

**PHILADELPHIA FIRE DEPARTMENT
FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET TESTIMONY
APRIL 22, 2025**

INTRODUCTION

Good morning, President Johnson and Members of City Council. I am Fire Commissioner Jeffrey Thompson. Joining me today are Deputy Commissioner Carl Randolph, Deputy Commissioner Martin McCall, and Deputy Commissioner Kelly Collins. I am pleased to provide testimony on the Fire Department's Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget.

DEPARTMENT MISSION & PLANS

Mission: The Philadelphia Fire Department (PFD) serves the public by providing comprehensive all-hazard prevention, risk reduction, and emergency response, while also working to ensure the health and safety of PFD members and supporting the Mayor's goal of building mutual trust and safety in city neighborhoods.

Plans for Fiscal Year 2026:

- Graduate up to 32 firefighters and paramedics from Technical Rescue School, which certifies participants as hazmat technicians and qualifies them to perform specialized rescue operations (e.g., confined spaces, collapsed structures, or bodies of water).
- Hire, train, and onboard 200 Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers, including both paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs).
- Work with the Department of Public Property (DPP) to facilitate the following relocations: 1) Health and Safety Office (HSO) and Hazardous Materials Administration Unit (HMAU) from trailers at the Fire Academy to a warehouse facility in Northeast Philadelphia; 2) EMS Mobile Integrated Health Unit from the Fire Administration Building to Kensington to be closer to the populations it serves; 3) Fire Marshal's Office from Southwest Philadelphia to a more spacious and centralized office in North Philadelphia.
- Work with partners to make critical building repairs at the Fire Academy so PFD can conduct live burns required for cadet certification and increase the Department's capacity to onboard new firefighters.
- Work with the Department of Fleet Services to move all reserve apparatus to the new Logistics Warehouse in Lawncrest. This will free up garage space at fire stations to house additional front-line emergency response vehicles.
- Work with DPP to complete the reconstruction of Engine 57's firehouse in West Philadelphia.
- Conduct an intensive recruitment campaign to attract a diverse candidate pool for the upcoming firefighter civil service exam.
- Institute an upskilling program for PFD EMTs to become paramedics, enabling them to provide more skilled emergency medical care.
- Strive to fill non-uniformed vacancies in PFD's administrative, fiscal, and compliance units.

PHILADELPHIA FIRE DEPARTMENT

PROPOSED BUDGET OVERVIEW & OTHER BUDGET DRIVERS

General Fund Financial Summary by Class						
	FY24 Original Appropriations	FY24 Actual Obligations	FY25 Original Appropriations	FY25 Estimated Obligations	FY26 Proposed Appropriations	Difference: FY26 Proposed-FY25 Estimated
Class 100 - Employee Compensation	\$365,611,225	\$372,902,008	\$388,463,277	\$396,690,579	\$392,110,292	(\$4,580,287)
Class 200 - Purchase of Services	\$13,854,729	\$15,089,100	\$14,043,352	\$14,088,352	\$15,250,034	\$1,161,682
Class 300/400 - Materials, Supplies & Equipment	\$14,142,530	\$14,000,502	\$21,289,691	\$22,113,046	\$15,783,589	(\$6,329,457)
Class 500 - Contributions	\$0	\$2,150,225	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Class 800 - Payment to Other Funds	\$7,186,300	\$7,186,300	\$8,296,986	\$8,296,986	\$8,577,920	\$280,934
TOTAL	\$400,794,784	\$411,328,135	\$432,093,306	\$441,188,963	\$431,721,835	(\$9,467,128)

Grants Fund Financial Summary by Class						
	FY24 Original Appropriations	FY24 Actual Obligations	FY25 Original Appropriations	FY25 Estimated Obligations	FY26 Proposed Appropriations	Difference: FY26 Proposed-FY25 Estimated
Class 100 - Employee Compensation	\$18,011,010	\$4,201,281	\$17,018,840	\$16,868,840	\$18,799,149	\$1,930,309
Class 200 - Purchase of Services	\$5,625,000	\$1,466,632	\$3,115,736	\$3,654,994	\$4,640,917	\$985,923
Class 300/400 - Materials, Supplies & Equipment	\$3,633,469	\$357,944	\$2,836,083	\$1,435,060	\$5,836,113	\$4,401,053
	\$27,269,479	\$6,025,857	\$22,970,659	\$21,958,894	\$29,276,179	\$7,317,285

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Aviation Fund Financial Summary by Class						
	FY24 Original Appropriations	FY24 Actual Obligations	FY25 Original Appropriations	FY25 Estimated Obligations	FY26 Proposed Appropriations	Difference: FY26 Proposed-FY25 Estimated
Class 100 - Employee Compensation	\$10,226,399	\$10,120,111	\$10,742,356	\$10,742,356	\$11,509,196	\$766,840
Class 200 - Purchase of Services	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$20,000	\$5,000
Class 300/400 - Materials, Supplies & Equipment	\$124,720	\$123,645	\$97,500	\$97,500	\$132,500	\$35,000
Class 800 - Payment to Other Funds	\$19,000		\$19,000	\$19,000	\$19,000	\$0
	\$10,385,119	\$10,258,756	\$10,873,856	\$10,873,856	\$11,680,696	\$806,840

Contracts Summary (Professional Services only)						
	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY25 YTD (Q1 & Q2)*	FY26 Projected**
Total amount of contracts	\$3,693,050	\$4,000,000	\$9,599,502	\$5,000,000	\$4,029,755	\$5,000,000
Total amount to M/W/DSBE	\$755,816	\$600,000	\$983,202	\$750,000	\$354,900	\$550,000
Participation Rate	20%	15%	10%	15%	9%	11%

*M/W/DSBE participation is expected to increase by the end of FY25.

**The projected M/W/DSBE participation rate for FY26 reflects a temporary decline due to changes in subcontracted vendors providing third-party billing services—shifting from three vendors to two. The contract's participation requirement is set between 10–20%. An additional subcontractor is expected to be added to support service delivery, but the participation percentage for the new vendor is not yet known.

Total M/W/DSBE Contract Participation Goal (Public Works; Services, Supplies & Equipment; and Professional Services combined)			
	FY24	FY25	FY26 Projected*
M/W/DSBE Contract Participation Goal	15%	15%	11%

*The projected M/W/DSBE participation rate for FY26 reflects a temporary decline due to changes in subcontracted vendors providing third-party billing services—shifting from three vendors to two. The contract's participation requirement is set between 10–20%. An additional subcontractor is expected to be added to support service delivery, but the participation percentage for the new vendor is not yet known.

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Proposed Funding Request:

The proposed Fiscal Year 2026 General Fund budget totals \$431,721,835, a decrease of \$9,467,128 from Fiscal Year 2025 estimated obligation levels. This decrease is primarily due to the exclusion of certain one-time costs from FY25, specifically the purchase of self-contained breathing apparatus (or SCBAs, in Class 300/400) and bonuses for Local 22's contract extension (Class 100).

The proposed budget includes:

- \$392,110,292 in Class 100, a \$4,580,287 decrease from FY25. This decrease is attributable to one-time funding in FY25 for a bonus for members of IAFF Local 22. The remaining funding will support payroll costs in FY26.
- \$15,250,034 in Class 200, a \$1,161,682 increase over FY25. This funding will cover upgrades to EMS medic units, computer-aided dispatch (CAD) technology, and mobile communication services.
- \$15,783,589 in Class 300/400, a \$6,329,457 decrease from FY25. This decrease is attributable to one-time funds in FY25 to replace self-contained breathing apparatus equipment (SCBA). The proposed FY26 Class 300/400 allocation will support the purchase of tactical gear related to special events in 2026, upgrades to medic units, technology upgrades, and lactation pods.
- \$8,577,920 in Class 800, a \$280,934 increase over FY25. This funding facilitates access to Water Department equipment and supports operational activities.

PHILADELPHIA FIRE DEPARTMENT

STAFFING LEVELS

The Department is requesting 3,392 budgeted General Fund positions for FY26, level with FY25.

General Fund Employment Levels (as of November 2024)			
	FY25 Budgeted	Filled as of November 2024	FY26 Proposed
Number of Full-Time Positions	3,392	2,778	3,392
Number of Part-Time Positions	4	3	4
Number of Exempt Positions	20	16	18
Number of Executive Positions (deputy level and above)		10	
Average Salary of All Full-Time Positions		\$91,660	
Median Salary of All Full-Time Positions		\$90,253	

NEW HIRES

New Hires (from 7/1/2024 to November 2024)	
	Total Number of New Hires
Black or African American	20
Hispanic or Latino	3
White	6
Other	3
Total	32

Detail for new hires since December 2024, if applicable: 59 new hires/rehires/transfers from 11/25/24 to 3/17/25 - one Asian, 12 Black, 15 Hispanic, 29 White, and two “Other”.

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PROGRAM BASED BUDGETING:

Program Name: Fire Commissioner's Office

Program Number: 21

FY26 Proposed General Fund: \$2,172,560

Program Description: The Fire Commissioner's Office is responsible for overall strategic planning, policy, operations, and communications for the Fire Department.

FY26 Strategic Goals:

- The Office will continue to seek grant opportunities to support operations and strategic initiatives.
- PFD will implement grant-funded leadership and resilience training initiatives.
- The Office will further focus on all-hazards preparedness and response with a focus on special operations to support major events in 2026.

FY26 Performance Measures:

Measure	FY24 Actual	FY25 Target	FY26 Target
Number of NFPA structure fires ¹	2,880	Reduction from FY24	Reduction from FY25
Number of fire incidents responded to	55,526	Meet demand	Meet demand
Number of EMS incidents responded to	277,195	Meet demand	Meet demand

¹The National Fire Protection Association defines a structure fire as "any fire in or on a building or other structure is considered a structure fire even if the structure itself was not damaged."

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Program Name: Operations

Program Number: 22

FY26 Proposed General Fund: \$360,050,466

Program Description: The Operations program is responsible for the daily staffing of PFD's fire suppression and emergency medical services (EMS) companies. It oversees the Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Unit at the Philadelphia International Airport (PHL), hazardous materials response, special operations, marine operations, and Pennsylvania-Task Force 1 (PA-TF1), the FEMA Urban Search and Rescue team sponsored by PFD.

FY26 Strategic Goals:

- The Department will graduate up to 32 firefighters and paramedics from Technical Rescue School, which certifies participants as hazmat technicians and qualifies them to perform specialized rescue operations (e.g., saving people from confined spaces, collapsed structures, or bodies of water). This will be an increase compared to the last Technical Rescue class in Fall 2020 which included 26 firefighters and two paramedics.
- Operations will hire, train, and onboard 200 EMS providers, including both paramedics and emergency medical technicians (EMTs). This is an aggressive goal to prepare the Department for special events in 2026 as well as reduce EMS vacancies and overtime.

FY26 Performance Measures:

Measure ¹	FY24 Actual	FY25 Target	FY26 Target
Fire engine response time (minutes:seconds)	6:40	≤ 6:39	≤ 6:39
Percent of fire calls responded to within 5:20 minutes	35%	90%	≥ 90%
EMS response time (minutes:seconds)	10:43	≤ 9:00	≤ 9:00
Percent of EMS calls responded to within 9:00 minutes	35.6%	≥ 90.0%	≥ 90.0%

¹The Fire Department is working to resolve concerns regarding incomplete data for each measure in this program. Data only based on about 60 percent of runs due to aged information systems. All response time-related measures have a margin of error of 10-15 percent because a first-on-scene time is recorded 85-90 percent of the time. Starting in FY25 Q3, PFD will be pulling data from a new source due to introduction of new 911 computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system.

Program Name: Logistics

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Program Number: 23

FY26 Proposed General Fund: \$41,109,913

Program Description: The Logistics program is responsible for ensuring PFD has the training, equipment, supplies, and facilities that members need to carry out their mission. It also oversees the Philadelphia Fire Academy, which trains recruits as well as current members, the Fire Communications Center (dispatch/911), and the Health and Safety Office.

FY26 Strategic Goals:

- Logistics will work with the Department of Public Property (DPP) to move the Health and Safety Office (HSO) and Hazardous Materials Administration Unit (HMAU) from trailers at the Fire Academy to a warehouse facility in Northeast Philadelphia. This will free up the trailers for badly needed classroom space at the Academy and give HSO and HMAU enough space for both administration and equipment storage.
- The Logistics program will work with partners to make critical building repairs at the Fire Academy so instructors can conduct live burns required for cadet certification.
- PFD will work with the Department of Fleet Services to move all reserve apparatus to the new Logistics Warehouse in Lawncrest.
- The Department will work with DPP to move the EMS Mobile Integrated Health Unit from the Fire Administration Building to a building in Kensington to be closer to the populations it serves.

FY26 Performance Measures:

Measure	FY24 Actual	FY25 Target	FY26 Target
Number of PFD graduates ¹	97	144	144
Graduation rate	87%	90%	90%
Number of field training contact hours	26,220	20,000	25,000

¹The FY25 and FY26 Targets are based on the number of graduates necessary to cover attrition and fill vacancies.

Program Name: Planning, Research, and Risk Reduction

Program Number: 24

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FY26 Proposed General Fund: \$13,983,184

Program Description: The Planning, Research, and Risk Reduction program is responsible for preparing emergency response plans for special events and critical infrastructure facilities. It oversees the Fire Marshal's Office and the Fire Code Unit and provides data analysis and fire prevention services through smoke alarm installations and community outreach.

FY26 Strategic Goals:

- The Department will work with public safety partners to prepare for special events in 2025 and 2026, including Homecoming 250, the FIFA World Cup, America250, and the MLB All-Star Game.
- The Department will work with DPP to move the Fire Marshal's Office from Southwest Philadelphia to a more spacious and centralized office in North Philadelphia.
- Planning, Research, and Risk Reduction will fulfill all 311 requests for free smoke alarm installations.

FY26 Performance Measures: *No performance measures associated with this program.*

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Program Name: Finance & Administration

Program Number: 25

FY26 Proposed General Fund: \$6,620,948

Program Description: The Finance and Administration Division is responsible for budgeting, human resources, professional standards, payroll, attendance, and other duties. This Division also oversees the Recruitment Unit, the Employee Assistance Program, and the Employee Relations Office.

FY26 Strategic Goals:

- Finance and Administration will conduct an intensive recruitment campaign to attract a diverse candidate pool for the upcoming firefighter civil service exam (anticipated in early FY26), which is given once every two years.
- The Division will strive to fill non-uniformed vacancies in its administrative, fiscal, and compliance units.
- The Division will begin a new Fire/EMS Explorers cohort of about 125 cadets.

FY26 Performance Measures: *No performance measures associated with this program.*

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Program Name: EMS Administration

Program Number: 26

FY26 Proposed General Fund: \$7,784,764

Program Description: The EMS Administration Division is responsible for overall EMS delivery and specialty units, including Mobile Integrated Health (MIH); EMS billing and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI); EMS Privacy Office; and the Regional EMS Office.

FY26 Strategic Goals:

- Purchase new tactical gear (helmets, ballistic vests, etc.) for medics to wear during emergencies, such as active shooter incidents. This gear will replace outdated protective equipment.
- Acquire equipment and supplies and provide training for PFD's Special Events Response Team (SERT), which responds to patients/medical emergencies on bikes, gators, or Segways. SERT is expected to be used heavily during special events in 2026.
- Institute an upskilling program for PFD EMTs to become paramedics, enabling them to provide more skilled emergency medical care and creating opportunities for promotion.
- Propose and pilot an evaluation process for EMS officers.

FY26 Performance Measures: *This program is new, and measures are being developed to best reflect and track performance and outcomes. Once measures are formulated and baseline data is established, those measures will be published in subsequent documents.*

OTHER BUDGETARY IMPACTS

Federal and State (Where Applicable)

The uncertainty over federal grants affects the PFD as the Department is in the midst of administering two large FEMA awards with signed grant agreements: a \$22.4 million grant to hire and pay 72 firefighters for three years (SAFER - Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response); and a \$2.6 million grant for officer development and resilience training (Assistance to Firefighters Grant - AFG). Both grants are administered through reimbursements. PFD is only one year into the SAFER grant, which has enabled the reopening of Ladder 1, Ladder 11, and Engine 6. PFD is still in the early stages of the AFG grant, which has a two-year performance period. PFD submitted another AFG grant application at the close of CY2024; that application is still pending.

PHILADELPHIA FIRE DEPARTMENT

CONTRACTING EXPERIENCE

M/W/DSBE Participation on Large Professional Services Contracts											
Top Five Largest Contracts, FY25											
Vendor Name	Service Provided	Dollar Amount of Contract	RFP Issue Date	Contract Start Date	Ranges in RFP	% of M/W/DSBE Participation Achieved	\$ Value of M/W/DSBE Participation	Total % Participation - All DSBES	Total \$ Value Participation - All DSBES	Local Business	Waiver for Living Wage Compliance?
Digitech Computer LLC	EMS PT Software and RCM	\$7,300,000	12/22/2021	2/1/2023	MBE: 15-20%	10%	\$730,000	10%	\$730,000	NO	NO
					WBE: 5-10%	0%	\$0				
					DSBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				
University of Pennsylvania	Medical Director	\$208,000	5/8/2020	7/1/2020	MBE: BGFE	0%	\$0	0%	\$0	NO	NO
					WBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				
					DSBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				
Deccan International	GIS Analytics Software	\$161,912	9/28/2018	3/1/2019	MBE: 25-30%	100%	\$161,912	100%	\$161,912	NO	NO
					WBE: 25-30%	0%	\$0				
					DSBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				
Priority Dispatch Corp	EMD/EF D Protocol Software	\$129,000	10/26/2017	5/12/2018	MBE: BGFE	0%	\$0	0%	\$0	NO	NO
					WBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				
					DSBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				
SB & Company	Auditing Services	\$15,000	11/29/2017	5/12/2018	MBE: BGFE	0%	\$0	0%	\$0	NO	NO
					WBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				
					DSBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				

Non-Profit Vendor Demographics not applicable.