




June 5, 2026

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Sheryl M. M. Long, City Manager 

Subject: Recommended FY 2027 Budget Update – Q&A #3

This memo includes responses to questions that the Office of Budget and Evaluation has received regarding the Recommended FY 2027 Budget Update. The content is for your information. Follow-up questions can be directed to Andrew Dudas, Budget Director, at extension 1562 or Andrew.Dudas@cincinnati-oh.gov.

1. How much did Film Cincinnati request? On Page 12 under City Operations and Programmatic Support, they are currently allocated at \$47,000.

Film Cincinnati received \$49,000 in City Operations Programmatic Support in FY 2026. This was based on an original allocation of \$50,000, less a 2.0% reduction. For FY 2027, the 2% reduction was restored as the budget target, but a subsequent 5.1% reduction was applied to the base amount of \$50,000 for the General Fund reduction amount to address the budget deficit. That leaves an allocation of \$47,450. These funds were not subject to the leveraged support application process. Film Cincinnati submitted a leveraged support application in the Arts Category.

2. Please clarify how the reductions in the Mayor, Clerk, and Council offices will be met.

Consistent with past reductions to eliminate a General Fund budget deficit, a reduction percentage was applied to the personnel budgets of the Mayor's Office, the Clerk of Council's Office, and the nine City Councilmember offices. If any of these offices would prefer that alternatively all or a part of the reduction be applied to the office non-personnel budget, Council can propose a budget adjustment to reallocate the reductions as part of the ongoing budget process or through a mid-year budget adjustment ordinance during FY 2027.

3. On Page 180, there is \$282,700 for additional Human Services Funding. Will HSAC decide how to distribute these funds? Or will these go towards projects already in process?

The funds will go towards projects already in process. Additional funding is required for the Human Services Fund based on an increase in General Fund revenue for FY 2027 in order to comply with the requirement that 1.5% of General Fund Operating Budget revenues, as stipulated in [Ordinance No. 0153-2017](#), be allocated to the Human Services Fund. In the second year of the biennial budget, the Human Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) will allocate the total funding received based on the percentage allocations established in [Ordinance No. 0036-2025](#). Therefore, FY 2026 recipients will receive an increase in their award for FY 2027 based on the additional funding available.

4. Why did the Reserve for Contingencies Non-Departmental account increase by \$1 million? How is this different from the reserves that we refill with the carryover waterfall?

Recommended funding in the General Fund Reserve for Contingencies Non-Departmental account is subject to available resources in any given fiscal year. If funding in this account is not allocated during the budget process, then the remaining funding in this account is to be used for needs that arise in the fiscal year subject to appropriation by the City Council. For the Recommended FY 2027 Budget Update, \$1.0 million was made available. These funds have since been identified by the Mayor as the funding source to provide \$1.0 million in support of BLINK. The Reserve for Contingencies Non-Departmental account is not considered a reserve account under the City's Stabilization Funds Policy and as such is not impacted by the carryover waterfall process.

5. On page 315, the Community Facility Improvements - Art Museum is allocated \$700,000. Is this additional money or are we reallocating/unlocking previous funds again?

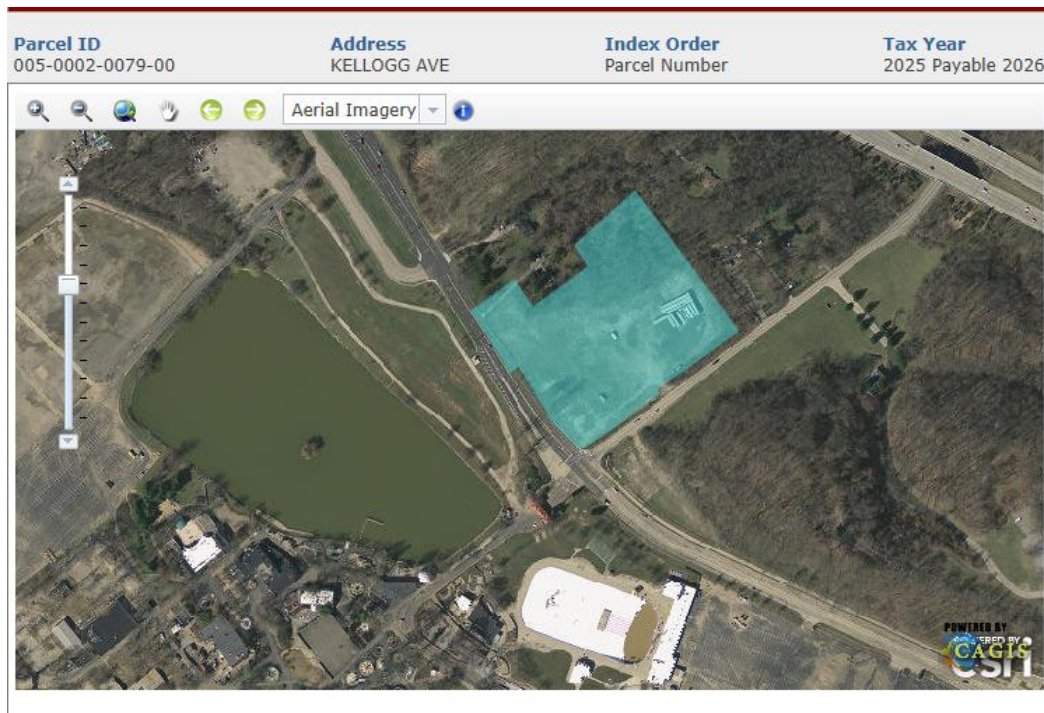
Historically, the Art Museum received \$200k annually in General Capital resources as part of the annual capital budget. The allocations from FY 2021 through 2023 were reallocated due to a lack of activity. During FY 2026, the City has been working with the Art Museum on a funding agreement to allow capital projects to move forward with existing allocations to the Art Museum. The amount included in the Recommended FY 2027 Capital Budget Update is meant to restore the prior funding that had been reallocated.

6. How will the \$500,000 allocated to Community Facility Improvements on page 415 be distributed?

Given that separate capital budget funding is included in FY 2027 for the Art Museum and Findlay Market, it is likely that these funds would be available for Music Hall pending alignment on a funding agreement for the allocation of funds and the maintenance of the facility.

7. What are the addresses or parcel numbers of the properties the City is looking to acquire related to the Farmer Music Center?

The primary parcel that the City is looking to acquire related to the Farmer Music Center is: 005-0002-0079-00 (<http://wedge.hcauditor.org/view/re/00500020079>) which is identified below:



8. Of the \$4.5 million in the City Manager's Budget for Farmer Music Center, what are the funds for? To acquire the property? What is the source of the funds?

The City Manager recommended that \$4.5 million from the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 5709.40(B) source be used for the Farmer Music Center. This source is from the aggregate of excess service payments from TIF Projects. Generally, these funds may be used for any "public infrastructure improvement" as defined in Ohio Revised Code Section 5709.40(A)(8), which includes acquisition of land, environmental remediation, demolition, and other uses specified under that definition, that are also in support of urban redevelopment within the meaning of ORC Section 5709.41. If appropriated, the Administration will work with Music & Event Management, Inc. (MEMI) to identify the best eligible use of the funds that will support the project. \$4.5

million is the maximum amount currently available from this source. Any remaining funds from the 40(B) source are needed for other existing debt obligations.

With the Mayor's subsequent proposed reduction to \$2.0 million of the 40(B) resource allocated to the Farmer Music Center, there would be \$2.5 million remaining from the 40(B) source. Those are the funds that are targeted to be used for the land acquisition discussed by the Mayor on the parcel adjacent to the Farmer Music Center. The price of that acquisition is not yet identified or agreed upon.

9. What is the methodology used when estimating the revenue the City might receive from the Farmer Music Center and through what sources might we generate revenue?

As proposed, the primary direct financial benefit to the City of Cincinnati from the Farmer Music Center project will be approximately \$1.5 million a year in projected new tax revenues—from admission taxes and income taxes. MEMI's estimates are based on the projected ticket sales each year, a projection of payroll of staff at the facility, and a projection of earnings from entertainers who will perform at the facility and pay income tax on their earnings.

Of the projected annual tax revenue, approximately 60% is projected as admission tax revenue (a little under \$1.0 million per year) and the remainder is projected as income tax revenue.

10. Earlier this year, Council moved to allocate \$350,000 to Habitat for Humanity from the carryover or another source the administration identified. Are the carryover funds still there or have they been dispersed elsewhere? When will Habitat for Humanity be able to get the allocated funds?

[Item No. 202600993](#) is the Ordinance that would allocate \$350,000 to Habitat for Humanity from the General Fund balance sheet reserve account no. 050x2582, "Housing and Economic Development Capital Project Reserve," which was established with funding from the FY 2025 carryover process. This item was held in March 2026, and no funds have been provided to Habitat for Humanity for this project from any source at this time. Staff from the Office of Strategic Growth (OSG) has met with members of the West End Community Council and attended their general meeting to discuss the idea of replacing these funds with a bigger ask for Habitat for Humanity from the affordable housing set aside of the West End TIF District. Those conversations went really well, and Habitat for Humanity was asked to come to their next meeting and answer some questions. As of right now, there is continued productive discussion on that proposal.

The General Fund balance sheet reserve account no. 050x2582, "Housing and Economic Development Capital Project Reserve," currently has an available balance of \$806,417.

11. How much is allocated for Access to Counsel?

Funding for Access to Counsel is included in the General Fund base budget at \$1.0 million, but funding was moved to the Department of Opportunity and Resident Services (DOORS) for FY 2027.

12. Why did the General Fund Overhead Non-Departmental account increase by more than \$1 million?

General Fund Overhead is an expense charged to Restricted Funds to reimburse the General Fund for support services provided to each of the respective funds. The General Fund Overhead budget calculation is based on prior year (FY 2026) budgeted personnel expenses. The rate charged changes annually based on an analysis of administrative support provided to departments. Generally, as wages increase, so does the General Fund Overhead expense. The final charge will be based on prior year (FY 2026) actual personnel expenses. As a result, the final charge in FY 2027 may differ slightly from what was budgeted.

13. On page 193, why are we reducing the Women Helping Women contract by \$12,750? Page 12 says we are giving them \$237,250 for fee-for-service. Are we moving their budget around? What's the difference?

A 5.1% reduction was applied to most City Operations Programmatic Support contracts in the City Manager's Recommended FY 2027 Budget Update in accordance with the across-the-board reduction exercise needed to close the General Fund deficit. The One-Time Significant Agency Change of \$(12,750) for Women Helping Women (WHW) included in the Cincinnati Police Department budget represents the 5.1% reduction. Funding for Women Helping Women is included in the Cincinnati Police Department's budget as they manage the contract. The total amount recommended for Women Helping Women in the City Manager's Recommended FY 2027 Budget Update is \$237,250.

14. On page 314, there is a \$20,000 reduction to the "Real Time Crime Center Camera Program." Is this what Congressman Landsman's grant went towards?

The "Real Time Crime Center Camera Program" capital improvement program project, as indicated on page 330 of the City Manager's Recommended FY 2027 Budget Update, will provide resources for the replacement and upgrade of Real Time Crime Information Center (RTCC) cameras Citywide which are used by Police to monitor special events, emergency situations, and criminal activity. The Camera

Technology and Mental Health Response Team Project, funded through Byrne Discretionary Community Project Grants through Congressman Landsman, will enhance differential response to calls for service through enhanced camera technology, including Real Time Crime Center enhancements.

15. The Mayor added \$1 million for the disparity study. Can you clarify if Council has previously allocated funding towards redoing the disparity study?

The need for a new disparity study was presented to the City Council, and last year the Department of Economic Inclusion (DEI) hired a consultant to help develop the scope for the next study. One of the concerns with the previous study was not that the consultant failed to complete the work required under the contract. Rather, there were concerns about the methodology that was used and whether it fully captured and represented the businesses that make up the local business community. Because of that, DEI spent time developing a more detailed scope of work and gathering community feedback to help make sure the next study uses a methodology that is more comprehensive and appropriate.

Funding for a new disparity study was not included in DEI's budget request last year, and there was no funding allocated beyond funds for the consultant's work to help prepare the scope for the next solicitation.

16. On page 306, the “Affordable Housing Trust Fund – Capital,” “Neighborhood Business Property Holding,” and “Strategic Housing Initiatives Program (SHIP)” projects are zeroed out. Where did those funds move to?

As part of the reorganization of the former Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), the capital programs previously associated with DCED were realigned within the framework of the new Office of Strategic Growth (OSG) as well as the Department of Opportunity and Resident Services (DOORS). A list of these program accounts appears on pages 431 and 433 of the City Manager's Recommended FY 2027 Budget Update.

The “Affordable Housing Trust Funding – Capital” program will continue under OSG, largely as it was established under the former DCED program. (See the description on page 461 of the City Manager's Recommended FY 2027 Budget Update.) A series of new capital programs in OSG include “Neighborhood Development Funding – Capital” (page 338), “Neighborhood Development Funding – Housing SHPIF” (page 462), “Property Holding” (page 339), and “Strategic Growth Initiatives” (page 340).

A series of new capital programs in DOORS recommended for FY 2027 include “Small Business & Commercial Stabilization” (page 344), “Homeownership & Housing Stability” (page 342), and “Resident Service Initiatives” (page 343).

17. On page 313, “Community Budget Request Program” is zeroed out. On page 333, the program is allocated \$1 million in subsequent years. Please explain.

In the Approved FY 2026-2031 Capital Improvement Program (CIP), the Capital Budget in the Office of the City Manager included a minimum commitment of \$1.0 million annually to Community Budget Requests (CBRs). The CBR program operates on a biennial basis, so requests were submitted and received last fiscal year, to be deployed over FY 2026 and FY 2027. Once specific CBR project scopes are identified, the resources are reallocated from the “placeholder” project account in the City Manager’s Office to the specific identified CBR project accounts within the respective department(s) that will perform the work. The \$1.0 million from each of FY 2026 and FY 2027 are reallocated in the City Manager’s Recommended FY 2027 Capital Budget Update and an additional \$110,000 was added to CBRs for a total of \$2,110,000 as follows:

Dept	Project Name	2027 Update
CRC	Rec Facilities Improvements - CBR	300,000
DOT	Anthony Wayne Curb Extensions - CBR	80,000
DOT	Artist Alley Reconstruction - COT DM CBR	100,000
DOT	Hunsford Street Reconstruction - CBR	150,000
DOT	Idaho and River Road Improvements - CBR	250,000
DOT	Madisonville Gateway Signage - CBR	165,000
DOT	OTR Gateway Signage - CBR	10,000
DOT	Westwood Town Hall Streetscape - CBR	1,055,000
		\$ 2,110,000

18. On page 318, is the “Sidewalk Repair Program” for City owned sidewalks?

As indicated in the description on page 387 of the City Manager’s Recommended FY 2027 Budget Update, the Sidewalk Repair Program “...will provide resources for the repair, reconstruction and construction of sidewalks, driveways, curb ramps and curbs that are the responsibility of the City of Cincinnati.” Note: as outlined in Cincinnati Municipal Code Sec. 721-147, “[f]or residential property, the owner of a parcel abutting two or more public streets shall be responsible for repair of paved walks on only one frontage...” which leaves the responsibility of the other residential frontage to the City under the Sidewalk Repair Program.

19. Which Cincinnati Recreation Commission (CRC) pools are least utilized?

Based on attendance data, the five least utilized CRC pools for 2025 were as follows:

- Filson – 590 visits (free youth admission in 2025)
- Camp Washington – 590 visits
- Millvale – 1,089 visits (free youth admission in 2025)
- Bush – 1,476 visits
- Winton Hills – 1,505 visits

The five least utilized pools for 2024 were as follows:

- Filson – 515 visits (free youth admission in 2024)
- Millvale – 973 visits (free youth admission in 2024)
- LeBlond – 1,054 visits
- Hanna – 1,532 visits (free youth admission in 2024)
- Bond Hill – 1,536 visits (free youth admission in 2024)

20. On page 308, “Ezzard Charles Bridge Decks” was zeroed out. Was this in hopes that the City will receive a federal grant?

As part of the City’s financial commitment to construct decking on the Ezzard Charles Bridge as part of the Ohio Department of Transportation’s (ODOT) Brent Spence Bridge Corridor project, the City was awarded an Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) grant on October 10, 2024. The City’s “Ezzard Charles Bridge Decks” capital project in FY 2027 was intended to provide the required local match to the OKI grant. However, in winter 2026 the project schedule was pushed into later years by ODOT due to construction coordination with other phases of the Brent Spence Bridge Corridor project. Therefore, DOTE requested the City’s planned local match contribution in FY 2027 be shifted to a later fiscal year in order to reallocate resources for more immediate transportation infrastructure needs in FY 2027. Currently, the local match for the “Ezzard Charles Bridge Decks” is anticipated to be needed in FY 2030. DOTE will continue to coordinate with ODOT and request the necessary local match funding that corresponds to ODOT’s utilization of the OKI grant monies.

21. When was the last time the Cincinnati Fire Department increased their authorized sworn complement? When was the last time the Cincinnati Fire Department budgeted sworn complement increased? What is the difference between budgeted complement and authorized sworn complement?

On October 26, 2005, the City Council adopted Motion No. [200510506](#) which in part moved, “that the administration revise the current Fire Department Table of Organization to reflect the appropriate level of staffing of 841 uniform members.”

This motion was made in response to an independent report from Tri-Data consultants. The first instance of the Approved Operating Budget including 841 sworn members for the Fire Department was in FY 2007; this number was included in the Approved Operating Budget through FY 2010.

In subsequent budgets, the budgeted sworn strength varied dependent on the number of sworn positions at the time of the salary projection used for budget development. Starting with the Approved FY 2019 Budget Update, the Administration has maintained a consistent budgeted sworn complement of 859 sworn FTE. This number is greater than the “authorized sworn strength” amount of 841 and controls for attrition and the graduation of annual recruit classes. Utilizing a target number allows for better tracking of attrition over time and current strength relative to budgeted expectations. In instances where the Fire Department has more than 859 sworn positions filled at the time of the salary projection, the Office of Budget and Evaluation includes resources for these positions but reduces the position count to the present 859 sworn positions. In the Recommended FY 2027 Budget Update, the Fire Department has budgeted resources for an expected starting strength of 901 sworn members based on current staffing levels, a Recruit Class that is expected to graduate 47 members in early FY 2027, and expected attrition.

22. What funding has the City given to ethnically focused public events such as Cincy Cinco or the Asian Food Festival and other like events?

In Fiscal Year 2026, the Asian American Cultural Association of Cincinnati (dba Asianati) received \$50,000 in leveraged support funding and the Hispanic Chamber Cincinnati USA received \$100,000 in leveraged support funding. While the leveraged support funding is intended to provide general operational support to the organizations, this may include support of events, such as Asian Food Fest, which Asianati assists in producing. The Mayor’s changes to the FY 2026 Budget also included an additional \$50,000 in special event support to Asianati to produce Asian Food Fest. Additionally, the Mayor’s changes to the FY 2026 Budget also included an allocation of \$200,000 for Black Tech Week.

Through the Special Events Fund, the City has awarded \$5,000 to support both the Black Owned Day Community Block Party and AfriFest. Additional event support provided by the City Manager’s Office includes a grant funding agreement of \$15,500 with the MLK, Jr. Coalition to support the MLK March. Through [Ordinance No. 0043-2026](#), \$100,000 will be provided to support the Black Family Reunion.

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