



NEWS FROM
ULSTER COUNTY
County Executive Jen Metzger

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

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Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger's 2025 Budget Includes Initiatives on EMS, Transit, Housing, Energy, and Infrastructure, with No Property Tax Increase

NEW PALTZ, NY - Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger delivered her 2025 Executive Budget Address at New Paltz Justice Court on Tuesday afternoon. The 2025 Budget will keep property taxes flat while making 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. When presenting her budget, the County Executive 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 2025 Executive Budget includes \$432 million in spending, up from \$412 million in the 2024 Adopted Budget. This increase is exclusive of transfers to the newly-created internal service fund. \$8.8 million of this increase is funded by federal and state grants at no cost to the County and \$16 million is mandated and required contractual spending, with the majority (\$10.2 million) of that cost driven by social services, including Temporary Assistance, Child Welfare Services, and Early Intervention.

Ulster County's Fund Balance Policy, as amended last year, requires the unrestricted fund balance to be between 15% and 20% to protect taxpayers against changing economic and fiscal conditions from one year to the next. The 2025 Executive Budget maintains a 19.9% unrestricted General Fund balance after appropriations and reserves.

"We are in a very strong fiscal position as a County going into 2025, and we're working to keep it that way by making operational improvements and strategic investments that will produce

long-term savings for taxpayers,” **said Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger.** "At the same time, this Executive Budget reflects our continued focus on initiatives that expand opportunities for our residents, improve people’s health and quality of life, and exemplify good stewardship of the environment and planet."

2025 EXECUTIVE BUDGET TOPLINES:

- **\$432 million total budget**, an increase of \$20 million from 2024.
- **The budget increase includes:**
 - **\$10.2M** in **state mandated social services**
 - **\$2.0M** in **retirement cost** increases
 - **\$3.8M** in additional state and other funding for **mental health and substance use disorder services**
- **Property Tax** - The 2025 Executive Budget keeps the **property tax levy flat**.
- **Sales Tax** - The 2025 Executive Budget projects **Sales Tax to remain flat** from current year projections.

2025 EXECUTIVE BUDGET INITIATIVES:

- **Bridges & Roads** - The 2025 Executive Budget proposes to establish a \$10M Bridge Reserve Fund to repair and build more resilient infrastructure and reduce borrowing costs for the bridge replacement program, providing long-term savings to taxpayers. Additionally, the budget proposes increased staffing levels at the Department of Public Works.
- **Housing** - The 2025 Executive Budget launches a new “Better Homes for All” initiative to help income-eligible renters and homeowners make energy upgrades that save on utility bills, improve safety and comfort, and reduce their carbon footprint. The Budget continues support for a suite of housing initiatives to expand the supply of new housing and prevent eviction and homelessness.
- **Public Transit** - Includes dedicated revenue from the increase in occupancy tax to implement the soon-to-be-completed route optimization study to better meet riders' needs.
- **Emergency Medical Services** -The 2025 Executive Budget includes a package of initiatives to enhance Emergency Medical Services (EMS) through recruitment, training, equipment, and support for multijurisdictional approaches to address service gaps. These include a County partnership with SUNY Ulster on new EMS certification programs and a new EMS training unit in the County Department of Emergency Services; legal assistance to support municipalities in collaborative efforts to close service gaps; and a new EMS grant program to help volunteer services purchase equipment that enables enhanced patient care. The County Executive will also

establish an EMS Advisory Board to ensure continued collaboration to raise the level of care for residents.

- **Education:** The 2025 Executive Budget provides additional operational support for the Ulster County Community College, bringing total County support to \$7.1 million, an increase of more than \$200,000.
- **Youth Programs** -The 2025 Executive Budget supports programming for youth in emergency housing, and includes a new lead-hazard rental inspection program in high-risk areas with state funding.
- **Veteran Families** - The 2025 Executive Budget expands support for family caregivers of veterans and active-duty service members by establishing a new family peer-support and assistance program.
- **Helping Local Governments Go Green** - The 2025 Executive Budget includes a second round of grants to local governments for climate initiatives, utilizing remaining funds from the County's federally funded \$2.5M municipal solar and EV-charging program. The second round will include funding to offset the local share of NYSERDA grants for local governments to hire an on-site energy manager for two years.
- **“Corrections to Careers”** - The 2025 Executive Budget expands the program for individuals incarcerated in the County jail to include next-level training in the Carpenters' union apprenticeship program upon release.
- **Government Efficiency** - The 2025 Executive Budget improves operational efficiencies by consolidating 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.
- **Expanding Economic Opportunities** - The County Economic Development Department is applying for \$300,000 to fund a micro-grant program to support entrepreneurs and small businesses, especially those facing barriers to accessing traditional financing. The County will also revitalize its \$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.

A full transcript of the County Executive’s 2025 Executive Budget Address, in English and in Spanish, is attached, as well as a summary of the Executive Budget Initiatives.

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