



September 12, 2024

Denver City Council, city team members, and residents of Denver:

Budgets are about turning values into action. That’s why Denver’s proposed 2025 budget is centered around building a more vibrant, more affordable, and safer Denver for all. It makes critical investments in every neighborhood while bolstering economic opportunity and quality of life citywide. It expands public safety, supports our commitment to a cleaner climate, provides more opportunity for Denver youth, and activates and enlivens our downtown.

Like every American city, Denver faces headwinds from an uncertain national economic environment and the end of one-time federal ARPA funds. We therefore must adapt and be prepared for any future scenario. That is why this budget balances investments for long-term growth with a focus on efficiency and smart stewardship of our fiscal health. We have taken a close look at spending across the city to both slow the size and growth of government. The city budget will grow just 0.6%, the slowest rate of growth in 14 years and we will not add additional FTE in the General Fund for the first time in over a decade. In addition, our remarkable success responding to the crisis of homelessness and surge in asylum seekers, we are now reducing spending on those programs. Through prudent cost-saving measures, we can ensure we continue to provide world class public services for all Denverites.

Every budget is a blueprint for how the city can work together to best serve our neighbors. By that measure, we are grateful for the months of hard work and collaboration across city agencies and departments that made this budget possible. This budget may outline our spending priorities for 2025, but it is just a down payment on the brighter, more vibrant future we are building for every Denverite. I look forward to continuing to work with you and our neighbors across the city to deliver on that promise together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mike Johnston'.

Mayor Mike Johnston

2025 Budget Highlights

\$1.76 Billion
Operating Budget

The 2025 General Fund budget is \$1.76 billion, a 0.6% increase over the 2024 budget of \$1.74 billion. Aside from the pandemic, this is the smallest annual budget increase since 2011.

9,738
Employees

In 2025, the General Fund will support 9,738 full-time equivalents (FTE), reducing FTE by around 200 positions without furloughs or layoffs. After more than a decade of significant personnel growth within the city and aside from the pandemic, this will be the first time since 2012 that personnel are not increasing in the General Fund.

While this decrease is partly due to restructuring how some positions are funded, most of the decrease comes from un-budgeting vacant positions.

Vibrant Denver

Our neighborhoods and downtown are the heart of Denver’s culture and community. This budget will help us invest in our unique neighborhoods, open more businesses and restaurants across our city, and help deliver the most vibrant downtown in America.

\$27.6 Million To strengthen our local economy and grow talent for our future, we are working to attract new employers, invest in local and minority-owned businesses, and support job seekers. Out of a \$58.6 million budget for economic development, nearly half of this total, \$27.6 million, will go toward workforce development.

\$6.4 Million Small businesses are at the heart of what makes Denver unique. Our budget invests \$6.4 million to support the growth and capacity of small, disadvantaged, minority, and women-owned businesses to help level the playing field for local entrepreneurs.

\$2.5 Million Some businesses will experience construction-related impacts from infrastructure projects that are critical to Denver’s sustainable growth. That’s why we put \$2.5 million toward helping these businesses stay open along 16th St. and Colfax Ave.

\$1.4 Million Our future is brighter when we create it together. City planners will work with communities across southwest Denver, downtown Denver, and in La Alma Lincoln Park in 2025 to create long-term plans for neighborhood growth and resiliency.

Affordable Denver

Across our city, affordability remains top of mind for residents in every neighborhood. More than 90% of Denverites cite the rising cost of housing as a significant concern. Our 2025 budget prioritizes expanding affordable housing city-wide, helping people stay in their homes, and ensuring every resident can afford to live, work, and play in the city we all love.

\$74 Million Denver deserves both affordable and accessible healthcare and housing. While city expenditures as a whole will only increase 0.6% in 2025, our budget for our safety net hospital system, Denver Health, will increase by 3% to a total of \$74 million in 2025.

\$60 Million One of our most important investments as a city is the creation and preservation of affordable housing. Our 2025 budget will invest \$60 million toward creating or preserving nearly 1,400 affordable homes, with additional investments in rapid rehousing and project-based vouchers to create housing for 3,000 households.

\$57.5 Million In 2024, All in Mile High delivered Denver’s largest reduction in unsheltered homelessness on record. It also leveraged one-time federal ARPA funding to invest in the infrastructure needed to address street homelessness compassionately and effectively for years to come. With this infrastructure now established, in 2025, the costs for All in Mile High will decrease by \$84 million to only \$57.5 million, one of the lowest carrying costs for homelessness resolution in the country.

\$22 Million

As part of our continuing work to prevent people from entering homelessness in the first place, we are funding \$20 million in temporary rent and utility assistance (TRUA), which will be prioritized for households who are most at risk of eviction leading to homelessness. For TRUA, \$12 million will come from the 2025 general fund, and we will request City Council approval to use an additional \$8 million from the 2024 contingency fund. This budget also includes \$2 million to provide residents with legal defense services in the event of an eviction.

\$1.2 Million

Our winters get cold and protecting our most vulnerable is always a priority. For the first time our budget will enable our cold-weather shelters to open 24/7 when temperatures drop to 25 degrees.

Safe Denver

Every Denverite deserves to feel safe in their community, which is why we will continue to prioritize a holistic approach to public safety. This will put more first responders on our streets, invest in alternative responses to people in crisis, and expand city-wide crime prevention and reduction efforts.

\$14.9 Million

Our 2025 budget continues investments in alternative responses to people in crisis, including \$6.9 million for the Support Team Assisted Response (STAR) program, \$2.6 million for the co-responder program, and \$5.2 million for the Behavioral Health Solutions Center. It also includes \$2.8 million for Roads to Recovery, a coordinated intervention, treatment, and rehabilitation pipeline for people in the criminal justice system who are struggling with addiction or mental health.

\$11.9 Million

We remain focused on recruiting and training high-quality public safety officers. In 2025, we will hold seven academies to train 168 new police recruits, 24 new firefighters, and 60 new sheriff's deputies.

\$11.7 Million

Improving community safety also requires investments in crime prevention and reduction. Our 2025 budget includes \$11.7 million for the new Office of Neighborhood Safety first established in May 2024; \$390,000 to purchase new, automated license plate readers to aggressively target auto theft; and \$250,000 for Safe Neighborhood Plans (Place Network Investigations), including a pilot of additional lighting and safety improvements in Paco Sanchez Park.

\$1.2 Million

To ensure our firefighters continue to provide strong services for residents, our budget provides Denver Fire funding for the construction of a new burn building that will improve training in real-life conditions.

Great Government

Throughout the 2025 budget process, we have prioritized responsible and effective government spending that provides world-class services for Denver residents, supports 13,000 city employees, and brings local government directly to communities.

\$2.5 Million

Our Denver City Council has raised several important budget priorities, and we are glad to be able to accomplish many of these in our 2025 budget. This includes but is not limited to \$2.3 million in funding for participatory budgeting, where city staff will work directly with residents to budget for neighborhood improvements,

as well as \$200,000 to start an Office of Community Engagement to bring efficiency and reliability to how residents engage with their government.

\$2.2 Million With \$2.2 million to improve transportation and mobility projects in our neighborhoods, we will prioritize simple, effective solutions to reduce vehicle speeds, improve the pedestrian experience, and improve safety for everyone.

4% We remain focused on supporting our incredible employees across the city. That's why we have budgeted for a 4% average merit increase for city employees in 2025.

Key Programs

We are committed to making Denver the best city in America, and that means investing in our young people and making sure that Denver remains a great place to live when they grow up. The 2025 budget will set aside significant funding for climate and youth efforts. As we prepare for the upcoming year, we will engage residents and stakeholders across Denver to develop plans and programs to meet our climate and youth goals.

\$13.4 Million We are building a greener, cleaner city to make Denver a more resilient and vibrant place to live for generations to come. That's why we are electrifying the city fleet by replacing aging light-duty vehicles with an electric vehicle whenever feasible. Our 2025 budget includes \$6 million for electric fleet and \$7.4 million for charging infrastructure for both city fleet and public locations. Additional 2025 climate priorities will address implementing the city's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings through Energize Denver, electrification efforts across the city, and boosting alternative transit options to reduce the amount of time Denverites have to spend in the car.

\$8.5 Million This budget will put millions of dollars toward programs for Denver kids, including affordable childcare, afterschool programming, and youth violence prevention.

\$3 Million We are creating the next generation of green jobs in clean energy and natural resources management through paid training programs and partnerships with employers, trade organizations, training providers, and community groups.

Reserves and Financial Position

\$220 Million With our focus on protecting the city's fiscal health, Denver continues to be in a strong financial position, with \$220 million, or 12.5% of expenditures, held in reserves for unforeseen economic challenges. In addition, General Fund contingency has \$34.6 million to address unbudgeted expenditures during the year and the capital program has \$8.9 million for unexpected needs in 2025.

\$12.5 Million In the face of a national immigration crisis, Denver stepped up and transitioned an emergency response into a stable, long term plan for our newcomer population. As these needs and Denver's approach have evolved, this budget includes \$12.5 million for newcomer support in 2025, a decrease from the \$90 million budgeted in 2024.

Complete budget details are available at denvergov.org/budget.