2025 ALBANY COUNTY EXECUTIVE BUDGET

INTRODUCTION AND HIGHLIGHTS
PREFACE

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P R E F A C E

INTRODUCTION

This budget document presents information about every appropriation and every revenue for each County department and program. Our goal is to present this budget in a format that is both informative and readable for a diverse audience of Albany County residents, legislators, employees and others interested in County operations. With this goal in mind, each year we refine the content and format and introduce features to ensure that the budget information you need is easy to find and presented accurately, clearly and understandably.

The preface you are reading now, is a good place to begin your examination of the budget. It briefly explains how this document is organized, describes the budget development process, and provides helpful hints for users.

THE BUDGET PROCESS

Albany County's fiscal year coincides with the calendar year, commencing on January 1st and ending on December 31st. The process for developing and adopting the annual budget is contained in Article 6 of the Albany County Charter. While the County Charter provides a specific schedule for the adoption of the budget, many other "unofficial" steps have been implemented as the budget process has evolved. The following description of Albany County's budget process therefore contains both the formal requirements contained in the County Charter and the informal processes used to comply with these requirements. Any dates for required action, however, are prescribed by the County Charter.

The County Executive sends his budget call letter to County departments in early June. This letter notifies departments of the schedule for developing the annual budget. County departments are required to develop and submit their requested budgets to the County Executive on or before July 1st. Despite this formal timeline, however, the Department of Management and Budget and many County departments have instituted a year-round process for formulating the budget. This process is often used as a planning and financial tool to revise and refine programs.

The Department of Management and Budget reviews and analyzes these requests and makes recommendations to the County Executive. The County Executive then submits the Executive Budget to the County Legislature by October 10th.

The County Charter also contains a series of steps to be taken by the County Legislature as it deliberates on the budget. The Legislature must conduct an initial public hearing on the Executive Budget no later than October 30th. After the public hearing, the Audit and Finance Committee generally holds a series of hearings or meetings to prepare the Legislative Budget report, which contains its recommended additions and deletions to the Executive Budget. The Legislative Budget report must be filed with the Clerk of the Legislature by November 20th. A public hearing on the Legislative Budget report must be held no later than December 1st.

The entire County Legislature must meet to consider the Executive Budget and Legislative Budget report by December 8th. At this meeting, the Legislature can officially vote to make changes to the Executive Budget. If the Legislature makes no changes to the Executive Budget, then the Executive Budget automatically becomes the Adopted Budget.

Should the Legislature make any changes to the Executive Budget, the revised document is returned to the County Executive for examination and consideration. The County Executive may approve the document or return it with his/her objections to any additions made by the Legislature, no later than December 12th. The County Executive can only object to increases in the budget.

The County Legislature must act on the County Executive's objections, if any, by December 16th. A two-thirds vote by the Legislature is required to override any of the County Executive's objections. If the Legislature fails to override any objections by December 18th, the document is adopted without the additions to which the County Executive objected.

If for any reason a budget has not been finally adopted by the Legislature on or before December 20th, the Executive Budget, with all of the Legislature's additions or deletions, to which the County Executive has not objected, becomes the Adopted Budget.

PREFACE

Property Tax Cap Process

In order to override the Property Tax Cap, the Legislature must take up a resolution, sponsored by a member, or members, of the legislature. The resolution must have a Public Hearing which is authorized through the Committee process. Once the Public Hearing has occurred, the Legislature may vote to enact the resolution.

The local law must be adopted prior to the Legislature voting to adopt the budget. If an override is not adopted, and a budget contains a tax levy that exceeds the property tax cap, the excess is placed in a reserve held by the State Comptroller which cannot be touched by the County until the following fiscal year.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BUDGET PUBLICATION

Introduction and Highlights

This section contains a message from the County Executive stating the focus of the new budget and what issues may have been considered while creating the budget.

Fiscal strategies and Financial plan which are key to revenue forecasts and other descriptive material concerning the organization of County government, County funds, revenues and expenditures. It summarizes some of the major highlights and changes in the current budget.

Fund Balances and Reserves

Fund balance is a measure of available financial resources. It is the difference between total assets and total liabilities in each fund, at any given point in time.

A reserve fund refers to a savings account or highly liquid assets set aside to meet unexpected costs or financial obligations.

Albany County has multiple funds that are used to run the County.

- A Fund - General Fund, used to account for all financial resources not being reported in any other fund.
- CD Fund - The Community Development Fund was established to facilitate the use of grants provided by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- CS Fund - The Risk Retention Fund contains appropriations for general liability insurance losses falling below the level of the County's deductible under its insurance coverage, administration of its insurance coverage, judgments and claims against the County and workers' compensation insurance.
- D/DM Fund - Department of Public Works—Maintenance of County roads and bridges.
- G Fund - Water Purification District—waste water conveyance and treatment.
- NH Fund - Shaker Place Rehabilitation and Nursing Center
- V Fund - Contains the appropriations for Albany County's outstanding debt.

County Executive send Budget Call Letter to All County departments
Early June
*
Departments Proposed Budgets submitted to County Executive
Early July
*
County Executive Budget Submitted to Legislature
October 10th
*
Public Hearing on Executive Budget
By October 30th
*
Legislature Meets with All departments to review budgets.
*
Legislative Budget Report filed with Clerk of the Legislature
By November 20th
*
Public Hearing on Legislative Budget
By December 1st
*
County Legislature Meets to consider Executive and Legislative Budgets
By December 8th
*
No changes to the Executive Budget
The Executive Budget automatically becomes the Adopted Budget.
*
Changes to Executive Budget
The Budget is returned to the County Executive for examination and consideration.
*
After offering County Executive's approvals or objections to the County Legislature's additions, the Budget is returned to the Legislature.
By Mid December
*
Legislature must act on County Executive's objections, if any.
*
If Legislature fails to act on or override any objections, Executive Budget becomes Adopted Budget.
By December 16th
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If Executive Budget, plus all of Legislature's deletions, additions, and increases to which the Executive has not objected, has not been adopted by the 20th, it will automatically become the Adopted Budget.
By December 20th

P R E F A C E

Countywide Summary Budgets
A one-page summary of all County appropriations and revenues for the current budget year;
A summary of all appropriations by account number for the current and two previous budget years; and
A summary of all revenues by account number for the current and two previous budget years.

Local Government Exemption report
These exemption reports provide taxpayers, policy makers, media, and the general public with greater transparency on property tax exemptions and their effect on overall property taxes.
Exemptions are reductions in property taxes granted to certain groups of property owners (such as nonprofits, seniors, or veterans) and are paid for by increases in property taxes on all other taxpayers (except for the STAR exemption, which is funded directly by New York State). The exemption reports show, for each type of exemption, how much of the local property tax base has been removed from taxation.

Department Budgets
This section presents information about every County department including:
Budget reports which contain line item details of every account for both appropriations and revenues for each account for a department. Graphs showing the financial trends for each departments accounts.

Capital Program
This is a listing of the current capital plans being handled by the county. They are broken out by the department that is handling the projects. Capital projects are a type of asset acquisition or maintenance project that adds to, builds upon or improves a capital asset.

Executive Budget Includes:
Economic and Revenue Expectations section of the budget which provides a survey of economic indicators and an outlook for the year ahead with a view to providing context for some of the estimates contained in the budget.

A department profile, which is a snapshot of the departments basic functions along with the current year highlights and projects or plans for the upcoming year. Each profile has a link to the County website for the department.

Adopted Budget includes:
Summary of Budget Changes - which lists out any changes made to the Executive budget that will be included in the Adopted budget.
Legislative Actions - Any Resolutions or Local Laws pertaining to the budget adoption process. A list of Legislative changes by department code.

BUDGET AMENDMENT GUIDELINES
Article 6 of the Albany County Charter contains two separate procedures for handling budget amendments. Generally, the County Executive is empowered to make minor budget amendments via a letter to the County Comptroller. In certain instances, however, a budget amendment requires approval by resolution of the County Legislature.

Legislative approval is required if the proposed budget amendment would:

- Result in an increase exceeding $10,000 to any one line in the adopted budget;
- Affect any salary rate, except as expressly permitted by the County Charter or New York State law;
- Reflect a figure greater than five percent of the annual appropriation for an administrative unit; or
- Transfer funds between administrative units.

Legislative approval is also required to accept any grant revenues that may be realized during the fiscal year that were not accounted for in the Adopted Budget.