



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

November 15, 2012

Dear President Ginther and Members of Council:

Today, in accordance with Section 26 of the Charter of the City of Columbus, I present you the estimate of the expense of conducting the affairs of the city for fiscal year 2013. As is required under our Charter, this is my 13th balanced budget; a budget that focuses on the safety of our residents, job creation, strong neighborhoods and continued fiscal responsibility.

Because safety continues to be our top priority, the 2013 budget funds additional police and fire classes to maintain 2012 strength levels. We have offset the significant loss of uniformed personnel associated with the State of Ohio's Deferred Retirement Option Plan and have now normalized personnel and overtime levels within the Department of Public Safety. We will again fund a summer strike force to ensure that policing activities can be targeted to areas where crime is most prevalent during the summer months. The Community Crime patrol will be fully funded at 2012's expanded level and we will continue our efforts related to the Applications for Pride, Purpose and Success (APPS) program within our Recreation and Parks Department, where we will more than double the number of community interventions in 2013.

In 2013, we will continue the aggressive economic development efforts that have made us a national model in job creation. Our existing partnerships with Experience Columbus, the Greater Columbus Arts Council and our human service agencies will be strengthened by providing funding predictability while asking in return accountability for the use of these funds. Columbus2020, COWIC and TechColumbus will also continue to receive support from the city in 2013. These, and other ongoing efforts, allow the city to retain existing jobs, bring new jobs into the city and ensure that our workforce is appropriately trained for the jobs of the present and the future.

Our neighborhoods are the lifeblood of our great city, and the 2013 budget provides expanded funding to ensure that our recreation centers, pools and parks remain vibrant focal points within our neighborhoods. We continue our efforts to remove blight from our city by maintaining funding for code enforcement, weed abatement and emergency demolition of vacant and unsafe structures. The successful citywide yard waste and recycling program, phased in during 2012, will be fully funded in all city neighborhoods in 2013. With the support of City Council, we have created the Columbus Next Generation Corporation to coordinate public and private resources and redevelopment efforts in some of our most challenged neighborhoods.

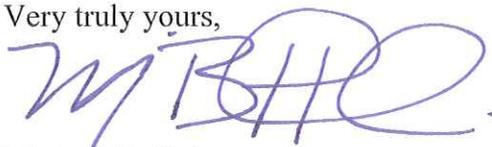
While the city's financial position has remained strong during difficult economic times, many of our residents rely on vital community services to meet basic needs. To meet these basic needs, we are expanding funding for social service agencies such as the Community Shelter Board in 2013. We will also continue our efforts to revitalize the South Side through the South Side Collaborative. In addition, the Columbus Neighborhood Health Centers are fully supported in 2013 so that needed health services continue to be available to vulnerable populations within the city.

Our commitment to the city's fiscal stability has allowed us to maintain our Aaa bond rating. The city of Columbus remains the most populous city in the country to receive the highest rating from all three rating agencies. Savings in 2012 will let us accelerate deposits into our Rainy Day Fund, allowing us to meet our commitment to restore the balance in the fund to \$50 million in 2013, one year earlier than promised. Last year, we created the 2013 Basic Neighborhood Services Fund in response to cuts in the Local Government Fund and the elimination of the estate tax. I am also pleased to announce we will be able to set aside \$5 million for basic neighborhood services in the 2014 General Operating Fund budget to help us address some of the financial challenges that we will be faced with that year.

Even though we have already taken steps to surpass the goals of our 10-Year Reform and Efficiency Plan, fiscal realities demand that we continue to build further on our accomplishments. The reforms we have enacted since 2009 will save at least \$214 million through 2019—more than double the \$100 million originally promised—but we will continue to push for additional savings and efficiencies. 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 2013 General Operating Fund budget that is balanced, maintains vital neighborhood services, makes strategic investments and faces financial realities with fiscal responsibility. It is also a budget that is committed to meeting the promises made to the citizens with the passage of the income tax increase three years ago. 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