



NEWS FROM

ULSTER COUNTY

County Executive Jen Metzger

******For Immediate Release******

Date: Wednesday, December 11, 2024

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Ulster County 2025 Budget Approved by County Legislature

**THE 2025 BUDGET PRIORITIZES INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING, CLIMATE, AND EMS WITH NO PROPERTY
TAX INCREASE**

KINGSTON, NY - The Ulster County Legislature voted on Tuesday to approve the 2025 Executive Budget with amendments – giving the green light to all of County Executive Jen Metzger’s proposed investments to improve infrastructure and transportation, address the housing crisis, bolster emergency medical services, protect the environment, and expand programs and opportunities for youth, veterans, and small businesses. The County Executive is carefully reviewing amendments by the Legislature — in particular those that were not vetted or approved by the Ways and Means Committee.

The 2025 Budget keeps property taxes flat and maintains a healthy fund balance consistent with County policy to protect taxpayers from uncertainty in the economic climate. When presenting her Executive Budget to the Legislature in October, County Executive Metzger noted that the County government has received the lowest possible score of zero in the State Comptroller's annual Fiscal Stress Score, and is in a strong fiscal position.

The Final Budget, passed with a bipartisan vote of 17 to 4 with two absences, included all of the Budget initiatives in the Executive Budget. Among them:

- A new “Better Homes for All” program to help struggling households make energy upgrades that save on utility bills, improve safety and comfort, and reduce their carbon footprint. The Budget also continues support for a suite of housing initiatives to expand the supply of new housing and prevent eviction and homelessness.
- Dedicated revenue from the occupancy tax to housing and to public transit service improvements.

- A package of initiatives to enhance EMS through recruitment, training, equipment, collaboration, and to support multi-jurisdictional approaches for addressing service gaps.
- A new lead-hazard rental inspection program in high-risk areas, with state funding.
- \$200,000 in additional operational support for Ulster County Community College, bringing total County support to \$7.1 million.
- New after-school and summer programming for youth in emergency housing.
- An expansion of the “Corrections to Careers” program in the County jail to continue pre-apprenticeship training by the Carpenters' union upon release.
- A second round of grants to local municipalities for climate initiatives, utilizing remaining funds from the County's federally-funded \$2.5M municipal solar and EV-charging program.
- A revitalization of the County’s \$1.2 million Revolving Loan Fund to support small businesses, including minority-, women-, and veteran-owned businesses, with low-interest loans for a variety of needs.
- An increase in operational efficiency by consolidating County functions in two new departments – a Department of General Services and Department of Risk Management – to better meet departmental needs and produce long-term savings.

The County Executive also supported a number of amendments during the budget process that were approved by the Ways and Means Committee and included in the final budget:

- Two new bus steward positions, to help ensure rider safety.
- \$9M to save debt service expenses by paying off Bond Anticipation Notes.
- \$8.25M in contingency for expected salary increases associated with the ongoing salary study, expected to be completed in 2025.
- \$75,000 for legal services for immigrants.

The County Executive is currently reviewing amendments made on the floor during last night's vote to approve the final 2025 budget. She has five days to consider signing the budget as passed or exercising her line-item veto authority on any amendments.

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