ULSTER COUNTY
NEW YORK

2027 EXECUTIVE BUDGET SUMMARY

Ulster County is navigating through a sea of rising costs, driven by major federal cuts and global economic pressures.

In this difficult fiscal environment, we remain committed to protecting and supporting the people of Ulster County. The Executive Budget reflects that commitment, seeking to meet new and growing needs in the most cost-effective way possible.

Rising Costs

In 2027, federal cuts to SNAP will result in a $1.4 million loss in SNAP administrative revenue, along with $1.7 million in SNAP program obligations that begin accruing in the fourth quarter. While much is still uncertain, the County is preparing for the likelihood that we will be required to directly finance a portion of the benefits that appear on residents' SNAP cards — an unprecedented shift in responsibility.

Non-Discretionary Costs Rising in 2027

We are seeing significant increases in a number of non-discretionary costs in 2027, including:

- NYS Retirement System: a nearly **$1.7M** increase — up 8.5% from 2026 and 23% from 2025.
- Mandated Safety Net Costs: an additional **$1.4M** — a more than 10% increase.
- Employee healthcare: **$3.2M** — a nearly 10% increase.

The U.S. war in Iran is driving up fuel costs to heat County buildings and power vehicles, buses, and heavy machinery. (We're projecting a $170K increase for diesel-powered vehicles, alone.) The County's energy bills would be even higher without our ongoing investments in solar and electrification, which we will continue to expand to reduce energy costs and protect the planet.

At the same time, information technology costs are surging, with global AI-driven demand causing some computer parts and equipment to triple in price. And bridge repairs and other capital projects have become significantly more expensive due to tariffs and the trade war with Canada. The capital reserves established in 2024 and 2025 are helping cushion the impact on debt service, but the underlying cost pressures remain substantial.

Budget Overview

Expenses	$ 519,678,330
Anticipated Revenue	$ 414,168,838
Fund Balance Appropriation (all funds)	$ 30,370,844
Total Levy	$ 75,138,648

Ulster County currently has an unrestricted general fund balance of $73 million as of December 31, 2025.

We have kept property taxes flat for many years even as economy-wide costs have risen year after year. This is simply no longer sustainable.

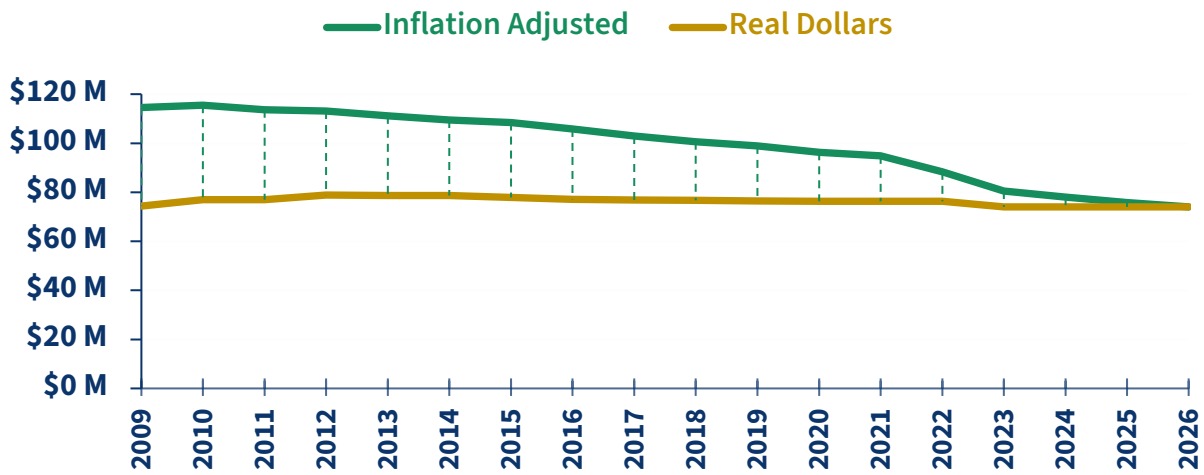
To help keep us on a sound fiscal footing, the Executive Budget includes a modest 1.5% increase in the property tax levy. County taxes are only a portion of the tax bill, and while household valuations vary greatly, the increase for many homeowners would be approximately $20.

The 2027 Executive Budget raises the property tax levy by 1.5%.

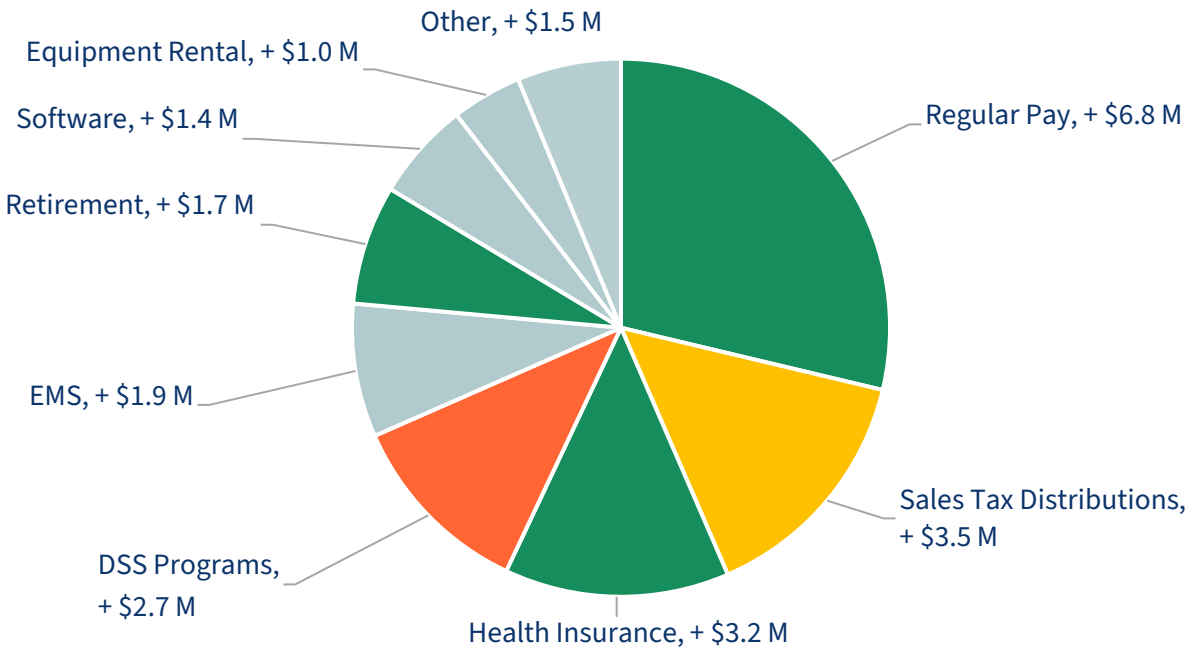
2027 EXECUTIVE BUDGET TOTAL

$519.7M

Tax Levy Purchasing Power In Today's Dollars (1/1/2026)



Major Drivers of $23.7M Budget Increase



Cost Management

Staffing

The 2027 Executive Budget carefully balances fiscal responsibility with staffing needs to maintain essential services across mental health, public health, public safety, transit, infrastructure, emergency response, and more.

To help control costs, the Legislature enacted a freeze on new positions under Resolution 457. The 2027 Executive Budget goes further by reducing the total number of funded positions, **eliminating 13 vacant positions** while adding six new positions for a net reduction of seven. The six new positions are either state- or federally-funded or meet needs consistent with Resolution 457.

Reining in Overtime Pay

The 2027 Executive Budget reduces budgeted overtime by nearly 4%, saving $250,000 from 2026 levels.

Programmatic Priorities

Combatting Domestic Violence

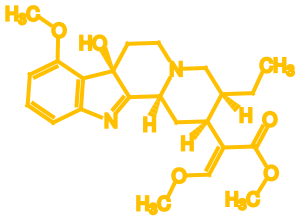


Domestic violence is by far the most common form of violent crime in Ulster County, accounting for more than 80% of individuals receiving support from Ulster County's Crime Victims Assistance Program. Ulster County continues strengthening its multidisciplinary approach to domestic violence through earlier intervention, improved protection, and stronger accountability.

Key initiatives in the 2027 Executive Budget include:

- Continued implementation of **Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP)** training to ensure all law enforcement agencies are trained to assess danger on scene and connect high-risk individuals to immediate support through a "LAP line." ($250,000)
- Establishment of a **Domestic Violence Task Force** to center survivor input and identify gaps in prevention and protection.
- Recommendation that the next round of **Housing Action Fund grants incentivize housing for survivors** and their children.

Educating the Public About Kratom



The Executive Budget dedicates $25,000 in opioid settlement funding for the Department of Mental Health to launch a **public education campaign on kratom**, ensuring residents understand what it is, the risks associated with its use, and where to get help.

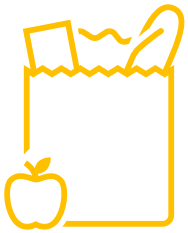
E-mobility Public Education

E-bike use is rising, along with conflicts, crashes, and serious injuries — especially among young riders.



The Executive Budget dedicates $15,000 in traffic safety funding to a Countywide **e-bike safety campaign** to ensure young people, drivers, and riders understand both the law and the risks.

Supporting Our Emergency Food System



Rising food and energy costs are straining household budgets, and food pantries are seeing increased demand with fewer residents receiving Federal SNAP benefits.

The Executive Budget includes funding for emergency food system **grants to local pantries**, and adds a **new category to support Victory Gardens** at community centers to help residents grow and share fresh, affordable food.

- **Emergency food grants** — Funding continued in 2027: **$250,000**

Addressing Emergency Housing Challenges



Ulster County continues to face rising emergency housing needs, with growing reliance on motel placements due to limited options.

In 2027, the County is advancing a more stable, supportive emergency housing system by:

- Moving forward with $2 million in Housing Action Fund-supported family shelters developed by HONOR and Community Housing Innovations. Reducing long-term dependence on motels by **creating smaller, community-based shelters** that keep families close to schools, jobs, and support networks.
- The Executive Budget establishes a new **Emergency Housing Coordinator** to work directly with motels, conduct regular on-site inspections, and coordinate rapid response to issues: **$62,000**

Investing in Permanent Solutions: Housing Our Residents Can Afford



The County continues major investments through the Housing Action Fund to build affordable, supportive, and workforce housing, with an **annual allocation of $2 million**.

Supporting Our Working Parents



Since 2007, Ulster County has seen a 45% decline in licensed childcare providers, straining the budgets of working families and preventing primary caretakers, most often mothers, from returning to the workforce.

The Executive Budget pilots a home-based childcare start-up program and includes in the proposed Capital Plan a new Children's Center at SUNY Ulster to expand affordable childcare options for working families.

- Childcare start-up program – training, certification, and support: **$130,000**
- SUNY Ulster Children's Center – expanded on-campus childcare; a recommendation of the Reimagining SUNY Ulster Committee: **$5.25M** (50% state share, 50% County share)

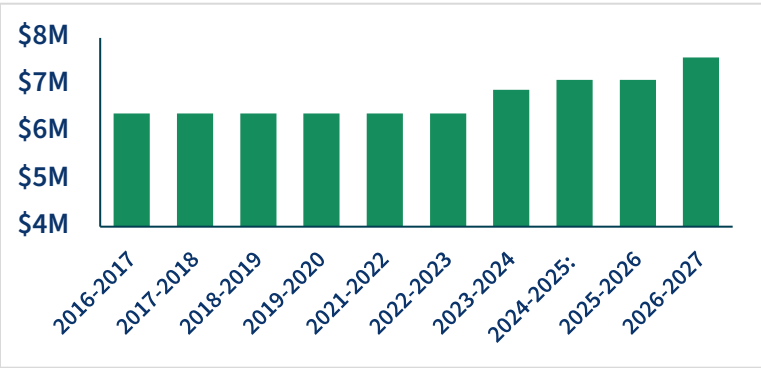
Preparing Our Future Workforce for Success



In partnership with NoVo in Kingston, the Ulster County Office of Employment and Training will launch the **Ulster YouthWorks Academy**, a 24-week program to provide high school-age youth and young adults with mentorship, coaching, skill-building, and paid, hands-on job experience in partnership with local employers. [Grant-funded; zero County share]

Increased Support for SUNY Ulster

The Executive Budget increases operational support for SUNY Ulster (a $475,000 increase for the 2026-2027 academic year), and advances capital projects aligned with the Reimagining SUNY Ulster Committee's recommendations.



Since 2023, Ulster County has increased funding by 18.5%, reflecting the County's strong commitment to affordable educational opportunities for our residents.

Strengthening Workforce Pipelines & Expanding Local Job Opportunities



Under Economic Development Director Leslie Wellington and Office of Employment and Training Director Sharon Williams, the County is launching sector-by-sector mini-summits with SUNY Ulster, SUNY New Paltz, Ulster BOCES, and industry leaders, culminating in an Economic Futures Summit in the spring of 2027 that will shape the County's Economic Development Strategic Framework and strengthen workforce pipelines.

New & Improved DMV Services



Beginning in mid-2027, the County will open a **full-service DMV office at the Trudy Farber Center in Ellenville**, and reorganize mobile DMV services by retiring the bus and **bringing services into municipal buildings**. These changes will enable expanded services and improve the overall experience of DMV customers.

- Full-time DMV Supervisor position: **$77,410**

Ulster County is ThinkingDIFFERENTLY



The Executive Capital Improvement Program adds **$300,000** annually to make County programs, services, and facilities more accessible by people of all abilities.