

General Fund Summary

THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS

The general fund provides financial support for the city's basic services. Many divisions are funded solely by the general fund, others receive general fund subsidies, and some have multiple funding sources.

Revenues, excluding the unencumbered balance, encumbrance cancellations, and transfers from other funds, are projected at \$1.23 billion, an increase of 2.8 percent from 2025 revenue projections. A description of the major revenue sources of the general fund is provided below, followed by a revenue summary table.

Income Tax

The primary source of revenue to the general fund is the income tax. Columbus' income tax was first instituted in 1947 at 0.5 percent. Subsequent increases of 0.5 percent occurred in each of the years 1956, 1971, 1982, and 2009. The current income tax rate is 2.5 percent.

The city levies an income tax on all wages, salaries, commissions, other compensation paid to employees, and on net proceeds of business operations in the city. Pursuant to Columbus City Code, Section 361.37, 75 percent of all income tax collections are deposited in the general fund for general fund operations and 25 percent of collections are deposited in a separate fund to service debt on capital improvements.

Approximately 80 percent of income taxes are collected through employer withholdings. Payments are made to the city on a statutorily prescribed basis.

The income tax is the largest source of revenue for general fund operations. In 2026, income tax revenues to the general fund are estimated at \$950.5 million, which is 75.6 percent of total general fund resources and 76.9 percent of total general fund revenue. This represents a 4 percent increase from 2025 projections.

Property Tax

The city annually receives property taxes equal to 3.14 mills of assessed tangible and real property and public utility located in the city. Property taxes are collected by Franklin, Fairfield, and Delaware counties, and are typically remitted to the city on a semi-annual basis. Collections are based on the prior year's assessed valuations, established by state law at 35 percent of appraised market value for real property and at 100 percent of true value for public utility property. Taxes are collected one year in arrears for real property.

Pursuant to Ohio statute and Columbus City Codes, property tax revenue is used for three purposes: certain debt service requirements, partial payment of police and fire pension costs,

and general fund operations. State law requires that the first two obligations be met before property tax revenue can be deposited into the general fund for general operations. Because the city pays debt service on non-enterprise capital improvements from the income tax set aside (ITSA) subfund, property tax revenues are deposited directly in the general fund. The 2026 estimate for property tax collections is \$86.4 million, an increase of 0.8 percent from the 2025 projection.

Hotel/Motel Tax

During 2014, Columbus City Code, Section 371.02, was amended and as a result, the general fund no longer receives a deposit from hotel/motel taxes. The 2025 and 2026 projections for general fund hotel/motel tax receipts are \$0.

Kilowatt-Hour Tax

Beginning in 2001, a tax was levied on users of electricity provided by the Division of Electricity. Known as the kilowatt-hour (KWH) tax, state statutes allow funds collected from users located within the city to be deposited into the city's general fund. These revenues are estimated at \$3.5 million for 2026.

Casino Tax

In 2009, a constitutional amendment was passed in Ohio, allowing for casinos in four Ohio cities (Columbus, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Toledo). In 2012, as casinos opened in the State of Ohio, the state began collecting taxes on casino revenues. The city receives a portion of revenue from the gross casino revenue county fund and the gross casino revenue host city fund. After moneys are set aside for Nationwide Arena and debt service, the balance of revenue received will be deposited into the general fund. The \$9.0 million estimate for the 2026 general fund deposit for casino tax revenues is a 5.9 percent increase over the 2025 projection.

Shared Revenues

Local government fund (LGF) revenues represent portions of various State of Ohio taxes which are shared with local governments within the state. The local community funds, formerly known as the local government fund, and the local government revenue assistance fund are now combined as the local community funds from the State of Ohio. This category also includes the city's share of any residual estate taxes and other smaller taxes. Total revenues are projected at \$28.7 million in 2026, or a 5.2 percent increase over projected 2025 revenues.

Adult-Use Cannabis Tax

In 2023, the sale of marijuana to individuals 21 and over was approved by Ohio voters. A 10 percent tax on these sales is collected by dispensaries and 36 percent of the collections will be remitted to cities where the dispensaries reside. Marijuana sales began in 2024 and payments to municipalities were expected during the latter half of 2025. The State of Ohio has not released any of the funds to Ohio's municipalities that are owed revenue. Total revenues are projected at \$0 in 2026.

Fines and Penalties

The City of Columbus receives 100 percent of all municipal court costs and fines assessed in cases initiated by the city (excluding those that have been earmarked for special purposes such as computerization of court functions), as well as fines assessed for traffic violations. In 2022, fines assessed for parking violations were moved to the newly created mobility enterprise fund. In addition, the city receives a percentage of court costs and fines assessed in cases initiated by

the state, county, or other municipalities and tried in the Franklin County Municipal Court. Revenues from fines and penalties are projected at \$10.4 million in 2026, a 4 percent increase from 2025 collections.

Charges for Service

Sources of revenue in this category include pro rata charges, third-party reimbursements for emergency medical services (EMS), parking meter revenues and other parking charges, and revenue from various divisions that charge for services. These include auto impounding fees, sales of impounded autos, certain fire protection and dispatching service charges, and revenue from the collection of income taxes and prosecution services for other municipalities and villages. Total revenues from charges for service are projected at \$81.8 million in 2026, a 2.8 percent decrease from 2025 estimates.

Pursuant to Ordinance 2293-2018, all independent funds of the city are assessed an administrative service charge of 4.5 percent of revenues, the proceeds of which are deposited into the general fund. This charge, referred to as “pro rata”, represents a fee for certain services performed by administrative divisions for enterprise, special revenue, grant, and internal service divisions for which no specific service charge is assessed. Services include, but are not limited to, debt administration and budget preparation provided by the Finance and Management Department, legal services provided by the City Attorney, financial reporting and assistance provided by the City Auditor, and maintenance and cleaning services provided by the Division of Facilities Management.

Investment Earnings

Investment earnings are deposited into the fund in which they were earned. The Treasury Investment Board, consisting of the City Treasurer, City Auditor, and the Director of Finance and Management, is responsible for investing the city's liquid assets. To ensure the credit-worthiness of the investment of public moneys, federal statutes restrict municipal investment to U.S. government securities, bank certificates of deposit, and repurchase agreements. Interest rates are projected to decline in 2026, resulting in general fund investment earnings projected at \$47.6 million, a 6.6 percent decrease from 2025 estimates.

License and Permit Fees

This category consists primarily of cable communications fees and fees charged by the Department of Public Safety for the issuance and enforcement of City of Columbus licenses and permits. The city charges cable companies a service permit fee for the ability to operate a cable system in the City of Columbus, equal to five percent of cable operator gross revenues. Fees in this category are estimated at \$6.1 million in 2026, of which cable TV permits are expected to be approximately \$5.5 million.

Other Revenue

This category includes various unclaimed funds, refunds, and miscellaneous revenue. The 2026 estimate is \$2.3 million.

Encumbrance Cancellations

These funds represent moneys set aside in prior fiscal years for expenditures that subsequently were not made. Funds can then be made available for use through the cancellation of encumbrances. The estimate for 2026 is \$10 million.

Other Miscellaneous and Fund Transfers

No other fund transfers are expected into the general fund in 2026.

GENERAL FUND REVENUE BY SOURCE AND YEAR HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED 2022 - 2026										
SOURCE	2022	2023	PERCENT	2024	PERCENT	2025	PERCENT	2026	PERCENT	2026
	ACTUAL	Actual	CHANGE	ACTUAL	CHANGE	PROJECTED	CHANGE	PROJECTED	CHANGE	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Income Tax	\$ 810,428,709	\$ 852,460,523	5.19%	\$ 862,236,638	1.15%	\$ 913,974,000	6.00%	\$ 950,533,000	4.00%	75.63%
Property Tax	60,955,469	63,610,301	4.36%	83,783,127	31.71%	85,679,000	2.26%	86,394,000	0.83%	6.87%
Kilowatt Hour Tax	3,358,596	3,360,752	0.06%	3,475,694	3.42%	3,500,000	0.70%	3,500,000	0.00%	0.28%
Hotel/Motel Tax	-	-	0.00%	-	0.00%	-	0.00%	-	0.00%	0.00%
TOTAL TAXES	874,742,774	919,431,576	5.11%	949,495,459	3.27%	1,003,153,000	5.65%	1,040,427,000	3.72%	82.78%
Local Government Fund	26,056,260	26,660,847	2.32%	25,373,167	(4.83%)	25,805,000	1.70%	27,223,000	5.50%	2.17%
Adult-Use Cannabis	-	-	0.00%	-	0.00%	-	0.00%	-	0.00%	0.00%
Liquor Permit Fee, Other	1,767,555	1,390,407	(21.34%)	1,696,023	21.98%	1,500,000	(11.56%)	1,500,000	0.00%	0.12%
Casino Tax	8,373,924	8,528,855	1.85%	8,585,155	0.66%	8,500,000	(0.99%)	9,000,000	5.88%	0.72%
TOTAL SHARED REVENUE	36,197,739	36,580,109	1.06%	35,654,345	(2.53%)	35,805,000	0.42%	37,723,000	5.36%	3.00%
License and Permit Fees	9,036,487	7,122,420	(21.18%)	6,151,321	(13.63%)	6,100,000	(0.83%)	6,100,000	0.00%	0.49%
Fines and Penalties	8,605,576	9,146,112	6.28%	10,279,139	12.39%	10,000,000	(2.72%)	10,400,000	4.00%	0.83%
Investment Earnings	11,625,088	30,961,925	166.34%	44,292,379	43.05%	51,000,000	15.14%	47,646,000	(6.58%)	3.79%
Charges for Service	69,384,763	71,702,802	3.34%	67,420,125	(5.97%)	84,164,000	24.84%	81,824,000	(2.78%)	6.51%
All Other	2,639,779	3,028,598	14.73%	3,173,081	4.77%	2,250,000	(29.09%)	2,250,000	0.00%	0.18%
TOTAL OTHER REVENUES	101,291,693	121,961,857	20.41%	131,316,045	7.67%	153,514,000	16.90%	148,220,000	(3.45%)	11.79%
TOTAL ALL REVENUES	1,012,232,206	1,077,973,542	6.49%	1,116,465,849	3.57%	1,192,472,000	6.81%	1,226,370,000	2.84%	97.57%
Encumbrance Cancellations	6,645,312	7,703,413	15.92%	16,054,531	108.41%	20,284,070	26.34%	10,000,000	(50.70%)	0.80%
Unencumbered Balance	58,299,693	100,022,386	71.57%	50,883,657	(49.13%)	15,535,263	(69.47%)	20,507,066	32.00%	1.63%
Fund Transfers	19,097,101	2,156,500	(88.71%)	-	(100.00%)	1,562,075	N/A	-	(100.00%)	
Other Misc. Transfers	-	-	0.00%	30,000,000	N/A	20,000,000	(33.33%)	-	(100.00%)	0.00%
Total Annual Resources	1,096,274,312	1,187,855,841	8.35%	1,213,404,036	2.15%	1,249,853,408	3.00%	1,256,877,066	0.56%	100.00%
27th Pay Period Reserve Fund	8,721,058	11,572,058	32.69%	14,509,058	25.38%	14,509,058	0.00%	14,509,058	0.00%	
Basic City Services Fund	49,669,492	49,669,492	0.00%	19,669,492	(60.40%)	-	(100.00%)	-	0.00%	
Economic Stabilization Fund	90,777,313	96,627,955	6.45%	102,800,213	6.39%	106,305,777	3.41%	109,305,777	2.82%	
TOTAL GENERAL FUND										
AVAILABLE RESOURCES	\$ 1,245,442,175	\$ 1,345,725,346	8.05%	\$ 1,350,382,799	0.35%	\$ 1,370,668,243	1.50%	\$ 1,380,691,901	0.73%	

Expenditures and Personnel

The following tables provide summary detail on general fund expenditures and personnel levels:

General Fund Summary

GENERAL FUND 2026 PROPOSED BUDGET SUMMARY BY AREA OF EXPENSE							
Department/Division	Personnel	Materials	Services	Other	Capital	Transfers	Totals
City Council	\$ 7,454,708	\$ 37,542	\$ 365,687	\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,860,937
<u>City Auditor</u>							
City Auditor	5,886,120	23,000	710,622	1,000	-	-	6,620,742
Income Tax	8,099,579	49,000	5,625,395	500	-	-	13,774,474
Total	13,985,699	72,000	6,336,017	1,500	-	-	20,395,216
City Treasurer	1,473,166	3,768	410,526	-	-	-	1,887,460
<u>City Attorney</u>							
City Attorney	18,478,344	66,000	572,775	3,000	-	-	19,120,119
Real Estate	263,598	-	-	-	-	-	263,598
Total	18,741,942	66,000	572,775	3,000	-	-	19,383,717
Municipal Court Judges	26,586,306	110,075	2,026,501	-	-	245,000	28,967,882
Municipal Court Clerk	16,651,892	120,350	1,104,776	-	-	-	17,877,018
Civil Service	5,561,800	52,800	923,209	116,000	-	-	6,653,809
<u>Public Safety</u>							
Administration	9,693,638	107,000	4,092,070	520,150	-	-	14,412,858
Support Services	20,838,845	2,470,622	4,834,579	10,000	-	-	28,154,046
Police	409,668,787	8,630,298	25,389,170	275,000	40,000	-	444,003,255
Fire	340,603,355	5,547,617	17,168,097	150,000	-	-	363,469,069
Total	780,804,625	16,755,537	51,483,916	955,150	40,000	-	850,039,228
<u>Office of the Mayor</u>							
Mayor	4,159,058	20,500	387,064	57,000	-	-	4,623,622
Office of Diversity & Inclusion	1,568,434	8,000	517,671	50,000	-	-	2,144,105
Office of CelebrateOne	1,674,277	21,000	220,170	390,000	-	-	2,305,447
Office of Education	342,850	2,000	11,745,514	364,383	-	-	12,454,747
Office of Violence Prevention	2,744,694	51,000	1,382,360	2,139,000	-	-	6,317,054
Total	10,489,313	102,500	14,252,779	3,000,383	-	-	27,844,975
Inspector General	2,203,756	28,400	41,022	-	-	-	2,273,178
<u>Building and Zoning Services</u>							
Building & Zoning	1,555,454	35,250	242,761	3,500	-	-	1,836,965
Code Enforcement	2,047,719	48,750	564,102	8,000	-	-	2,668,571
Total	3,603,173	84,000	806,863	11,500	-	-	4,505,536
<u>Development</u>							
Administration	4,459,930	40,000	540,636	151,000	-	-	5,191,566
Econ. Development	1,497,953	4,400	1,972,832	1,641,000	-	-	5,116,185
Planning	2,293,440	6,600	443,603	1,000	-	-	2,744,643
Housing	2,648,529	13,000	766,324	45,000	-	-	3,472,853
Real Estate&Land Redevelopmr	1,806,648	3,000	335,000	-	-	-	2,144,648
Housing Stability	1,186,969	3,150	497,000	16,547,989	-	-	18,235,108
Total	13,893,469	70,150	4,555,395	18,385,989	-	-	36,905,003
<u>Finance and Management</u>							
Finance Administration	3,358,089	11,500	897,497	-	-	-	4,267,086
Financial Management	3,367,154	2,500	1,680,312	-	-	-	5,049,966
Facilities Management	10,875,954	1,335,000	11,054,622	1,000	-	-	23,266,576
Total	17,601,197	1,349,000	13,632,431	1,000	-	-	32,583,628
Finance City-wide	-	-	-	-	-	20,600,000	20,600,000
Finance Technology (pays gf agency bills)	-	-	36,649,593	-	-	-	36,649,593
<u>Human Resources</u>							
Administration	2,424,449	30,500	119,088	-	-	-	2,574,037
Occupational Safety & Health	-	12,000	1,700,000	-	-	-	1,712,000
Total	2,424,449	42,500	1,819,088	-	-	-	4,286,037
Neighborhoods	7,359,809	80,809	880,149	5,381,000	-	52,500	13,754,267
Health	-	-	-	-	-	32,887,105	32,887,105
Recreation and Parks	-	-	-	-	-	58,757,388	58,757,388
<u>Public Service</u>							
Administration	494,444	-	5,290	-	-	-	499,734
Refuse Collection	17,006,740	250,000	14,898,615	100,000	10,000	-	32,265,355
Total	17,501,184	250,000	14,903,905	100,000	10,000	-	32,765,089
Total General Operating Fund	\$ 946,336,488	\$ 19,225,431	\$ 150,764,632	\$ 27,958,522	\$ 50,000	\$ 112,541,993	\$ 1,256,877,066

General Fund Summary

GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURE AND BUDGET SUMMARY					
	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	2025 Projected	2026 Proposed
City Council	\$ 6,019,092	\$ 7,042,055	\$ 7,645,591	\$ 7,696,986	\$ 7,860,937
City Auditor					
City Auditor	5,499,619	6,018,202	6,688,318	6,404,542	6,620,742
Income Tax	8,163,345	12,286,182	14,035,623	13,010,820	13,774,474
Total	13,662,964	18,304,384	20,723,941	19,415,362	20,395,216
City Treasurer	1,474,430	1,491,300	1,934,668	1,844,350	1,887,460
City Attorney					
City Attorney	16,197,842	17,448,956	18,159,641	18,616,518	19,120,119
Real Estate	185,051	246,618	262,260	258,920	263,598
Total	16,382,893	17,695,574	18,421,901	18,875,438	19,383,717
Municipal Court Judges	25,729,461	28,445,949	28,814,860	29,786,877	28,967,882
Municipal Court Clerk	15,898,165	18,100,963	19,057,323	19,282,643	17,877,018
Civil Service	5,474,582	6,118,258	6,712,962	6,561,006	6,653,809
Public Safety					
Administration	13,794,908	14,572,464	15,169,486	14,941,796	14,412,858
Support Services	23,259,806	24,581,294	25,502,144	25,687,058	28,154,046
Police	381,339,038	378,135,248	397,552,365	432,367,456	444,003,255
Fire	307,699,580	310,601,843	336,244,368	355,025,580	363,469,069
Total	726,093,332	727,890,849	774,468,363	828,021,890	850,039,228
Office of the Mayor					
Mayor	3,816,457	4,598,898	4,658,237	4,641,296	4,623,622
Office of Diversity & Inclusion	1,926,080	2,644,285	2,460,249	2,964,013	2,144,105
Office of CelebrateOne	1,670,853	3,769,966	2,464,541	2,468,674	2,305,447
Office of Education	14,213,103	14,669,100	13,661,495	13,810,772	12,454,747
Office of Violence Prevention	1,576,433	5,027,076	6,805,999	6,389,328	6,317,054
Total	23,202,926	30,709,325	30,050,521	30,274,083	27,844,975
Inspector General	1,443,385	1,870,262	2,376,891	2,221,806	2,273,178
Building and Zoning Services					
Building & Zoning	197,470	1,546,931	2,414,202	2,122,569	1,836,965
Code Enforcement	7,270,774	7,500,189	7,322,930	7,196,332	2,668,571
Total	7,468,244	9,047,120	9,737,132	9,318,901	4,505,536
Development					
Administration	14,360,125	25,119,381	15,552,834	16,166,679	5,191,566
Economic Development	16,124,342	17,704,886	6,821,630	13,403,948	5,116,185
Planning	2,161,936	2,596,176	2,880,254	2,339,051	2,744,643
Housing	8,674,751	4,730,519	4,025,846	4,225,802	3,472,853
Real Estate & Land Redevelopment	597,977	1,245,188	1,290,986	1,595,270	2,144,648
Housing Stability	-	-	-	819,265	18,235,108
Total	41,919,131	51,396,150	30,571,550	38,550,015	36,905,003
Finance and Management					
Finance Administration	8,809,995	6,158,753	5,974,866	5,319,004	4,267,086
Financial Management	5,114,023	4,355,217	5,319,633	4,505,262	5,049,966
Facilities Management	20,567,898	24,834,841	23,338,247	24,299,010	23,266,576
Total	34,491,916	35,348,811	34,632,746	34,123,276	32,583,628
Citywide Technology	26,226,678	27,750,280	32,067,672	28,039,015	36,649,593
Finance City-wide	27,848,224	22,676,049	29,854,853	8,416,225	20,600,000
Human Resources					
Administration	3,335,243	3,319,974	3,937,913	2,098,252	2,574,037
Occupational Safety & Health	-	-	-	-	1,712,000
Total	3,335,243	3,319,974	3,937,913	2,098,252	4,286,037
Technology	2,704,841	20,705,443	-	-	-
Neighborhoods	11,745,496	13,434,380	15,224,064	15,163,395	13,754,267
Health	32,315,513	32,587,527	33,289,251	33,289,251	32,887,105
Recreation and Parks	48,854,555	57,971,669	58,728,767	65,703,401	58,757,388
Public Service					
Administration	867,210	951,455	1,055,072	1,009,295	499,734
Refuse Collection	63,813,866	65,010,996	67,047,367	29,654,875	32,265,355
Total	64,681,076	65,962,451	68,102,439	30,664,170	32,765,089
Total General Operating Fund	\$ 1,136,972,146	\$ 1,197,868,773	\$ 1,226,353,408	\$ 1,229,346,342	\$ 1,256,877,066

GENERAL FUND PERSONNEL SUMMARY -- FULL-TIME

	2023	2024	2025	2026
	Actual	Actual	Budget	Proposed
City Council	45	54	56	57
City Auditor				
City Auditor	36	38	39	38
Income Tax	66	61	74	67
Total	102	99	113	105
City Treasurer	6	7	7	7
City Attorney				
City Attorney	129	137	134	139
Real Estate	1	1	1	1
Total	130	138	135	140
Municipal Court Judges	228	234	247	246
Municipal Court Clerk	178	178	186	170
Civil Service	41	40	42	44
Public Safety				
Administration	62	66	83	70
Support Services	153	155	180	169
Police- Non Uniformed	210	229	290	242
Police- Uniformed	1,882	1,887	2,117	2,066
Fire- Non Uniformed	44	48	56	51
Fire- Uniformed	1,655	1,710	1,765	1,776
Total	4,006	4,095	4,491	4,374
Office of the Mayor				
Mayor	21	23	23	21
Office of Diversity and Inclusion	12	11	14	12
Office of CelebrateOne	11	11	11	11
Office of Education	1	2	2	2
Office of Violence Prevention	7	15	21	21
Total	52	62	71	67
Inspector General	13	16	18	17
Building and Zoning Services				
Building & Zoning	2	16	17	15
Code Enforcement	64	65	59	16
Total	66	81	76	31
Development				
Administration	31	27	33	27
Economic Development	12	11	16	12
Planning	20	20	21	19
Housing	33	31	31	23
Real Estate & Land Redevelopment	5	10	10	13
Housing stability	0	0	0	6
Total	101	99	111	98
Finance and Management				
Administration	30	26	30	25
Financial Management	24	23	28	27
Facilities Management	98	101	116	111
Total	152	150	174	163
Human Resources	15	12	15	16
Neighborhoods	58	58	68	62
Public Service				
Administration	7	7	7	4
Refuse Collection	182	189	240	184
Total	189	196	247	188
Total General Fund	5,382	5,519	6,057	5,785

MEGAN N. KILGORE
City Auditor

DARLENE WILDES, CPA
Deputy City Auditor

THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS

OFFICE OF MEGAN N. KILGORE,
CITY AUDITOR

To: Mayor Andrew J. Ginther
Columbus City Councilmembers
City Attorney Zach Klein

From: City Auditor Megan Kilgore

Date: October 30, 2025

2026 Official Revenue Estimate

Dear Colleagues:

Columbus enters 2026 with durable economic momentum. The City's economy remains broad and resilient—anchored by healthcare and higher education, strengthened by steady population growth, and energized by continued investment in technology and research.

Employers across these sectors continue to expand, major medical facilities are under construction, and wages remain stable. While we are beginning to observe the workforce impacts of robotic process automation (RPA) and offshoring, particularly in administrative and support functions, these effects have thus far been offset by job creation in the City's growing sectors. These fundamentals also position Columbus to sustain consistent revenue performance even as national growth moderates.

To prepare this estimate, our office relied on real-time data from the City's revenue system, supplemented by information available from state and federal sources (as constrained by the ongoing federal shutdown). We also conducted numerous interviews with local employers, financial institutions, economists, and other key contributors to our economy.

General Fund resources for 2026 are forecasted to be \$1,256,877,066, an increase of 2.49% relative to the 2025 Original Revenue Estimate of \$1,226,353,408 (dated 1/31/2025 after budget hearing). We will closely monitor the actual impact on revenues in the first quarter of 2026 and will update projections as needed.

The detailed notes attached provide additional context and assumptions supporting this estimate. Please feel free to contact me with any follow-up questions.



Megan N. Kilgore
City Auditor



October 30, 2025

2026 Official Revenue Estimate

Per the Charter of the City of Columbus, the Mayor's estimate of the expense of conducting the affairs of the City for the following fiscal year shall be submitted to City Council on or before the fifteenth day of November in each year. The estimate shall be compiled from certain information obtained from various City departments, including a statement from the City Auditor of the total probable revenue for the period covered by the Mayor's estimate. This statement shall serve as the City Auditor's Statement of Available Resources for Fiscal Year 2026.

ESTIMATED GENERAL OPERATING FUND REVENUE:

Income taxes	\$950,533,000.00
Property taxes	86,394,000
Investment earnings	47,646,000
Licenses and permits fees	6,100,000
Shared revenue	37,723,000
Charges for services	81,824,000
Fines, forfeitures and penalties	10,400,000
Miscellaneous revenue	5,750,000
TOTAL ESTIMATED RESOURCES FROM REVENUE	\$1,226,370,000
TOTAL TRANSFERS IN	-
TOTAL ESTIMATED RESOURCES AND TRANSFERS	\$1,226,370,000
Estimated prior year encumbrance cancellations	10,000,000
Estimated 2025 Year End Fund Balance	20,507,066
TOTAL ESTIMATED AVAILABLE RESOURCES GENERAL OPERATING FUND	\$1,256,877,066

UNENCUMBERED CASH AVAILABLE IN OTHER GENERAL FUND SUBFUNDS:

Estimated Unencumbered Cash – JOB GROWTH [100015]	887,881
Estimated Unencumbered Cash – PUBLIC SAFETY INITIATIVE [100016]	41,345
Estimated Unencumbered Cash – NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE [100018]	1,683,536
Estimated Unencumbered Cash – REIMAGINE SAFETY [100019]	1,066,492
TOTAL ESTIMATED AVAILABLE RESOURCES	\$1,260,556,320



This estimate includes an increase in 2026 income tax revenue of 4% as compared to the estimated income tax revenue of \$914.0 million for the year ended December 31, 2025.

In addition to the total resources estimated for the General Operating Fund, there is an estimated \$3.7 million in unencumbered cash in other General Fund subfunds, which could be transferred to the General Operating Fund to cover the cost of basic city services. If the unencumbered balances in these General Fund subfunds were transferred to the General Operating Fund, total estimated available resources would be \$1.261 billion for 2026.

See "Notes to the City Auditor's Statement of 2026 Estimated Available Resources" for additional information.

CITY OF COLUMBUS, OHIO
NOTES TO THE CITY AUDITOR'S STATEMENT OF 2026 ESTIMATED AVAILABLE RESOURCES
GENERAL OPERATING FUND

NOTE 1 – GENERAL OPERATING FUND RESOURCES

The 2026 General Operating Fund total estimated *revenues* for the City of Columbus (“City”) are approximately \$1.226 billion. The revenue is generated through income tax, property tax, licenses and permit fees, fines, forfeitures and penalties, investment earnings, charges for services, shared revenue, and miscellaneous revenue.

Total estimated revenues for 2026 represent an increase of \$35.4 million, or 3.0 percent, compared to the revised 2025 revenue estimate of \$1.191 billion. Likewise, total estimated resources for 2026 are projected to rise by \$15.5 million, or 1.25 percent, compared to the 2025 total resource estimate of \$1.242 billion.

The table below presents the amount of revenue attributed to each major category for 2024 actual results, the revised 2025 estimate, and the 2026 estimate.

Revenue Categories	2024		2025		2026	
	Actual	% to Total	Revised Estimate	% to Total	Original Estimate	% to Total
Income Taxes	\$862,237	77.2%	\$913,974	76.8%	\$950,533	77.5%
Property Taxes	83,783	7.5%	85,679	7.2%	86,394	7.0%
License and permit fees	6,151	0.6%	6,100	0.5%	6,100	0.5%
Fines, forfeitures and penalties	10,279	0.9%	10,000	0.8%	10,400	0.9%
Investment earnings	44,293	3.9%	51,000	4.3%	47,646	3.9%
Charges for service	67,420	6.0%	82,664	6.9%	81,824	6.7%
Shared revenue	35,654	3.2%	35,805	3.0%	37,723	3.1%
Miscellaneous revenue	6,649	0.7%	5,750	0.5%	5,750	0.4%
Resources from revenue	\$1,116,466	100.0%	\$1,190,972	100.0%	\$1,226,370	100.0%

NOTE 2 – INCOME TAXES

Income tax revenue represents approximately 77.5% of total General Fund revenues estimated for 2026.

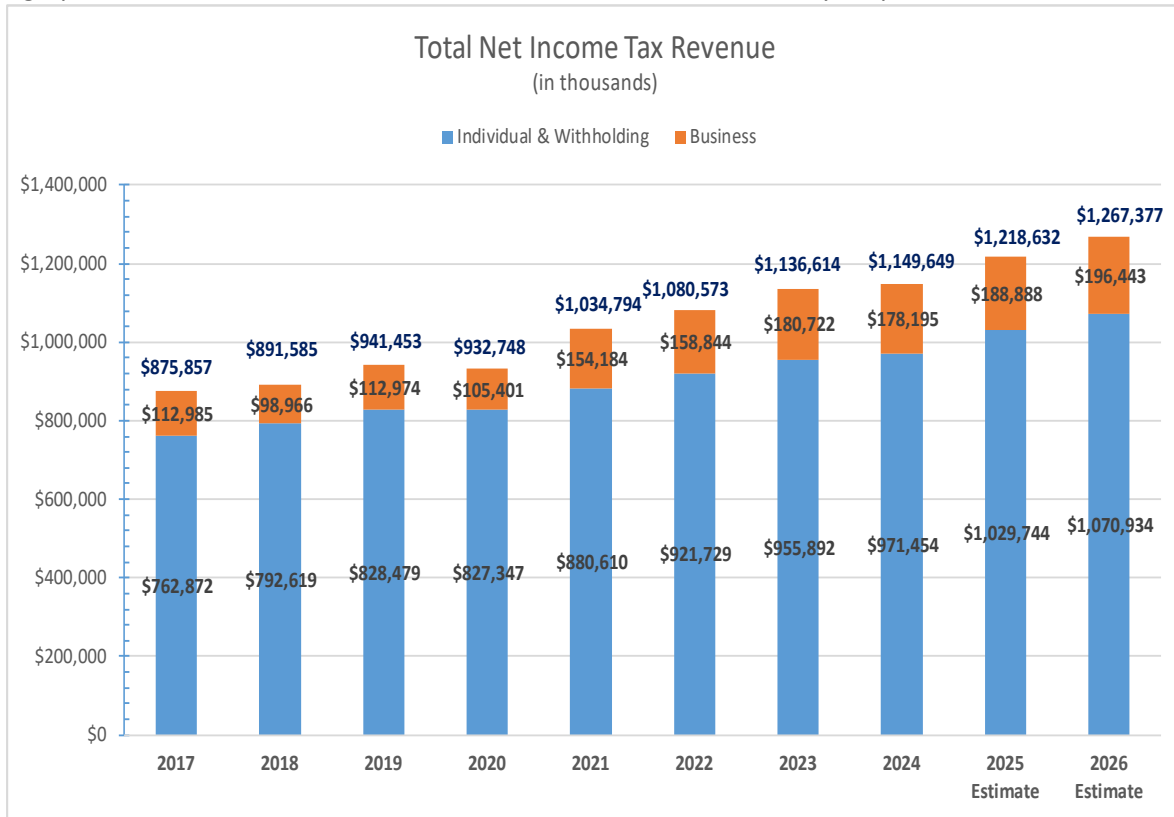
Total income tax collections for 2026, after providing for taxpayer refunds, are estimated at \$1.267 billion. In accordance with City policy, one-fourth of all collections will be deposited into the Income Tax Set-Aside Subfund (a subfund of the General Fund) to support capital improvements. The remaining three-fourths, or roughly \$950.5 million, will be deposited into the General Operating Subfund of the General Fund.

The City’s current income tax rate is 2.5%, levied on all wages, salaries, commissions, and other compensation paid to employees, as well as on the net profits of business operations within the City.

The 2026 income tax estimate reflects projections for employment levels, realized wage inflation, and work-from-home trends. These factors together shape the City’s primary revenue stream.

CITY OF COLUMBUS, OHIO
NOTES TO THE CITY AUDITOR'S STATEMENT OF 2026 ESTIMATED AVAILABLE RESOURCES
GENERAL OPERATING FUND

The graph below shows total income tax collections/estimates for a 10-year period.



National Economic Context

As 2026 approaches, the U.S. economy continues to experience moderate growth, easing but persistent inflation, and a tight labor market. Policymakers are balancing efforts to sustain expansion while containing price pressures.

At the time this estimate was prepared, the federal government was in its fifth week of a shutdown. While the City's overall fiscal exposure is limited, such events can affect local income tax collections in several ways. Withholding from federal employees and contractors may be temporarily reduced, and federally funded positions at local employers—including hospitals, universities, and research institutions—can also be disrupted. In addition, a shutdown can dampen consumer spending, delay business decisions, and interrupt the flow of federal labor and wage data that inform the City's economic forecasts.

Extended or repeated shutdowns can erode business confidence, slow hiring, or constrain wage growth—all of which directly influence the City's income tax base.

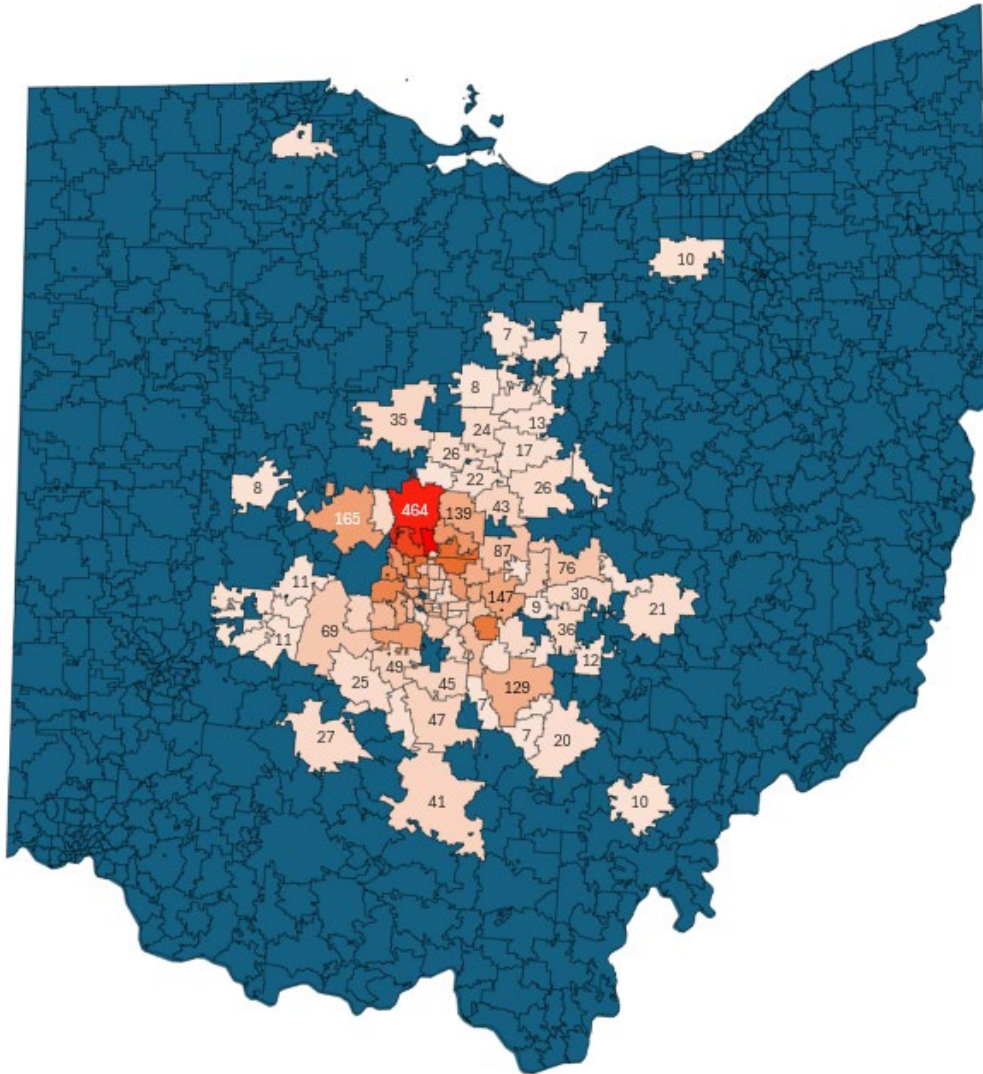
Remote Work and Income Tax Effects

By 2025, remote and hybrid work patterns have largely stabilized, with most major employers having adopted permanent arrangements. While this shift continues to influence refund activity—particularly

CITY OF COLUMBUS, OHIO
NOTES TO THE CITY AUDITOR'S STATEMENT OF 2026 ESTIMATED AVAILABLE RESOURCES
GENERAL OPERATING FUND

among commuters working from home outside city limits—its overall impact has been partially offset by steady wage gains and the relocation of new residents into the City.

The heat map below highlights the residential areas with the greatest number of refund requests through September 2025.



Columbus continues to attract professionals who can live and work anywhere, including those employed by national firms. This trend, combined with ongoing job growth in healthcare, technology, and higher education, has helped sustain healthy income tax collections despite the redefined workplace landscape.

CITY OF COLUMBUS, OHIO
NOTES TO THE CITY AUDITOR'S STATEMENT OF 2026 ESTIMATED AVAILABLE RESOURCES
GENERAL OPERATING FUND

Local Employment Trends

The City's economy through 2025 remains fundamentally strong, supported by a stable foundation of public, institutional, and private-sector employers. Government, higher education, and healthcare continue to provide steady employment and economic stability for the City's tax base, while growth in technology and innovation-related industries adds new layers of diversification. Some sectors are normalizing, while others—especially healthcare and technology-driven industries—continue to generate long-term opportunities for workforce and wage growth.

- Healthcare remains the region's dominant employer, supported by continued construction of new towers, clinics, and specialized facilities across the City's major hospital systems. These investments are not only expanding capacity but also generating sustained demand for skilled labor in nursing, medical technology, and facilities operations.
- Technology and innovation continue to show robust growth, with companies in software development, data analytics, and healthcare innovation increasing their local presence. Partnerships between universities, startups, and corporate innovation labs are deepening Columbus's role as a national technology hub.
- Professional and technical services remain elevated as the Columbus economy shifts toward higher-knowledge roles.

Job Market Dynamics

Columbus continues to benefit from low unemployment, steady in-migration of skilled workers, and a strong concentration of knowledge-based employment within its boundaries. In recent years, several industries have streamlined operations through automation, process redesign, and selective off-shoring, leading to targeted workforce reductions—most notably in back-office and administrative functions. These efficiency gains, while moderating job counts in certain sectors, have not materially weakened the City's income tax base. Instead, they have been partially offset by stronger corporate net-profits tax collections and sustained hiring in high-value occupations related to medical and healthcare innovation, research, digital infrastructure, and technology development.

Looking ahead to 2026, the City anticipates continued expansion in health-related and innovation-driven employment, supported by the construction of new medical facilities, ongoing university research investments, and the growth of local technology enterprises. Collectively, these forces are expected to outpace workforce contractions in other areas, underpinning a moderate but positive income tax outlook for 2026.

CITY OF COLUMBUS, OHIO
NOTES TO THE CITY AUDITOR'S STATEMENT OF 2026 ESTIMATED AVAILABLE RESOURCES
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A three-year analysis of jobs, by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code designation, and their respective +/- changes is below. *Note: figures in this table are presented on an unrounded basis; as a result, totals may not sum precisely.*

INDUSTRY	2023		2024		2025	
	Columbus Annual Avg.	% Change	Columbus Annual Avg.	% Change	Columbus Annual Avg. through July	% Change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	N/A		N/A			
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	N/A		N/A			
Utilities	2,687	5.0%	2,711	0.9%	3,005	10.8%
Construction	27,590	6.1%	29,964	8.6%	29,851	-0.4%
Manufacturing	26,595	0.7%	27,058	1.7%	27,342	1.1%
Wholesale Trade	18,989	3.1%	18,767	-1.2%	18,457	-1.7%
Retail Trade	49,136	1.2%	49,089	-0.1%	49,136	0.1%
Transportation and Warehousing	35,523	-7.9%	34,536	-2.8%	32,327	-6.4%
Information	10,306	-0.5%	10,193	-1.1%	10,137	-0.6%
Finance and Insurance	30,707	-5.1%	29,145	-5.1%	29,760	2.1%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	12,646	5.3%	12,858	1.7%	13,070	1.6%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	39,773	5.9%	39,352	-1.1%	39,983	1.6%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	15,466	6.4%	15,987	3.4%	15,949	-0.2%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	33,661	-4.1%	32,486	-3.5%	33,842	4.2%
Educational Services	10,960	4.5%	11,431	4.3%	11,902	4.1%
Health Care and Social Assistance	97,808	5.9%	102,898	5.2%	104,187	1.3%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	8,649	6.5%	8,862	2.5%	8,490	-4.2%
Accommodation and Food Services	48,980	4.3%	48,928	-0.1%	48,203	-1.5%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	25,951	5.8%	26,365	1.6%	26,838	1.8%
Government	108,448	2.7%	112,250	3.5%	114,473	2.0%
	603,875	2.3%	612,881	1.5%	616,954	0.7%

Source: BLS; 2025 data through July.

NOTE 3 – PROPERTY TAXES

The City's share of real property taxes to be collected in 2026 is estimated at \$86.4 million, net of approximately \$2.5 million retained by the counties (Franklin, Fairfield, and Delaware) and the State for administrative costs and fees. Amounts paid directly to the City by the State, known as "rollbacks," are included in this total.

Property tax revenues are estimated based on trends in assessed valuations as determined by the county auditors. Under Ohio law, assessed value is established at 35 percent of appraised market value. A sexennial revaluation of all property must be completed every six years, with triennial updates occurring midway between full reappraisals. Franklin County completed its most recent reappraisal in 2023; the previous triennial update occurred in 2020. The triennial update that will take place in 2026 will impact 2027 property tax revenue.

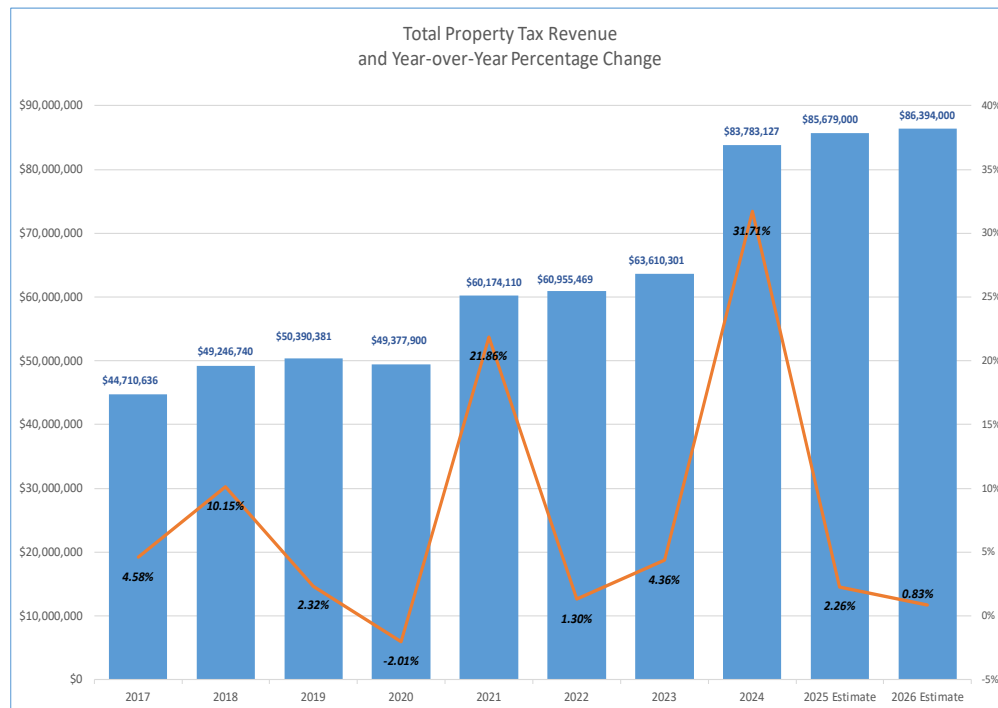
The Ohio Constitution limits the total property taxes levied by all taxing authorities within a county to one percent of assessed value without voter approval. Under current procedures, the City's share is 3.14 mills, or 0.314 percent of assessed value. Any increase in this rate would require voter authorization.

Franklin County assessed values for tax year 2025 (which determine taxes to be collected in 2026) will be available in December 2025.

CITY OF COLUMBUS, OHIO
NOTES TO THE CITY AUDITOR'S STATEMENT OF 2026 ESTIMATED AVAILABLE RESOURCES
GENERAL OPERATING FUND

The estimate excludes any potential effects from property tax reform proposals pending before the Ohio General Assembly, as their enactment, effective dates, and fiscal impacts cannot be reasonably determined at this time.

The graph below shows total property tax revenue and the year-over-year percentage change for a 10-year period.



NOTE 4 – INVESTMENT EARNINGS

The City pools its cash and investments for maximum investing efficiency. Investment income from this pool is allocated among individual funds in accordance with City Code and Council direction, after meeting certain requirements. Interest earnings in excess of required allocations are recorded as revenue in the General Fund.

Based on the estimated amount of pooled cash and investments and projected interest rates, it is estimated that \$47.6 million will be posted as revenue to the General Fund in 2026. The 2026 investment earnings estimate is marginally lower than the \$51 million expected to be realized for 2025. This slight decrease from 2025 expectations, reflects an anticipated easing of interest rates partially offset by a modest increase in average invested balances.

NOTE 5 – LICENSES AND PERMIT FEES

Licenses and permit fees are estimated at \$6.1 million, which is consistent with that expected to be collected for 2025. Much of this revenue, \$5.5 million, is from cable permits. Traditional cable TV is being replaced with streaming; therefore, this revenue source is expected to remain static.

CITY OF COLUMBUS, OHIO
NOTES TO THE CITY AUDITOR'S STATEMENT OF 2026 ESTIMATED AVAILABLE RESOURCES
GENERAL OPERATING FUND

NOTE 6 – SHARED REVENUE

Shared revenues are estimated at \$37.7 million for 2026. These revenues include the City's portion of various State-shared taxes, such as the Local Government Fund (LGF) and municipal motor vehicle license fees, which together are estimated to provide \$27.2 million in 2026.

The City also receives casino tax revenues from two sources: a county share allocation and a host city allocation. Total casino tax receipts are projected at \$15.0 million in 2026. The City has entered into multiple agreements funded through these revenues; after accounting for those commitments, approximately \$9.0 million in casino tax receipts are expected to remain in the General Operating Fund.

Another potential source of shared revenue is the Adult Use Cannabis tax. On November 7, 2023, Ohio voters approved Issue 2, known as *An Act to Control and Regulate Adult Use Cannabis*, permitting adults aged 21 and older to purchase and possess cannabis for recreational use. Retail sales began on August 6, 2024, and are subject to a 10 percent excise tax collected at the point of sale. Of that tax, 36 percent is allocated to the Host Community Cannabis Fund, which will provide revenue to cities and townships hosting dispensaries.

The State did not appropriate expenditures from the Host Community Cannabis Fund in its Fiscal Years 2025–2026 biennial budget. As a result, the City will not receive any proceeds from this source until after July 1, 2026. The State continues to review potential changes to tax rates and distribution formulas, and the amount the City will ultimately receive remains uncertain.

On December 16, 2024, City Council approved Ordinance 3436-2024, creating the Cannabis Host Community Special Revenue Fund and directing the City Auditor to deposit future proceeds from the Adult Use Cannabis tax into this fund. The specific uses of this fund will be determined through subsequent Council legislation. Accordingly, no cannabis-related revenues have been included in the 2026 General Fund estimate.

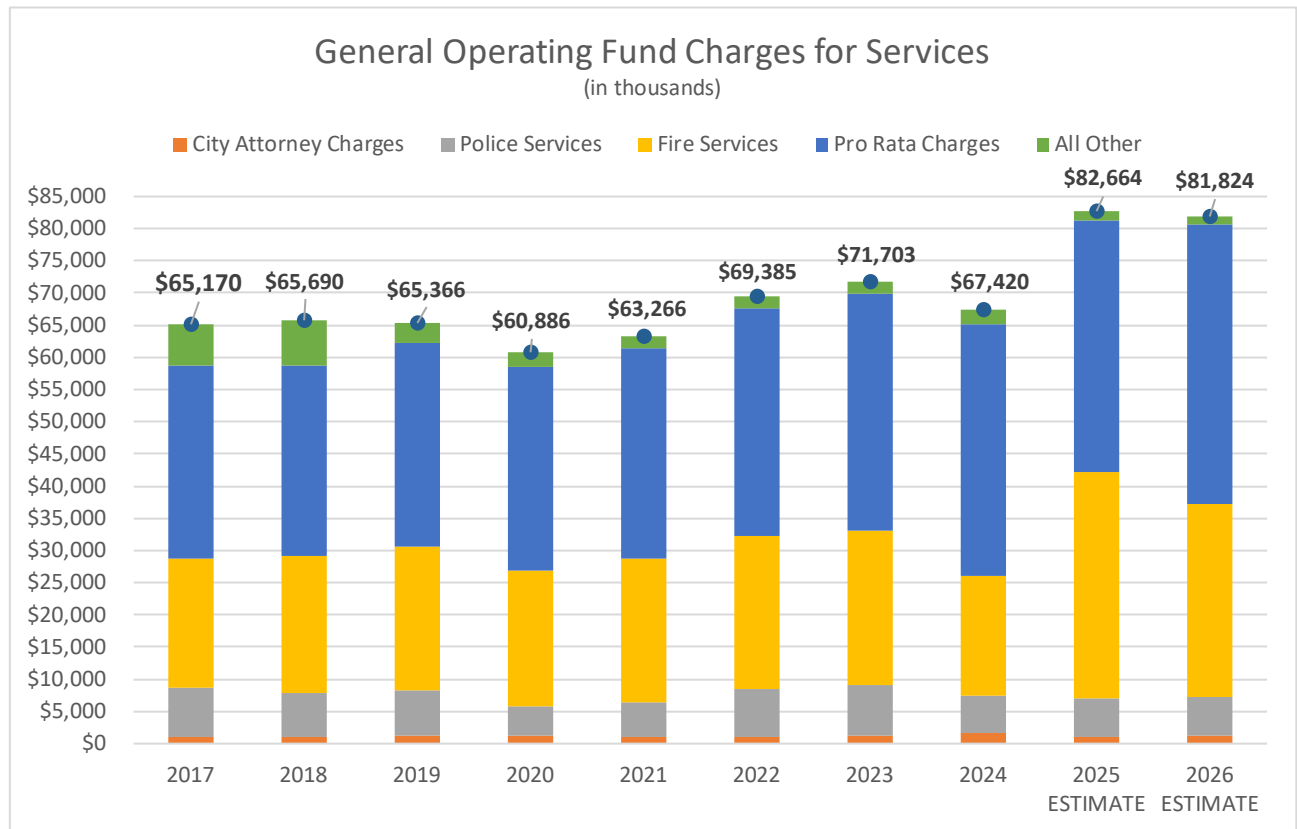
NOTE 7 – CHARGES FOR SERVICES

Charges for services in 2026 are estimated at \$81.8 million. The most significant revenue sources included in charges for services are for Pro Rata, Division of Fire Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Billing, and special Police services. Pro Rata (or administrative charges to non-General Operating Fund divisions) represents certain operating costs borne by the General Operating Fund which are allocated to other funds of the City. Ordinance 3200-2021 calls for an assessment rate of 4.5% of revenues of the funds assessed, resulting in revenue to the General Operating Fund estimated at \$43.4 million for 2026.

The Fire EMS Billing for fees related to emergency medical transportation services are estimated at \$30 million for 2026. The 2025 estimate of \$35.2 million included a catch-up amount related to 2024 EMS billing amounts that were not collected in 2024 due to a cyberattack on the City's EMS Billing third-party administrator. Special Police services which include policing special community and other events are estimated to generate revenue of \$6 million in 2026.

CITY OF COLUMBUS, OHIO
NOTES TO THE CITY AUDITOR'S STATEMENT OF 2026 ESTIMATED AVAILABLE RESOURCES
GENERAL OPERATING FUND

The following graph illustrates charges for services revenue by source over a 10-year period.



NOTE 8 – FINES, FORFEITURES AND PENALTIES

Revenue from fines, forfeitures and penalties consists primarily of court costs. Court costs resulting from operations of the Franklin County Municipal Court should produce approximately \$10.4 million in 2026. This estimate represents a 4% increase over the 2025 estimate, as the municipal court revenue continues to recover from the impact of the pandemic.

NOTE 9 – MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES

Miscellaneous revenues are estimated at \$5.8 million for 2026. Kilowatt hour (kWh) tax is permitted to be levied on users of electricity provided by the City's Division of Electricity. State statutes provide for the kWh tax to be deposited into the City's General Operating Fund and the City reports this amount as miscellaneous revenue. The kWh tax for 2026 is estimated at \$3.5 million. The remaining \$2.3 million estimated in miscellaneous revenue is for rents, refunds, reimbursements, and other miscellaneous payments.

NOTE 10 – TRANSFERS IN

There are currently no transfers in estimated for 2026.

NOTE 11 – PRIOR YEAR ENCUMBRANCE CANCELLATIONS

CITY OF COLUMBUS, OHIO
NOTES TO THE CITY AUDITOR'S STATEMENT OF 2026 ESTIMATED AVAILABLE RESOURCES
GENERAL OPERATING FUND

Encumbrances which will be carried forward to 2026, but not used, are estimated at \$10.0 million. These cancellations will increase unencumbered cash in 2026 to be used for operations. Cancellations are estimated based on previous trends of encumbrance amounts carried forward from year to year, as well as the amounts cancelled each year.

NOTE 12 – ESTIMATED AVAILABLE BEGINNING BALANCE

The estimated available 2026 beginning balance was determined using estimates of year-end 2025 revenues and expenses based on year-to-date actual revenues and expenditures through the third quarter of 2025.

The 2026 beginning cash balance was estimated as follows:

	(in thousands)
General Operating Fund Estimated Beginning Cash Balance	
Beginning Cash Balance - January 1, 2025	\$ 126,498
Less - Outstanding Encumbrances at December 31, 2024	<u>110,963</u>
Unencumbered Cash Balance - January 1, 2025	\$ 15,535
Add City Auditor's Official Revised Estimate dated January 1, 2025	-
Add - City Auditor's Estimated 2025 Receipts	\$ 1,190,972
Add - City Auditor's Estimated Encumbrance Cancellations	13,784
Add - Transfers In	<u>21,562</u>
Total Amount Available for Appropriations	\$ 1,241,853
Add - Estimate of Revenue in Excess of Official Estimate dated Jan 2025	8,000
Less - 2025 Projected Expenditures	<u>1,229,346</u>
Projected Available Cash Balance - December 31, 2025	<u>\$ 20,507</u>

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