 1,337,

ranked 43 out of 620 cities with \$2,393 per capita in total revenue (\$3.2 million.) Silver Bay, population 1,857, collected \$2,607 per capita in total revenue (\$4.8 million) ranking it 30th of the 620 cities.

The two cities face different debt service obligations. Grand Marais reported \$1.675 million in debt service expenditures, 12th out of the 385 cities reporting, while Silver Bay reports \$91,000 in debt service expenditures putting it in the 333rd spot of the 385 reporting.

Grand Marais reports \$4.2 million in total expenditures (including debt service) or \$3,114 per capita placing it in the top 5% of spenders per capita. Silver Bay reported \$4.3 million in expenditures, \$2,342 per capita.

Clearly, a difficult task for the average taxpayer is finding out where their tax dollars go. County and State Auditors do what they can and are surprisingly transparent. But comparing Cook County's General Government expenditures of \$379 per capita with a population of 4,633 in 1997 to the 2020 General Government expense of \$806 (112% increase) with a population of 5,600 (21% increase) may get some people thinking. That's what the Star Tribune editors urged back in '97.

Food Allergy, Intolerance, & Sensitivity

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If you're lucky, you can gobble up any food you like without concern about allergies, sensitivities, or intolerances. For some people consuming the wrong foods or drinks can result in uncomfortable, or even life-threatening, reactions. These reactions differ from each other in that they happen in different systems of the body.

Allergies happen in the immune system.

For unknown reasons, the body will identify a food as an allergen and then treat it like a dangerous invader. The body mounts an attack and produces antibodies that then cause other cells to release chemicals that cause an allergic reaction. Allergic reactions can be caused by consuming even a minuscule amount, touching it, or simply inhaling microscopic particles from the air. Symptoms usually start within minutes and can include:

- Skin reactions (hives, itchiness, swelling)
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Respiratory symptoms (shortness of breath or wheezing)
- Anaphylaxis - a life-threatening reaction that may include: *Difficulty breathing, dizziness, or loss of consciousness. Injected epinephrine and medical care are immediately required.*

Food allergies happen most commonly in babies and children, but they can appear at any age. It's even possible to develop an allergy to a food that has been eaten for years without any problems.

Food sensitivities can cause immune reactions that generate symptoms across body systems:

joint pain, stomach pain, fatigue, rashes, and/or brain fog. Some people may be “cross-reactive,” meaning they react to foods that are related to each other.

Food intolerances happen in the digestive system and occur when someone's body can't properly digest a food. Symptoms of intolerances may take hours to show up as the food moves through the digestive tract and can include:

- Abdominal (belly) pain, gas, or bloating
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Headaches or migraines
- Heartburn
- Nausea or upset stomach
- Skin rashes

Management and Treatment of Allergies, Sensitivities, & Intolerances

Allergies

The primary way to manage food allergies is to avoid consuming foods that cause a reaction. This involves diligent label-reading, but not all consumables are required to list potential allergens. Eating out can be especially challenging. Restaurant staff may not know all the ingredients of every dish that they serve. Depending on a person's level of sensitivity, even walking into a restaurant could cause a reaction.

Not only can it be difficult to know what allergy-causing ingredients are in foods, but someone that has previously experienced only mild symptoms can, without warning, experience anaphylaxis. People with

diagnosed food allergies should have an epinephrine auto-injector with them at all times. It is the only treatment for anaphylaxis.

Sensitivities

Elimination diets can help identify food sensitivities. This is the process of carefully experimenting, observing, and documenting both foods and the reactions that they may cause. Over a period of weeks, foods are first removed, and then reintroduced - one by one. This is best done with the guidance of a physician or registered dietician. They can help you understand the limitations of this

Food Allergies (continued on page 14)

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