# Budget Time for Cook County Government

Using one-time fixes, the Cook County President presented a proposed 2027 budget of $9.69 B to the Cook County Board without any tax or fee increases or layoffs. The President warned, however, that these were one-time fixes and some very tough decisions will be needed to be made for the 2028 budget.

Work has already begun on long-term strategies to deal with the ongoing structural budget deficit that is primarily due to

- Federal changes to Medicaid coverage and reductions to Obama care health insurance leading to more uninsured patients which Cook County Health will continue to serve as the one ultimate safety-net health care system in Illinois
- Still ongoing litigation involving revenues from the state for transportation, of which about $250m annually the County had been using for administration of laws related to transportation and vehicles. Thus far, the courts have ruled that that money may only be used for actual roads. So instead, these administrative costs must be covered by the County's General Fund unless and until the County's appeals are successful.
- Growing payroll, benefits, and pension liabilities

Key aspects of the proposed 2027 budget include:

- Total budget of $9.69 B (a slight reduction from the 2026 budget of $10.12 B): $9.16 B of operating and $533 M of capital costs
- Number of employees: 23,803 (down 25 positions from 2026 budget by eliminating vacant positions)
- Healthcare and public safety costs make up 72.7% of the Operating costs
- The largest source of revenues comes from the Health Care system: $4.43 B made up primarily of County Care Medicaid revenues and fees from insured patients
- The next largest source of revenues is the Sales Tax for $1.55 B; property taxes are budgeted at $832.4 M

Next steps in the budget process:

- Public hearings for public comments on Oct. 15 at 12 noon and 5 pm
- Meetings of the Finance Committee of the Cook County Board with the County departments and elected officials, Oct. 27 thru 30
- Proposed amendments to the budget will then be submitted
- The Finance Committee will vote on amendments on Nov. 19
- Immediately following on Nov. 19, the Board will vote on the budget as amended
- December 1: the new fiscal year begins under the 2027 budget

The Cook County League's Budget & Structure Group will be observing and reporting on the Oct. 27 thru 30 meeting with departments where 2026 accomplishments and 2027 proposals are discussed, along with budget numbers.