

Mayor’s Letter of Transmittal



Members of Cleveland City Council and Residents of the City of Cleveland:

My Administration presents this budget at a time of broad uncertainty and unpredictability, conditions that make long-term planning more complex for cities across the nation. In response, Cleveland is leading with clarity and discipline through a focused agenda for a safer, more affordable, and more opportunity-rich city for every resident. We call this agenda the Cleveland ERA: Economic Resurgence in Action.

Over the past four years, in partnership with City Council, we have made progress on modernizing City Hall, expanded public safety and neighborhood initiatives, advanced waterfront and infrastructure planning, and laid the foundation for a more modern, effective government. This budget advances the next phase of the Cleveland ERA, moving from stabilization to sustained progress, by investing in safety, modern government, neighborhood revitalization, and economic opportunity in ways that deliver results for every resident.

Public Safety

Safety remains our highest priority, and we are getting results through an all-of-government approach grounded in accountability, partnership, and sustained investment. Since the launch of our Raising Investment in Safety for Everyone (RISE) initiative, homicides are down 37 percent, robberies are down 20 percent, and police recruitment and retention have strengthened significantly.

Since 2022, we have put 279 more officers on our streets. With the support of City Council, we have also made critical investments in facilities, equipment, and training to ensure officers are better prepared to serve. This budget allows us to go further, expanding technology, deepening partnerships, and strengthening the programs that promote safety and opportunity, especially when it comes to our young people.

Modernizing City Hall

We are rebuilding City Hall from the inside out with new digital tools to make city services more accessible, transparent, and efficient. Residents can now track 311 requests in real time, and we continue to modernize permitting and licensing systems to cut red tape for homeowners, small businesses, and developers. We are also promoting civic engagement and innovation with tools like Cleveland Open Data, which provides free, public access to city data, maps, and analytics.

Internally, we are launching new data-driven performance management tools to help ensure departments are accountable for measurable outcomes. Guided by feedback from Council and residents, these reforms are creating a city government that works better, faster, and with greater trust. Over the next four years, we will continue this work so that residents can do more online, faster, and with greater ease and transparency.

Economic Opportunity, Neighborhood Investment, and Brighter Futures

Our Administration is advancing critical housing and quality-of-life initiatives, including the Home for Every Neighbor program, which has permanently housed nearly 200 residents, citywide Parks and Recreation improvements, and expanded youth programs developed in partnership with organizations across the city. These efforts are guided by an overarching strategy to counteract long-standing neighborhood disinvestment and foster sustainable, equitable growth throughout Cleveland.

At the same time, we are driving economic growth and job creation at every level. In 2025, nearly \$3 million in small business grants were awarded, and City Hall launched its first-ever business retention, expansion, and attraction strategy to support citywide growth. This bold approach prioritizes site readiness and preparation to unlock underutilized land, spur job creation, and revitalize some of Cleveland's most important economic assets.

Looking Ahead

To Council President Blaine Griffin and the Members of Cleveland City Council, thank you for your partnership and dedication. Over the past four years, your guidance has been invaluable, and I look forward to continuing our work together on behalf of the residents of Cleveland.

The 2026 budget reflects the values and priorities of the Cleveland ERA: progress, accountability, and shared prosperity. Together with City Council, we are advancing a safer, more vibrant, and more prosperous city, delivering measurable results and creating opportunity for residents in every neighborhood.

Pursuant to Section 38 of the Charter of the City of Cleveland, I hereby transmit the estimate of receipts and expenditures for all departments and divisions of the City for the year 2026, representing a General Fund operating budget of \$920 million and a total citywide budget of \$2.34 billion.

With Gratitude,



Justin M. Bibb

Mayor, City of Cleveland