



City Of Columbus  
Mayor Michael B. Coleman

## Office of the Mayor

City Hall / 90 West Broad Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-9014  
614/645-7671  
FAX 614/645-5818

November 13, 2011

Dear President Ginther and Members of Council:

Today, in accordance with Section 26 of the Charter of the City of Columbus, I present you with the estimate of the expense of conducting the affairs of the city for fiscal year 2012. As is required under our Charter, this is my 12th balanced budget; a budget that focuses on the safety of our residents, job creation, strong neighborhoods and continued fiscal responsibility.

Safety continues to be our top priority, and the 2012 budget funds additional police and fire classes to replace those officers and firefighters who have retired in conjunction with the State of Ohio's Deferred Retirement Option Plan. By the end of 2012, we will have more police officers and firefighters than at any other time in my tenure as mayor. We will again be funding a summer strike force to ensure that policing activities can be targeted to areas where crime is most prevalent during the summer months. Funding for Applications for Pride, Purpose and Success (APPS) will be expanded within our Recreation and Parks Department. The APPS program targets teens and young adults to get them off the streets and into our recreation centers where they are provided with mentoring and other needed services in a safe and positive environment. The APPS program will be designed this year to also intervene in young people's lives to keep them out of gangs and reduce violence in neighborhoods.

We will continue our aggressive economic development activities in 2012. Working through our existing partnerships with Experience Columbus, Columbus2020, the Greater Columbus Arts Council, COWIC and Tech Columbus we will not only fight to retain existing jobs, but work to bring jobs into the city as well, and ensure that our workforce is appropriately trained to meet the needs of our business community.

Our neighborhoods are the lifeblood of our city, which is why the 2012 budget keeps our recreation centers open guaranteeing that our young people have safe places to exercise, play and learn. We are also maintaining funding for code enforcement and expanding funding for weed abatement, working hard to remove blight from our city. I am also happy to announce that we will begin implementation of a citywide curbside recycling program in 2012. We will phase in this effort across the city until all neighborhoods have access to this basic neighborhood service, thus reducing our city's environmental footprint, lowering our tipping fees and extending the life of the Solid Waste Authority's landfill.

While the city's financial position continues to strengthen, we realize that many in our community are in need of support due to the length and depth of the national economic downturn. That is why we are expanding our funding for service agencies such as the Community Shelter Board in 2012. We have also included funding in the 2012 budget for a focused effort on the South Side through the South Side Collaborative and other human service endeavors. The Columbus Neighborhood Health Centers will also be fully supported in 2012 so that needed health services are available to vulnerable populations.

Our strong fiscal policies have once again resulted in the maintenance of our Aaa bond rating. In fact, our credit rating is stronger than the U.S. government, the State of Ohio and we are now the only city of our size in the country to receive the highest rating from all three rating agencies. In 2012, we will continue our commitment to replenishing our Rainy Day Fund. Savings in 2011 due to reduced spending will allow us to accelerate deposits into the fund in 2012. We will increase our 2012 deposit by \$1.3 million to \$6.7 million bringing the projected balance in the fund to \$40.2 million by the end of the next fiscal year. These deposits keep us ahead of our commitment to restore the balance in our Rainy Day Fund to \$50 million by the end of 2014.

In response to cuts in the Local Government Fund and the elimination of the estate tax and in preparation for the 2013 budget due to those significant cuts, we have created the 2013 Basic Neighborhood Services Fund. We will deposit \$10 million into this fund to ensure the continuation of core city services in fiscal year 2013. It is extremely important that we reserve these funds for use in 2013 when the full impact of the state reductions will be felt in the city's General Operating Fund.

Even though we have made great progress in meeting the goals of our 10-Year Reform and Efficiency Plan, fiscal realities demand that we continue to build on the accomplishments we have made to date. It is our intention to not only meet, but to exceed, the savings identified in the plan to ensure the long-term stability of the General Operating Fund. We have had great success in controlling personnel costs by working with the unions that represent our employees. They understand the challenge in front of us and have responded accordingly by working with us to reduce benefit and insurance costs.

I have proposed a 2012 General Operating Fund budget that is balanced, maintains vital city services, makes strategic investments and promotes fiscal responsibility given economic realities. It is also a budget that is committed to meeting the promises made to the citizens with the passage of the income tax increase. It is only with their support that we can ensure that Columbus continues to be the best city in the nation in which to live, work, and raise a family.

Very truly yours,



Michael B. Coleman

Mayor