

**DEPARTMENT OF RECORDS
FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET TESTIMONY
APRIL 28, 2026**

INTRODUCTION

Good Morning, Council President Johnson and Members of City Council. I am James Leonard, Commissioner of the Records Department. Joining me today are Tracey Williams, Deputy Commissioner, and Carl Zimmerman, Budget Officer. I am pleased to provide testimony on the Department of Records' Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget.

DEPARTMENT MISSION & PLANS

Mission: The Department of Records (DOR) provides inclusive, efficient, and effective service to City agencies and the public in the management of City records through: recording and maintenance of all land title documents in Philadelphia, including the collection of local and state realty transfer taxes and recording fees; management and operation of the City Records Storage Center, which contains the inactive physical business records of all City agencies; copying and form management services for City agencies in the City's Central Duplication Facility; and public access to records, including financial disclosure forms, public safety reports, land records, City Archives, and City regulation public notices. DOR provides public-facing services that residents can see, touch, and feel.

Plans for Fiscal Year 2027: DOR will continue to encourage as many customers as possible to convert from paper to electronic recording to ensure 24-hour turnaround time for document processing. The recording of documents electronically also allows for fees and taxes to be collected and booked more closely to real time. This will improve efficiencies in operations and reduce data debris, which aligns with the Mayor's goal of making Philadelphia the greenest big city in the country.

DOR will continue to evaluate and improve its revenue procedures in collaboration with the City Treasurer's Office, Revenue Department and Law Department to implement more efficient revenue reconciliation processes.



In July 2025, DOR launches the nation’s first Vital Statistics Verification System, which enables DOR staff to perform automated verification of grantor vital status at the time of an attempted deed recording, which will assist in the prevention of deed fraud and preservation of existing housing. This was an intergovernmental collaboration among DOR, OIT, Revenue, and the Law Department.

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	\$3,623,071	\$3,620,164	\$3,793,693	\$3,992,231	\$4,035,760	\$43,529
Class 200 - Purchase of Services	\$829,122	\$748,500	\$809,122	\$809,122	\$704,122	(\$105,000)
Class 300/400 - Materials, Supplies & Equipment	\$143,758	\$141,207	\$143,758	\$143,758	\$143,758	\$0
	\$4,595,951	\$4,509,871	\$4,746,573	\$4,945,111	\$4,883,640	(\$61,471)

Contracts Summary (Professional Services only)						
	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY26 YTD (Q1 & Q2)	FY27 Projected
Total amount of contracts	\$1,172,129	\$1,104,161	\$1,105,733	\$1,170,212	\$1,170,212	\$1,100,000
Total amount to S/LBE	\$400,000	\$407,365	\$290,000	\$375,000	\$375,000	\$375,000
Total amount to M/W/DSBE	\$475,000	\$498,590	\$380,000	\$465,000	\$465,000	
S/LBE Participation Rate	34%	37%	26%	32%	32%	34%
M/W/DSBE Participation Rate	41%	45%	34%	40%	40%	

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 \$4,883,640, a decrease of \$61,471 from Fiscal Year 2026 estimated obligation levels. This decrease is primarily due to the funding for a one-time \$80,000 in FY26 for an ePay conversion to allow the department to accept credit cards, and a one-time \$25,000 for a Housing Exhibition related to 2026 special events.

The proposed budget includes:

- \$4,035,760 in Class 100, a \$43,529 increase over FY26. This funding will provide the Department with 60 full-time positions, unchanged from FY26, to provide high quality service to the public and other city agencies.
- \$704,122 in Class 200, a \$105,000 decrease from FY26. This funding will continue to provide level services for contracts and maintenance for the Department.
- \$143,758 in Class 300/400, level with FY26. This funding will permit the Department to purchase the materials, supplies and equipment necessary to provide services to the public and other departments and to maintain internal operations.

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STAFFING LEVELS

The department is requesting 60 budgeted General Fund positions for FY27, level with FY26.

Employment Levels (as of November 2025)			
	FY26 Budgeted	Filled as of November 2025	FY27 Proposed
Number of Full-Time Positions	60	57	60
Number of Exempt Positions	3	3	3
Number of Executive Positions (deputy level and above)		2	
Average Salary of All Full-Time Positions		\$63,986	
Median Salary of All Full-Time Positions		\$55,820	

NEW HIRES

Records has no new hires since 7/1/2025.

VACANCY RATE AND ALLOWANCE

Vacancy Rate Summary (General Fund & Grants 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	8.3%	(\$41,767)	5.0%	1.1%	(\$155,587)	3.9%

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OTHER BUDGETARY IMPACTS

Federal and State (Where Applicable)

N/A

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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?
TYLER TECHNOLOGIES	DOCUMENT RECORDING SYSTEM	\$532,121	2/21/2020	7/1/2020	MBE: BGFE	0%	\$0	0%	\$0	No	No
					WBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				
					DSBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				
					S/LBE:BGFE	0%	\$0				
CONNEXUS TECHNOLOGY, LLC	INDEXING HISTORICAL DEEDS	\$250,000	10/5/2023	7/1/2024	MBE: BGFE	100%	\$250,000	100%	\$250,000	Yes	No
					WBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				
					DSBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				
					S/LBE:BGFE	0%	\$0				
LRW SOLUTIONS GROUP, INC.	RECORDS INVENTORY	\$90,000	7/9/2024	8/5/2024	MBE: BGFE	100%	\$90,000	100%	\$90,000	No	No
					WBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				
					DSBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				
					S/LBE:BGFE	0%	\$0				
ELEMENT 84, INC.	PHILLYHIST ORY SUPPORT	\$57,877	5/3/2023	7/1/2023	MBE: BGFE	0%	\$0	0%	\$0	No	No
					WBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				
					DSBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				
					S/LBE:BGFE	0%	\$0				
ROSALES LLC	DEED FRAUD MARKETING	\$125,000	8/18/2025	10/7/2025	MBE: BGFE	100%	\$125,000	100%	\$125,000	Yes	No
					WBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				
					DSBE: BGFE	0%	\$0				
					S/LBE:BGFE	0%	\$0				

**Non-Profit Vendor Demographics not applicable*

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PROGRAM BASED BUDGETING:

Program Name: Document Recording

Program Number: 01

FY27 Proposed General Fund: \$1,632,547

Program Description: The Document Recording program consists of the examination, recording, indexing, and mapping of all land title documents in the city, the collection of local and state realty transfer taxes, and the collection of recording fees.

FY27 Strategic Goals:

- The Document Recording program will maintain a one-day turnaround time for recorded documents.
- The Department will continue its public outreach related to deed fraud.
- The program will add three (3) more years (1967-1970) of historical deeds to PhilaDox, DOR’s public-facing database of recorded documents. This will bring the total number of years uploaded to PhilaDox to four years.

FY27 Performance Measures:

Measure	FY25 Actual	FY26 Target	FY27 Target
Percentage of land records filed electronically (deeds, mortgages, etc.)	92%	≥ 92%	≥ 92%
Percentage of documents recorded within 24 hours	100%	100%	100%

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PROGRAM BASED BUDGETING:

Program Name: Records Management

Program Number: 02

FY27 Proposed General Fund: \$349,006

Program Description: The Records Management program consists of the management and operation of the City’s Records Storage Center (RSC), which contains the inactive physical records of all City departments, offices, boards and commissions, City Council, and the First Judicial District.

FY27 Strategic Goals:

- DOR will continue to recycle expired records and collaborate with departments to digitize records. This improves efficiencies in operations and reduces data debris, and aligns with the Mayor’s goal of making Philadelphia the greenest big city in the country.
- This program will work with at least five departments to review and revise retention schedules to align with each department’s current operations and policies.

FY27 Performance Measures:

Measure	FY25 Actual	FY26 Target	FY27 Target
Number of boxes containing expired records recycled ¹	10,453	10,000	10,000

¹ Records continues to work on clearing a backlog of expired documents.

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PROGRAM BASED BUDGETING:

Program Name: Imaging

Program Number: 03

FY27 Proposed General Fund: \$681,024

Program Description: The Imaging program consists of the Central Duplication unit, which provides a full range of copying, printing, and binding services to all City agencies. This program is also responsible for reviewing, cataloging, and maintaining City forms.

FY27 Strategic Goals:

- DOR will collaborate with departments to identify opportunities to reduce paper copy orders and transition to digital distribution formats.
- DOR will monitor Central Duplication performance using a workflow management system and set appropriate performance measures.

FY27 Performance Measures:

Measure	FY25 Actual	FY26 Target	FY27 Target
Percentage of print jobs completed within customer deadline	100%	≥ 98%	≥ 98%

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PROGRAM BASED BUDGETING:

Program Name: Public Access to Records

Program Number: 05

FY27 Proposed General Fund: \$1,333,742

Program Description: The Public Access to Records program includes five major activities, each of which is centered around making City records available to the public and promoting government transparency:

- **Financial Disclosures:** As required annually by state and local law, DOR manages electronic and physical filings of City and state financial disclosure forms and makes them available to the public.
- **Public Safety Reports:** DOR provides public safety incident reports to the public for a fee and to City agencies.
- **Land Records:** DOR makes all land title records for real estate located in Philadelphia available to the public. These are available electronically through fee-based web applications and physically in a public research room that DOR maintains. This function also includes the Department's Mapping Unit, which ensures that legal descriptions in recorded deeds match the City's official tax records.
- **City Archives:** DOR manages and preserves the City Archives, which contain millions of historical records dating back over three centuries. The Archives are open to the public and provide access to City records of historical and cultural significance that are permanently maintained and preserved at 548 Spring Garden Street.
- **Public Filing of Regulations:** DOR oversees the public filing of regulations proposed by City offices, departments, boards, and commissions, as well as bonds filed by City officers and employees. It manages the public advertisement of proposed regulations, processes public hearing requests, and ensures proposed regulations are available to the public online and in paper form.

FY27 Strategic Goals:

- DOR will issue a request for proposals (RFP) for the City Archives to source a vendor to provide a software solution that will catalog and index the Archives' assets and provide an online platform for the public to search the Archives.
- DOR will continue its partnership with OIT and Police to expand the public safety online portal to include police incident reports. Obtaining a police incident involves a manual paper process that can be time-consuming. Digitizing this process will streamline report retrieval times and improve customer experience.
- DOR will collaborate and engage with historical societies, universities, organizations, and museums to create programs that commemorate the America250 Semiquincentennial celebration.

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FY27 Performance Measures:

Measure	FY25 Actual	FY26 Target	FY27 Target
Percentage of financial disclosures filed electronically	99%	≥ 98%	≥ 98%
Percentage of public land requests turned around within one day	100%	100%	100%

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PROGRAM BASED BUDGETING:

Program Name: Department Administration

Program Number: 04

FY27 Proposed General Fund: \$887,321

Program Description: The Department Administration program oversees the day-to-day operational management of all DOR programs. It includes the Department’s Executive Office, which consists of the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Budget Officer, Records Operations Manager, and other administrative staff.

FY27 Strategic Goals:

- In collaboration with CTO by the end of FY27, DOR will implement remote deposit safes in its central administrative office, which will expedite revenue deposits and free up administrative resources.

FY27 Performance Measures:

Measure	FY25 Actual	FY26 Target	FY27 Target
Departmental vacancy rate ¹	5%	< 10%	< 10%

¹This is a point-in-time measure as of the last day of the fiscal year.