

Glossary

THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS

A

Accrual

Refers to any individual entry recording revenue or expense in the absence of a cash transaction.

Accrual Accounting

Relating to, or being a method of, accounting that recognizes revenue when earned and expenses when incurred.

ACFR

Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. A set of financial statements prepared according to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) providing extensive financial data alongside a city introduction, insights into varied activities, and statistical data and trends within the city's financial and non-financial sectors.

Actual(s)

Expenditures plus outstanding encumbrances against current year appropriation.

ADA

Americans with Disabilities Act

ADAP

Alcohol and Drug Addiction Program

Ad Valorem

A tax amount that is based on the value of a piece of property.

Adopted Budget

The budget adopted by City Council including council-approved modifications.

Allocation

A part of a lump-sum appropriation designated for expenditure by specific organizational units and/or for special purposes, activities, or objects.

Appropriation

An authorization from City Council to incur obligations for a specific purpose. An appropriation is usually limited in amount and as to the time when it may be spent, normally the fiscal year.

APPS

Applying Purpose and Passion to Service, formerly known as Applications for Purpose, Pride, & Success. Created in 2011, the mission of the APPS program is to enrich the lives of Columbus youth and young adults (ages 14-23) by connecting individuals and their families to programs and services focused on building life skills, character development, employment, postsecondary education, and other components that foster success in life. This is a Recreation and Parks Department program.

ARP ACT

The American Rescue Plan Act was passed by Congress and signed into law on March 11, 2021, to speed up the country's recovery from the economic and health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing recession.

B

Balanced Budget

As described in the Financial Policies section of this document, a budget is considered balanced in a fund if the appropriations in that fund for a given fiscal year do not exceed the resources available to it. Those resources can include a combination of current (budget) year's anticipated revenue and the beginning year fund balance.

Beginning Balance

The beginning balance is comprised of residual funds brought forward from the previous year's ending balance.

Bond

The written evidence of debt, which, upon presentation, entitles the bondholder or owner to a fixed sum of money plus interest. The debt bears a stated rate(s) of interest or states a formula for determining that rate and matures on a certain date.

Budget

A plan of financial operation embodying an estimate of proposed expenditures for a given period or purpose and the proposed means of financing them. The term can refer to the financial plan presented to City Council for consideration and the final document approved by City Council.

C

CAD	Computer-Aided Dispatch
Capital Assets	Permanent, tangible assets with a value in excess of \$5,000 and whose expected useful life exceeds five years. This includes items such as equipment, furniture, and vehicles.
Capital Budget	The city's budget for projects, major renovations, and improvements or additions to the city's fixed assets (e.g., streets, sidewalks, roads, sewers, plant improvements, water lines, parks, and buildings).
Capital Improvements	Projects that help maintain or improve a city asset. Normally, a capital improvement is a new construction, expansion, renovation, or replacement project for an existing facility or facilities, or the purchase of major equipment.
Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)	The city's allocation plan for capital expenditures over several future years. It sets forth each capital project, identifying the expected beginning and ending date for each project, the amount the city will expend in each year, and the method of financing those expenditures. The CIP is not an authorization of appropriation. City Council approves the plan as a resolution.
Capital Outlay	A category of expenditures that results in the acquisition of, or an addition to, the city's fixed assets.
CARE Coalition	Community, Action, Resiliency, and Empowerment. Part of the Comprehensive Neighborhood Safety Strategy, this program is run by Columbus Public Health and provides direct outreach to residents impacted by gun violence, helps connect them to services, and builds resiliency in neighborhoods.
CARES Act	The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was passed by Congress and signed into law on March 27, 2020, providing, among other things, economic relief to local governments navigating the public health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Cash Basis Accounting	Cash basis accounting only recognizes revenue and expenses when cash is actually collected or disbursed.
CATCH	Changing Actions To Change Habits

CEPT	Chemically Enhanced Primary Treatment
City Charter	The City of Columbus Charter is the city's constitution, and only the voters of Columbus can amend it.
City Codes	The City Code is the collection of all ordinances that govern all citizens and businesses within the city.
Cost of Service	The cost a utility pays to provide a service. A utility takes these costs into account when determining what rate to charge consumers.
CRM	Customer Relationship Management

D

Debt Service	The city's obligation to pay the principal and interest of all bonds and other debt instruments according to a pre-determined payment schedule.
Department	A major organizational unit of the city which indicates overall management responsibility for an operation or group of related operations within a functional area.
Depreciation	A decrease in the value of an asset with the passage of time, due to use, wear and tear, or obsolescence.
Division	A categorization of an organizational unit, indicating management responsibility for an operation or a group of related operations within a functional area, subordinate to the department level.
DRWP	Dublin Road Water Plant

E

Encumbrance	Obligations in the form of purchase orders or contracts, which are chargeable to an appropriation, and for which part of the appropriation is reserved. To encumber funds means to set aside or commit funds for future expenditures.
Encumbrance Cancellation	Funds cease to be encumbered when the obligations are paid or otherwise liquidated (cancelled).
Enterprise Fund	A fund established to account for operations that the city financed and operated in a manner similar to private business enterprises. In the funds, the intent of the city is to recover the costs of providing services to the general public on a continuing basis, primarily through user charges.
ESG	The Emergency Solutions Grant enacted under Subtitle B of Title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act which provides funding for homelessness prevention and rapid-rehousing.
Expenditure	This term refers to a payment for an asset, goods, or services with appropriated funds. This is different from when an entity encumbers funds, thereby reserving funds they plan to expend.

F

FASB	Financial Accounting Standards Board. A standard-setting body that prescribes authoritative standards of financial accounting and reporting practices of private sector entities.
Fiscal Year	The twelve-month period over which the financial year takes place. At the end of this period, the city evaluates its financial position and results of operations carried out in this time period. For the City of Columbus, the fiscal year begins on January 1 and ends December 31. Therefore, the city's fiscal year is the same as the calendar year.
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent. A position, permanent or temporary, based on 2,080 hours per year.

Fund

A budgetary and accounting entity separated from other funds for the purpose of carrying on specific activities or attaining certain objectives in accordance with special regulations, restrictions, or limitations.

Fund Balance

Unless otherwise defined, the cash available for appropriation in any fund that is unencumbered for any specified purpose.

G

GAAP

Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. A body of accounting and financial reporting standards set by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) for state and local governments, and by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) for private sector organizations.

GASB

Government Accounting Standards Board. GASB is the source of generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) used by state and local governments.

General Fund

A fund used to account for all general-purpose transactions of the city that do not require a special type of fund.

**General Obligation
(G.O.) Bond**

Bonds that have the full faith and credit of the city and are used or expended for a specific purpose or activity.

GFOA

Government Finance Officers Association.

GIS

A geographic information system (GIS) is a system designed to capture, store, manipulate, analyze, manage, and present all types of spatial or geographical data.

Goal

A statement of broad direction, purpose, or intent based on the needs of the community.

Governmental Fund

Governmental funds are used to account for “governmental-type activities or functions.” Governmental-type activities include services largely funded through non-exchange revenues (taxes are the most common example).

Grant

A contribution by another level or entity of government, or other organization (in the case of private grants) to support a particular function.

H

HCWP

Hap Cremean Water Plant

HOME

The HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) provides federal funding for developing affordable housing for rent or homeownership or providing for direct rental assistance to low-income people. HOME is the largest federal block grant to state and local governments designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income households.

HVAC

HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) is the technology of indoor and vehicular environmental comfort. Its goal is to provide thermal comfort and acceptable indoor air quality.

I

Income Tax Set-Aside (ITSA)

Initiated in 1947 and implemented in 1948, pursuant to Ohio law (ORC Chapter 5747), Columbus City Code Section 361.19 authorizes the levying of a two-and-one-half percent income tax on Columbus workers and businesses. Increases in the income tax above one percent are subject to voter approval, pursuant to state law and the Columbus City Charter. The city deposits three-quarters of income tax revenue to the general fund and one-quarter to the income tax set-aside fund, a subfund of the general fund. The ITSA is primarily used to finance capital improvements, generally of a non-enterprise nature.

Initiatives

A strategy or action that the city takes to resolve a specific issue.

Infrastructure Improvements

Capital events that materially extend the useful life or increase the value of the infrastructure, or both.

Interest

Money paid regularly at a particular rate for the use of money lent, or for delaying the repayment of a debt.

Internal Service Fund

A fund used to account for the financing of goods or services provided by one department or agency to other departments or agencies, on a cost-reimbursement basis.

Investment Income

Income coming from interest payments, dividends, capital gains collected upon sale of a security or other assets, and other profit from an investment vehicle of any kind.

J

JPWWTP

Jackson Pike Waste Water Treatment Plant

L

Loan

A written or oral agreement for a temporary transfer of funds from the owner (lender) to a borrower who promises to return it according to the terms of the agreement, usually with interest for its use.

M

MAVS

Military And Veteran Service

MBE

Minority Business Enterprise

MCH

The Maternal & Child Health (MCH) Section of Columbus Health is responsible for newborn home visits, safe sleep programming, fetal & infant mortality reviews, child fatality reviews, injury prevention, and school health.

Modified Accrual

An accounting method commonly used by government agencies that combines accrual basis accounting with cash basis accounting. Modified accrual accounting recognizes revenues when they become available and measurable and, with a few exceptions, recognizes expenditures when liabilities are incurred.

N

Neighborhood Pride

Neighborhood Pride is a team effort by city departments, neighborhood groups, individual residents, businesses, schools, and other partners to make our neighborhoods safer and cleaner. The program sends teams from city departments into neighborhoods to clean alleys and streets, tend to parks, and check and repair street lights. These teams also identify safety and health hazards, find code problems, and help families find answers and resources to fix those problems.

Note

A financial security that generally has a longer term than a bill, but a shorter term than a bond. However, the duration of a note can vary significantly, and may not always fall neatly into this categorization. Notes are similar to bonds in that they are sold at, above, or below face (par) value, make regular interest payments, and have a specified term until maturity.

O

OEP

Opiate Extension Program

OEPA

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

Official Statement

A document published by the issuer of bonds which generally discloses material information on a bond issue, including the purposes of the bond issue, how the bonds will be repaid, and the financial, economic, and demographic characteristics of the issuing government. Investors may use this information to evaluate the credit quality of the bonds.

Operating Budget

The city's annual appropriation of funds for ongoing program costs, including salaries and benefits, services, and supplies, among other cost categories.

Operating Funds

Funds that finance the majority of the city's operations. For the most part, revenues deposited into these funds are raised by the taxing and fee-collecting authority of the city. Grants and contributions from governments and other entities compose the other major sources of revenue for these funds.

OPWC

Ohio Public Works Commission

Ordinance

A formal legislative enactment by the City Council which has the full force and effect of law within the boundaries of the city.

OWDA

Ohio Water Development Authority

P

PACE

Pro-Active Code Enforcement. PACE is a team of code officers charged with pro-actively investigating blighted areas of the city without waiting for complaints from citizens.

PAFR

Popular Annual Financial Report. A condensed presentation of financial data from the ACFR, intended to be readily accessible and easily understandable to the general public and other interested parties without a background in public finance.

PAL

Police Athletic League

PAWP

Parsons Avenue Water Plant

Performance Indicators (or Measures)

Performance indicators are the means by which an objective can be judged to have been achieved or not achieved. Indicators are, therefore, tied to goals and objectives and serve simply as a "yardstick" by which to measure the degree of success in goal achievement. Performance indicators are quantitative tools and are usually expressed as a rate, ratio, or percentage.

Personnel Services

Items of expenditures in the operating budget for salaries and wages paid for services performed by city employees, as well as the fringe benefit costs associated with city employment.

Principal	The original amount of a debt on which interest is calculated.
Pro Forma	A projected or estimated statement that presents the future financial position of a fund if present trends continue or certain assumptions hold true.
Program	A group of related activities to accomplish a major service or core business function for which the city is responsible. A program is typically part of a division within a department, but can cross department and/or fund lines as well.
Property Tax	A tax levied on the assessed value of real property. This tax is also known as an ad valorem tax.
Proprietary Fund	In government accounting, is a business-like fund of a state or local government. Examples of proprietary funds include enterprise funds and internal service funds. Enterprise funds provide goods or services to the general public for a fee. Internal service funds account for goods and services provided by one department or agency to another department or agency of the governmental unit (or to other governmental units) on a cost-reimbursement basis.
PSAP	Public Safety Answering Point
Public-Private Partnerships	A government service or private business venture which is funded and operated through a partnership of government and one or more private sector companies.
Public Safety Wellness Center	To provide comprehensive mental health and wellness support to the dedicated personnel in the city's Police and Fire Divisions.
Purchase Power	An expenditure in the electrical division in the Department of Utilities that refers to the purchasing of wholesale electricity. The division must purchase wholesale electricity since the city does not generate its own.

R

Rating Agencies	Companies that provide ratings to indicate their respective opinion of the relative credit quality of securities. Examples include S&P Global Ratings, Moody's Investors Service, Inc., and Fitch Ratings, Inc.
Receipts	A term relating to the total revenue received during a certain time period.

Refunding

A procedure whereby an issuer refinances outstanding bonds by issuing new bonds. There are generally two major reasons for refunding: to reduce the issuer's interest costs or to remove a burdensome or restrictive covenant imposed by the terms of the bonds being refinanced. The proceeds of the new bonds are either deposited in escrow to pay the debt service on the outstanding bonds when due in an "advance refunding" or used to promptly (typically within 90 days) retire the outstanding bonds in a "current refunding." The new bonds are referred to as the "refunding bonds," and the outstanding bonds being refinanced are referred to as the "refunded bonds" or the "prior issue."

Reserve

Funds held or appropriated for contingencies.

Revenue

The yield of taxes and other sources of income that the city collects and receives into its treasury for public use.

Revenue Bonds

The earnings of an enterprise fund are used exclusively for the payment of the bonds' principal and interest.

S

SIB

State Infrastructure Bank

SMOC

Sanitary Maintenance Operations Center

Special Improvement District

A defined area within which property owners are required to pay an additional tax or assessment in order to collectively fund projects within the district's boundaries.

Special Revenue Funds

Those funds used to account for the proceeds of specific revenue sources (other than special assessments) or to finance specified activities as required by law or administrative regulations.

SSES

Sewer System Evaluation Survey (SSES) is the critical first step in any sewer system evaluation and management program, which includes project management/coordination of flow monitoring, sewer system evaluation, field survey, system mapping, hydraulic modeling and analysis, best management practices, cleaning, and long-term maintenance management programs.

Streetscape

The visual elements of a street, including the road, adjoining buildings, sidewalks, street furniture, trees and open spaces, etc., that combine to form the street's character.

Sustainable Columbus

To ensure the City is doing its part to combat the effects of climate change while imparting fairness and environmental justice, in an effort to create a more equitable and resilient community.

SWACO

Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio

SWWTP

Southerly Waste Water Treatment Plant

T

Tax Abatements

Subsidies that lower the cost of owning real and personal property by reducing or eliminating the taxes a property owner pays on it.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

A funding mechanism for economic development which is available to local governments in Ohio to finance public infrastructure improvements. TIFs are comprised of specific areas and work by locking in the taxable worth of real estate within a defined area. Any payments derived from an increase in the assessed value of a property will be directed towards a separate TIF fund to finance public infrastructure defined within the original TIF legislation.

Tipping Fee

The charge levied upon a given quantity of waste received at a waste processing facility. In the case of a landfill, it is generally levied to offset the cost of opening, maintaining, and eventually closing the site.

U

Unencumbered Cash

City funds that are free and clear of any encumbrances.

**Unvoted Debt
(Councilmanic)**

Unvoted debt typically carries a higher interest rate since it does not have the backing of the electorate.

User Fees

Fees for direct receipt of a public service, paid by the beneficiary of the service.

V

Vacancy Credit

A term referring to when a department anticipates savings stemming from the turnover of employees throughout a given budget year.

Voted Bond Package

This refers to the city taking the proposition of funding capital improvements to the electorate for a vote. In Columbus, citizens voting in favor of a voted bond package are voting to underwrite the proposed projects with property taxes, if ever necessary. It is important to note, however, that property taxes have never been levied to pay debt service, nor does the city intend to do so. The benefit of passing voted bond packages is that the city can then borrow money at a lower interest rate.

Voted (Unlimited) Debt

Debt issued by a municipality that is backed by a pledge from the voters that allows for an assessment of property taxes to be levied to pay for associated principal and interest.

W

WBE

Women Business Enterprise

WIC

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides federal grants to states for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.

WPCLF

Water Pollution Control Loan Fund

WSRLA

Water Supply Revolving Loan Account

WWTF

Waste Water Treatment Facilities