



## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

November 13, 2025

In accordance with Section 26 of our City Charter, I am honored to present the 2026 City of Columbus Operating Budget. Inside this book, you'll find details of our \$1.26 billion proposal to keep our residents safe, stable, and thriving as we navigate a period of growth influenced by uncertainty.

This year's proposal reflects a deliberate, disciplined approach to managing public resources. The city budget is impacted by inflation and increasing labor expenses. We can no longer rely on temporary federal pandemic relief funds, but our city remains on strong financial footing thanks to prudent fiscal management, conservative revenue forecasting and the continued trust and investment of Columbus residents.

The 2026 Operating Budget focuses on the two most fundamental promises to our citizens: safety and stability. It sustains essential services ranging from public safety to clean water and strong neighborhoods. Importantly, it also ensures our most vulnerable neighbors are supported through challenging times.

As in years past, the largest investment in the budget is reserved for public safety. This budget includes funds for two police recruit classes and one fire class, adding up to 120 new police officers and 45 new firefighters to the ranks of our city's first responders. It continues to fund the proven strategies and partnerships that have helped drive violent crime in Columbus to its lowest level in more than a decade, though domestic violence remains a critical concern. New and continued investments will support programs such as Safe Streets, Project Moonlight and the Division of Police's Non-Fatal Shooting pilot. These are innovative initiatives focused on prevention, intervention, and enforcement.

Housing stability is the other major focus of this year's budget proposal. For the first time, the City of Columbus is dedicating its own dollars to emergency rental assistance through the Resilient Housing Initiative, a \$5.0

million program to help low-income renters avoid eviction. The budget also funds the new Office of Housing Stability which will oversee city, state, and federal housing investments; this includes administering the \$500 million Affordable Housing Bond approved overwhelmingly by Columbus voters this year. Together, these investments demonstrate our shared belief that stable housing is foundational to safe, strong neighborhoods.



This budget continues to fund the Clean and Safe Corridors initiative launched in early 2025, bringing coordinated attention and investment to commercial corridors in neighborhoods areas around Parsons, Sullivan, Livingston, and High streets. In 2026, the program will expand to Cleveland Avenue and additional corridors citywide to strengthen small businesses, restore pride in place and show our residents that their city is investing where they live and work.

The 2026 Operating Budget also reinforces our commitment to basic city services that residents rely upon daily, including clean water, reliable power, responsive trash and recycling collection and well-maintained roads. It funds the operation of our recreation centers and parks, including the opening of the new Kilbourne Run Sports Park in early 2026. It also preserves our "rainy-day" reserve fund

to protect against future fiscal instability.

This budget reflects the values of a city where everyone has opportunity and responsibility. While we face national uncertainty, Columbus continues to move forward with confidence. We are growing, innovating and working together to ensure that prosperity reaches every resident.

In the following pages you will find additional details about how this proposal invests in the people, programs, and partnerships that make our city stronger. I look forward to working with Columbus City Council to review and approve this budget, and to continue advancing our mission to keep Columbus safe, stable, and thriving for everyone who calls our great city home.



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