

Attachment B

FY 2025-26 Budget Development Policies & General Fund Allocation Policy

Budget Development Policies

Bold italicized type denotes new policies

1. Accountability and Transparency: Information about how public monies are spent and the outcomes they achieve are to be clear, transparent, and understandable.

- a) Budget information will include recommended expenditures and revenues presented by category (object level) at the department level. Sources of revenue will be identified as well as staffing trends.
- b) Oversight of spending, contracts, and grants will be maintained through quarterly financial reports and consistent program monitoring.
- c) Departmental staffing levels will be clearly identified and consistently calculated. To achieve this, and to ensure greater comparability of year-over-year changes within departments, extra help and contractor on payroll positions will be excluded from FTE calculations because these types of positions do not occupy authorized positions and often experience wide fluctuations during the fiscal year.
- d) Subject to CEO concurrence, departments may keep a reasonable number of authorized vacant unfunded positions for possible future needs. Unless otherwise arranged with the CEO's Office, this number should remain consistent from year-to-year.

2. Program-Based Budgeting: Allocations from the General Fund to departments will be distributed according to Board policy direction, historical spending, and federal and State mandates.

- a) Allocate resources in a manner that supports Board strategic and programmatic priorities.
- b) Refer to **General Fund Contribution Allocation Policy** for allocation methodology.
- c) ***Departments will prepare and maintain balanced program-level budgets for all programs that are funded in part or in whole by General Fund Contribution.***

3. Balanced Budget/Fiscal Stability: A structurally-balanced budget (ongoing revenues equal to ongoing expenditures) for all County operating funds will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for scheduled public hearings.

- a) Fund ongoing operations with ongoing revenue. One-time revenues should be dedicated for one-time expenditures. Revenue sources with significant variability from year to year, or those with an unpredictable basis, should only use the stable portion, if any, for ongoing operations. The remainder should be used for one-time expenditures. In some cases, the use of one-time funds may be permitted to ease the transition to downsized or reorganized operations. ***If a department plans to use one-time funding for ongoing operations, it shall provide a memo to the CEO confirming that it will not use or request General Fund dollars to sustain the ongoing expenditures once one-time funding is exhausted unless otherwise agreed to by the CEO.***
 - i) Due to continued unpredictability in cannabis revenues, no new allocations beyond those adopted in the FY 2021-22 budget will be made towards ongoing expenditures, with the exception of expenditures to support the cannabis program or to cover costs of negotiated labor increases, if necessary. Remaining cannabis revenues will be used towards one-time expenditures, or held in fund balance. Additionally, a prudent reserve equal to 25% of projected cannabis revenues will be maintained in General County Programs.

- b) Recommend organization-wide rebalancing strategies such as mandate relief, reorganizations, consolidations, reengineering, public-private partnerships, information technology innovations, and other efficiency efforts that can provide long-term cost savings to the County.
- c) Enhance revenue through efforts that stimulate economic vitality to result in an increased tax base.
- d) Ensure appropriate maximum reimbursement of federal and State programs and user fees that fully offset service costs as allowed by law. In the event the Board of Supervisors adopts fees that, in the public interest, are lower than needed to fully offset service costs, the CEO will work with the impacted department to identify funding to cover the remaining costs, including increased General Fund Contribution.
- e) Program expansion requests must fully document the need, identify the requested funding source or reduction of funding elsewhere, and, if applicable, propose a method for monitoring the impact of an expansion, once implemented.
- f) In order to allocate limited resources in a fiscally responsible manner, Departments shall assume salary savings of no less than 3%, or their 5-year average actual salary savings, whichever is lower, when developing their budget. Positions that have remained vacant and funded for more than two budget cycles may be recommended for deletion by the CEO, unless departments can justify the extended vacancy.
- g) Where feasible, eliminate the practice of General Fund Departments directly charging Special Revenue Funds for services provided, and instead incorporate these expenses into the Cost Allocation Plan.
- h) To the extent funds are available, the CEO's office will recommend General Fund Contribution, on a case-by-case basis, to help offset department rate increases that would otherwise result in service level reductions in the department.
- i) ***Special Revenue Fund programs will fund their pro rata share of county initiatives, unless otherwise recommended by the CEO. Examples include, but are not limited to capital projects, energy efficiency projects, information technology projects, and other strategic performance initiatives.***

4. Identify and Mitigate Fiscal Risks: The County Executive Office, in coordination with County departments, will identify fiscal issues, events, and circumstances that pose significant risks and reduce the impact of those risks.

- a) Northern Branch Jail Operations – A total contribution of \$30 million will be recommended to fully fund Northern Branch Jail Operations in the FY 2025-26 budget. Sources of funds may include General Fund Contribution and Proposition 172 revenue.
- b) Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) – On March 1, 2016, the Board adopted an OPEB funding plan. As a result, a consistent ongoing contribution rate of 4.0% of covered payroll will be utilized.
- c) Behavioral Wellness Department Operations – The demand for inpatient beds can vary significantly from year-to-year without corresponding funding. The number of beds utilized at the Psychiatric Health Facility, and the type of client, also plays a significant role in the volatility of funding. A minimum of \$1 million will be maintained within the General Fund, to be available for behavioral health inpatient bed costs in excess of budget where there is no other available departmental funding.
- d) The CEO will work with the Fire and Sheriff's Departments to develop a maintenance funding plan for the Air Support Unit to ensure there is funding available for regularly scheduled maintenance of aircraft as well as a prudent reserve for unexpected expenses.

- e) A minimum of \$1.5 million will be set aside annually to build a balance to help offset the eventual purchase, implementation, and licensing costs of an Enterprise Resource Planning System.
- f) A minimum of \$2 million will be held in General County Programs Proposition 172 fund balance, only to be released to the Sheriff-Coroner's Office upon review and recommendation of the CEO and approval by the Board, to: mitigate baseline overtime usage related to shift relief backfill including academy training time, vacation, sick, and other lost time, and special events/emergencies not reimbursed from other sources, and; reimburse for costs incurred for the County New Hire Incentive Program or other recruitment efforts pre-authorized by the CEO.
- g) Maintain a minimum reserve of \$3 million in the Disaster Recovery fund balance (Account 9846) in General County Programs to fund the repair of County infrastructure damaged during disasters when no other State or federal reimbursement or other available funding can be identified.

5. Reserves: Establish and maintain a strategic reserve equal to 8% of the General Fund operating revenue (approximately 30 days working capital). Once the target is achieved, any excess fiscal year-end unassigned General Funds will lapse to the Unassigned Fund Balance account for future Board appropriation.

- a) A minimum \$1 million annual strategic reserve contribution will be recommended, until the Strategic Reserve target has been met.
- b) Non-General Fund operating funds, in consultation with the County Executive Office and the Auditor-Controller's Office, will maintain appropriate and prudent operating reserves.
- c) The CEO will work in consultation with Departments that receive 1991 and 2011 Realignment funding from the State to recommend allocations annually. Where feasible, the CEO will place 1991 Realignment revenues received in excess of the fiscal year's budgeted allocations within restricted fund balances in General County Programs. In years where actual revenue comes in below budgeted amounts, draws from these restricted fund balances will be made to make up the difference in eligible Departments.
- d) A minimum reserve of \$5 million will be maintained in the Litigation fund balance in General County Programs for uninsured litigation costs and settlements.
- e) A working capital or advance construction reserve fund balance shall be established in General County Programs to provide cash flow, when necessary, for capital projects that will not receive State, federal or other reimbursement in a timely manner while the project is underway. The funds are for temporary cash flow needs and shall be reimbursed to the General Fund within a specified period of time. The balance of reserve will be transferred to General Fund unallocated fund balance when no longer needed.

6. Service Levels: Service level impacts, positive or negative, will be identified in departmental budget requests and communicated to the public.

- a) Department budgets will identify major programs, services, and outcomes, and significant changes to service levels will be detailed and presented to the Board prior to budget hearings.

7. Capital and Infrastructure: Provide funding for necessary capital improvements and maintenance of existing facilities.

- a) Capital Plans will identify necessary capital improvements and maintenance needs. Prioritization and funding strategies will be developed to address these needs through a Facilities Condition Assessment and ongoing Maintenance Management and Preservation Plans.
- b) A minimum of \$3.0 million will be recommended for capital improvements/refurbishments and infrastructure maintenance.

- c) Funding will be recommended for the following Countywide projects:
- i) A minimum of \$500,000 for Americans with Disabilities Act improvements.
 - ii) A minimum of \$1.3 million for energy reduction upgrades, security improvements, and roof replacements in County facilities.
- d) A minimum of \$2.0 million will be recommended for the Technology Replacement & Investment Fund to address critical countywide and multi-departmental information technology project needs.
- e) As discretionary revenues grow, 18% of the unallocated Discretionary General Fund Revenues will be committed for maintenance needs and will be allocated to Public Works, General Services and Parks during the budget development process based on existing needs and priorities.
- f) Policy on prioritizing capital projects – A set of prioritization principles will be applied to all Capital Improvement Projects using the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) criteria as follows:
- **Priority I: Imperative (Must-do)** – Projects that cannot reasonably be postponed in order to avoid harmful or otherwise undesirable consequence. These projects correct a condition dangerous to public health or safety, satisfy a legal obligation, alleviate an emergency service disruption or deficiency, and prevent irreparable damage to a valuable public facility.
 - **Priority II: Essential (Should-do)** – Projects that address clearly demonstrated needs or objectives. These projects rehabilitate or replace an obsolete public facility or attachment thereto, stimulate economic growth and private capital investment, reduce future operating and maintenance costs, and leverage available state or federal funding.
 - **Priority III: Important (Could-do)** – Projects that benefit the community but may be delayed without detrimental effects to basic services. These projects provide a new or expanded level of service, promote intergovernmental cooperation, reduce energy consumption, or enhance cultural or natural resources.
 - **Priority IV: Desirable (Other Year)** – Desirable projects that are not included within five-year program because of funding limitations.
- g) The CEO and Department will determine, for capital projects funded through debt issuance in a General Fund Department where the project is expected to generate increased revenue, if any portion of the new revenue could be used towards debt service payments.

General Fund Contribution Allocation Policy

Based on Budget Development Policy 2, Program-Based Budgeting

Allocations from the General Fund to departments will be distributed according to Board policy direction, historical spending, and federal and State mandates.

1. Each Department's base General Fund Contribution (GFC) for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 budget will be the contribution for FY 2024-25 Adjusted Budget. One-time funds granted in FY 2024-25 are not considered GFC.
2. Where not prohibited by law, departments must use all non-General Fund revenues, such as special revenues, grants, and agency funds, before using GFC. Unanticipated revenues should be used to eliminate departmental use of one-time funds for ongoing operations.
3. In general, the base GFC will be adjusted by an amount equal to a percentage of the impact of projected wage and employee benefit increases in FY 2025-26, where that percentage is the proportion of GFC that makes up of the department's total funding in FY 2024-25. For example, if the wage and benefit cost increases total \$100, and the FY 2024-25 GFC makes up 30% of the department's total funding, then the GFC base would be increased by \$30.
4. In the event that projected countywide general revenues do not meet the GFC allocation, departmental allocations will be reduced as necessary to balance the budget.
5. When submitted budgets reflect significant service level reductions from FY 2024-25 levels, departments will document service level impacts by program in order of severity, while identifying mandate levels and outcome measures.
6. Based on available funding, the CEO may recommend GFC allocations above the formulaic increase laid out above to address significant issues or structural imbalances within specific departments.
7. Any request for GFC in excess of the CEO's recommended allocation, and/or additional FTE above currently authorized levels, will be submitted as a budget expansion request. Expansion requests shall define the problem or issue to be addressed, provide data and applicable internal and/or external comparisons to illustrate how the requested expansion will help with the issue, and include a performance measure for tracking whether the expansion, if approved, is having the anticipated impact. Expansions based on the Department Renew Goals or Operational Performance Review recommendations, and that can point to evidence-based findings demonstrating their effectiveness, will receive priority consideration.
8. Special Revenue Funds will be evaluated at fiscal year-end, and appropriate adjustments may be made to the following year's GFC allocation.
9. Unallocated Discretionary General Fund Revenues will remain in the Unassigned Fund Balance account for future Board appropriation.