

**OFFICE OF COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT & OPPORTUNITY
FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET TESTIMONY**

INTRODUCTION

Good Morning, Council President Johnson and Members of City Council. I am Orlando Rendon, Executive Director of the Office of Community Empowerment & Opportunity. I am pleased to submit testimony on the Office of Community Empowerment & Opportunity's Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget.

DEPARTMENT MISSION & PLANS

Mission: The Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity (CEO) supports access to economic opportunity in Philadelphia by providing leadership on issues of economic mobility and financial empowerment and advancing equity to ensure that all Philadelphians can share in the city's future. CEO carries out its mission by connecting residents to critical City resources and supports, funding and piloting new programs, supporting policy research and analysis, and convening local, state, and national stakeholders in support of the Mayor's goals to unlock economic opportunity for all, ensure vibrant and equitable communities, and help build intergenerational wealth, with particular focus in communities that have limited access to services, programs, infrastructure, or opportunities relative to need. CEO also helps deliver on the Mayor's promise of a government Philadelphians can see, touch, and feel through its extensive community-based work and outreach.

Plans for Fiscal Year 2027:

In FY27, the Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity (CEO) will continue to advance the Parker Administration's vision by strengthening pathways to economic mobility, expanding equitable access to services, and deepening the connection between residents and City government. The Proposed FY27 Budget establishes Philadelphia's Economic GPS – Growth, Prosperity, and Security – to guide an array of strategic priorities that play a role in increasing economic mobility by fostering a growing and inclusive economy and putting more people on the path to self-sufficiency. CEO will play a key role in this initiative through its Office of Financial Empowerment, which will help Philadelphians find economic security by providing financial counseling, access to low-cost banking options, and other services through new digital navigation resources and at the City's Financial Empowerment Centers. CEO will continue to build on its role as a citywide leader in community engagement and economic opportunity by focusing on three core areas:

Expanding access to economic opportunity and financial empowerment: CEO will connect residents to critical resources that reduce financial insecurity and support long-term economic mobility. This includes benefits access, free tax preparation, and one-on-one financial counseling, as well as workforce initiatives such as Same Day Work and Pay and WorkReady. In FY27, CEO will launch the Office of Financial Empowerment to strengthen and coordinate financial counseling, safe banking access, and wealth-building strategies across the City. CEO will continue to align program delivery with resident needs, ensuring low-barrier access to employment, re-entry supports, and financial stability services.

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Institutionalizing equitable community engagement across City government: CEO will continue to expand its role as a leader in equitable community engagement through direct engagement and by supporting departments in designing and implementing outreach strategies that meaningfully reach communities with limited access to services and opportunities. Through door-to-door engagement, phone and text outreach, training, and technical assistance, CEO will connect residents to critical resources while strengthening feedback loops that inform City policy and program design. CEO will also continue to advance tools and communities of practice, including the Equitable Community Engagement Toolkit, to build capacity for consistent, effective engagement across departments.

Strengthening systems, partnerships, and accountability: CEO will deepen coordination across City agencies, community-based organizations, and external partners to align efforts, reduce duplication, and improve outcomes. This includes advancing shared planning and performance frameworks, leveraging insights from community engagement and the Community Needs Assessment, and supporting cross-sector collaboration to address systemic barriers to economic mobility. In FY27, CEO will also implement a modernized outreach and canvassing system to enhance data collection, improve targeting of services, and strengthen reporting and accountability.

Through this work, CEO will continue to ensure that City government is accessible, responsive, and grounded in the experiences of residents, while advancing strategies that promote economic mobility, financial empowerment, and equitable growth across Philadelphia.

PROPOSED BUDGET OVERVIEW & OTHER BUDGET DRIVERS

General Fund Financial Summary by Class						
	FY25 Original Appropriations	FY25 Actual Obligations	FY26 Original Appropriations	FY26 Estimated Obligations	FY27 Proposed Appropriations	Difference: FY27 Proposed-FY26 Estimated
Class 100 - Employee Compensation	\$3,511,054	\$2,786,597	\$1,659,447	\$1,702,560	\$2,413,855	\$711,295
Class 200 - Purchase of Services	\$1,886,857	\$1,846,520	\$3,448,357	\$3,448,357	\$4,950,607	\$1,502,250
Class 300/400 - Materials, Supplies & Equipment	\$515,998	\$256,805	\$15,998	\$15,998	\$34,998	\$19,000
	\$5,913,909	\$4,889,922	\$5,123,802	\$5,166,915	\$7,399,460	\$2,232,545

Contracts Summary (Professional Services only)						
	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26 Projected	FY26 YTD (Q1 & Q2)	FY27 Projected
Total amount of contracts	\$472,605	\$1,638,000	\$1,610,000	\$1,560,000	\$1,560,000	\$2,000,000
Total amount to S/LBE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total amount to M/W/DSBE	\$79,000	\$289,500	\$137,500	\$75,000	\$0	
S/LBE Participation Rate	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
M/W/DSBE Participation Rate	17%	18%	9%	5%	0%	

**Through the first two quarters of FY26, no payments were made to the contracted vendor. Vendor payments to M/W/DSBE subcontractors began in Q3.*

***S/LBE not yet available as the City works to build the S/LBE registry and begin setting small and local business participation goals.*

Total S/LBE Contract Participation Goal (Public Works; Services, Supplies & Equipment; and Professional Services combined)			
	FY25	FY26	FY27 Projected
S/LBE Contract Participation Goal	N/A	N/A	N/A

** S/LBE not yet available as the City works to build the S/LBE registry and begin setting small and local business participation goals.*

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Proposed Funding Request:

The proposed Fiscal Year 2027 General Fund budget totals \$7,399,460, an increase of \$2,232,545 over Fiscal Year 2026 estimated obligation levels. This increase is primarily due to funding to support the Office of Economic Mobility and its new economic mobility programs.

The proposed budget includes:

- \$2,413,855 in Class 100, a \$711,295 increase over FY26 estimated obligations. This funding will support personnel costs necessary to implement and sustain CEO's core programs and strategic initiatives. Investments in staffing will strengthen the Department's capacity to deliver benefits access, financial empowerment services, workforce initiatives, and community engagement efforts. Additional personnel will also support the establishment of the Office of Financial Empowerment
- \$4,950,607 in Class 200, a \$1,502,250 increase over FY26 estimated obligations. This funding will support contractual and programmatic services delivered through community-based organizations and strategic partners. Class 200 investments will sustain and expand key initiatives such as BenePhilly, free tax preparation and Child Tax Credit/Earned Income Tax Credit (CTC/EITC) outreach, Financial Empowerment Centers, Same Day Work and Pay, and other workforce and economic mobility programs. Funding will also support the procurement and implementation of a modernized outreach and canvassing software system, enabling improved data management, service targeting, and performance reporting,
- \$34,998 in Class 300/400, a \$19,000 increase over FY26 estimated obligations. This funding will support essential operating expenses, including office supplies, technology-related needs, and other equipment necessary to ensure efficient program administration and service delivery. These resources enable staff and partners to effectively conduct outreach, engagement, and program implementation activities across Philadelphia communities.

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STAFFING LEVELS

The department is requesting 89 budgeted positions for FY27, an increase of nine positions over FY26.

The increase is mostly attributable to the launch of the Office of Economic Mobility within the Office of Community Empowerment & Opportunity.

Employment Levels (as of November 2025)			
	FY26 Budgeted	Filled as of November 2025	FY27 Proposed
Number of Full-Time Positions	80	63	89
Number of Exempt Positions	80	63	89
Number of Executive Positions (deputy level and above)		6	
Average Salary of All Full-Time Positions		\$79,749	
Median Salary of All Full-Time Positions		\$71,750	

NEW HIRES

New Hires (from 7/1/2025 to November 2025)	
	Total Number of New Hires
Black or African American	5
Asian	1
Hispanic or Latino	2
White	1
Total	9

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New Hires (from November 2025 to April 2026)		
	Total Number of New Hires	Spanish
Black or African American	6	
Hispanic or Latino	1	1
White	1	
Total	8	1

VACANCY RATE AND ALLOWANCE

Vacancy Rate Summary (General Fund)						
	FY25 Actual Vacancy Rate	FY26 Budgeted Vacancy Allowance	FY26 Vacancy Rate	FY26 Budgeted Vacancy Allowance Rate	FY27 Budgeted Vacancy Allowance	FY27 Budgeted Vacancy Allowance Rate
Departmental Total	21.8%	(\$10,828)	9.5%	0.7%	(\$166,003)	7.3%

OTHER BUDGETARY IMPACTS

Federal and State (Where Applicable)

As of FY27, a substantial portion of CEO’s operating budget is supported by state and federal sources. Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds support CEO’s anti-poverty programs, including BenePhilly, Financial Empowerment Centers, Employment, Housing, Community Engagement, and, in FY27, the Public Service Fellow. CEO’s work is also funded through Work Ready funds, which serve the city’s Emergency Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (ETANF) population through direct services by CEO staff, as well as contracting with community partners. CEO will continue to monitor federal policy developments closely and works with City partners to mitigate potential impacts of any changes.

CONTRACTING EXPERIENCE

M/W/DSBE Participation on Large Professional Services Contracts											
Top Five Largest Contracts, FY26											
Vendor Name	Service Provided	Dollar Amount of Contract	RFP Issue Date	Contract Start Date	Ranges in RFP	% of M/W/DSBE and SBE Participation Achieved	\$ Value of M/W/DSBE and SBE Participation	Total % Participation - All DSBEs	Total \$ Value Participation - All DSBEs	Local Business	Waiver for Living Wage Compliance?
AB&C Philadelphia LLC	Public Awareness Campaign	\$500,000	12/15/2023	5/1/2024	MBE: 10%	0%	\$0	0%	\$0	No	No
					WBE: 15%	0%	\$0				
					DSBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				
					S/LBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				
PeopleShare	Temporary Talent Acquisition	\$1,060,000	6/1/2023	7/1/2023	MBE: BGFE	0%	\$0	0%	\$0	Yes	No
					WBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				
					DSBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				
					S/LBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				

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Non-Profit Vendor Demographics		
JEVS Human Services	Minority %	Female %
Workforce	77.00%	69.00%
Executive	Not Available	Not Available
Board	27.00%	53.00%
Clarifi	Minority %	Female %
Workforce	54.00%	58.00%
Executive	Not Available	Not Available
Board	33.00%	56.00%
Campaign for Working Families	Minority %	Female %
Workforce	71.00%	64.00%
Executive	Not Available	Not Available
Board	43.00%	57.00%
First Step Staffing	Minority %	Female %
Workforce	87.50%	56.25%
Executive	Not Available	Not Available
Board	50.00%	42.86%
Hispanic Assoc of Contractors & Enterprises (HACE)	Minority %	Female %
Workforce	88.00%	52.00%
Executive	Not Available	Not Available
Board	80.00%	50.00%

**Executive demographic information not requested in Transparency in Business disclosure forms.*

PROGRAM BASED BUDGETING:

Program Name: Community Empowerment & Opportunity

Program Number: 01

FY27 Proposed General Fund: \$7,399,460

Program Description: CEO leverages Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds to advance its mission of promoting employment and workforce development, income and asset building, health and housing initiatives, benefits access, and civic and community engagement. As a key driver of economic mobility, CEO collaborates with offices and departments throughout City government, along with trusted community partners and community-based organizations, to connect residents with vital resources that foster pathways out of poverty and to self-sufficiency. Through focused outreach and place-based initiatives, CEO ensures that support reaches those who need it most. In addition to targeted community engagement, CEO uses insights gained from these interactions to shape programs and policies that address systemic barriers and the root causes of poverty. By blending community-driven action with systemic programming, CEO creates sustainable opportunities for economic mobility and financial empowerment across Philadelphia.

FY27 Strategic Goals:

- **Promoting Economic Mobility, Financial Empowerment, and Workforce Participation:** CEO will connect residents to benefits, financial counseling, free tax preparation, and employment opportunities that reduce financial insecurity and support workforce participation. This work includes low-barrier employment, re-entry support, financial empowerment, and partnerships that help residents move toward long-term economic mobility.
- **Institutionalizing Equitable Community Engagement:** CEO will continue to serve as a Citywide leader in advancing equitable community engagement practices across City government. Through direct outreach, training, technical assistance, data-informed tools, and communities of practice, CEO will support departments in designing and implementing engagement strategies that meaningfully reach communities with limited access to services, programs, and opportunities while delivering information, resources, and feedback loops that improve policy and program outcomes.
- **Strengthening Systems, Partnerships, and Accountability:** CEO will strengthen cross-departmental and external coalitions to align economic opportunity efforts, reduce duplication, and maximize impact. This includes advancing shared planning, data, and performance frameworks; leveraging insights from the Community Needs Assessment; and supporting coordinated action that improves accountability and outcomes across the City.

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FY27 Performance Measures:

Measure	FY25 Actual	FY26 Target	FY27 Target
Benefits Access: Number of households that enroll in benefits ¹	1,955	1,000	1,250
Benefits Access: Total number of applications for benefits	3,849	3,750	5,000
Financial Empowerment: Number of individuals who received one-on-one financial counseling ¹	1,712	1,300	1,950
Child Tax Credit: Number of returns filed by tax preparation partners ²	14,188	13,500	13,500
Child Tax Credit: Number of click-throughs on digital advertisements	13,214	15,000	15,000
Child Tax Credit: Number of individuals reached through grassroots strategies	70,454	70,000	70,000
Same Day Work and Pay (SDWP): Total number of days worked by all SDWP program participants ³	3,994	8,000	8,000
Community Resources Corps: Number of households protected from initial water shutoff ⁴	N/A	2,200	1,600

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Community Engagement: Number of medical supplies (naloxone doses and fentanyl test strips) distributed through door-to-door canvassing to prevent opioid-related deaths	28,134	30,000	48,000
Community Engagement: Number of face-to-face conversations between canvassers and residents to address the ongoing overdose epidemic in citywide overdose “hotspot” neighborhoods	6,921	8,000	12,000

¹ FY25 actuals are higher than the FY26 and FY27 targets due to a non-recurring private grant partnership.

² This program is partner-led and administered; as such, results can vary year to year.

³ In FY26, SDWP programs in other departments were consolidated under CEO. Because of this change, CEO set higher targets for FY26 and FY27.

⁴ The Philadelphia Water Department and Water Revenue Bureau, in partnership with the City’s Data Office, have expanded auto-enrollment efforts and reaffirmed their commitment to the Raise Your Hand Initiative, reducing the number of customers at risk of shutoff. CEO has also modified its method of tracking data for this measure by confirming status changes from the Water Department, rather than tabulating self-reported data. For this reason, FY25 data is not applicable for comparison, and the FY27 target has been set to reflect the changes in data collection.