

BACKGROUND

Allegheny County Council must pass a budget by December 6th. Right now, our Councilors are debating the budget proposed by County Executive Innamorato. They've held hearings and are accepting public comment. They may propose amendments to the County Executive's budget, which can adjust funding levels and impact what services and programs the County invests in next year. Once all amendments are finalized, County Council votes on the budget. A simple majority is required for most items, but for certain decisions—like the tax rate adjustment proposed this year—the budget requires a two-thirds majority, i.e., 10 votes, to pass.

Watch [this video](#) to learn more about the process.

The County hasn't increased its property tax rate for over a decade – and now it has a structural deficit in its operating budget. There's been no change in the County property tax rate since 2011, even though operating costs have increased. Allegheny County has been running on a structural deficit since 2021. Until now, this deficit was offset by \$600M in pandemic relief funding that is ending.

County Executive Innamorato has proposed to save our county services by increasing the property tax rate by 2.2 mills in 2025. This rate change will ensure the County can continue delivering critical services that residents depend on while impacting the median Allegheny County home by just \$15 per month (for owner-occupied residences).

Human services for our most vulnerable residents, our human services workforce, and our network of human services providers are all at stake. Human Services are primarily supported through state and federal funds which the County is required to “match”, so every \$1 in reduced County funding requires an approximate \$5 overall cut to the Human Services budget. For example, a 1 millage tax increase would require a reduction in County funding for Human Services of \$27M and an overall cut to the Human Services budget of \$136M.

At a 1 millage tax increase, services the County would be forced to eliminate include:

- All Family Centers, basic needs support and evidence-based home visiting for 16,000 families
- All specialized services for 1,600 at-risk families with new babies, including nearly 650 families at very high risk for child welfare involvement.
- All out of school programs for 5,700 youth.
- All independent living programs like the 412YouthZone that serve 1,000 former foster, homeless, and at-risk older youth.
- All gun violence prevention and intervention programs serving 400 of our highest risk youth.

Even cutting the above programs in full would not provide the savings necessary to avoid a deficit. The County would have to make significant cuts to additional services such as:

- Emergency shelter for 800 youth and families and 3,400 adults.
- Rental assistance to prevent evictions for 6,500 residents.
- Home delivered meals for 3,600 seniors.
- Senior Centers serving 11,000 clients.
- KidsVoice legal representation for 2,200 children and youth with child welfare cases.
- Behavioral health services that insurance or Medicaid doesn't cover for 9,000 people.

Cutting the above services not only impacts Allegheny County's most vulnerable residents, but also the County's human services workforce and provider network. These services rely upon more than 150 service providers, collectively employing hundreds of staff, who would be impacted by cuts.

CALL TO ACTION

After more than a decade of flat County property tax rates, Allegheny County now faces a structural deficit in its operating budget so large that it could be forced to cut more than \$136M from the human services budget.

Urge your County Councilors to support the 2.2 millage tax increase proposed by County Executive Innamorato, which is necessary to avoid catastrophic cuts to County services.

1. [Call or email County Council](#), including Council-At-Large Members Samuel DeMarco, Bethany Hallam, and your District Representative (look up your district [here](#)).
2. Join us at upcoming events!

SAMPLE LETTER/EMAIL

Dear *[County Council member title and name]*:

I'm writing on behalf of *[organization name]* to urge your support for the 2.2 millage tax increase proposed by County Executive Innamorato, which is necessary to fund the Allegheny County Budget. As an organization dedicated to *[purpose]*, *[organization name]* is deeply concerned about the potential impact of any County Budget reductions on the availability of human services for people in *[Council District, neighborhood, or municipality where your organization operates]*.

After more than a decade of no millage increases in Allegheny County property taxes, the County now faces a structural deficit in its operating budget. The anticipated deficit is so large that the County could be forced to cut up to \$136.7M from the human services budget in 2025.

Allegheny County is our region's single largest funder of human services; its budget provides critical resources for our County's most vulnerable residents, our human services provider network, and our human services workforce. Importantly, through the Department of Human Services, the Allegheny County Budget supports hundreds of organizations to deliver services like:

- Family Centers offering basic needs support and evidence-based home visiting for more than 16,000 families with children.
- Specialized services for more than 1,600 at-risk families with new babies, including nearly 650 families at very high risk for child welfare involvement.
- Out of school programs for more than 5,700 youth.
- Independent living programs like the 412YouthZone that serve more than 1,000 former foster, homeless, and at-risk older youth.
- Gun violence prevention and intervention programs serving more than 400 of our highest risk youth.

- Emergency shelter for more than 800 youth and families and more than 3,400 adults annually.
- Rental assistance to prevent evictions for more than 6,500 residents.
- Home delivered meals for more than 3,600 seniors.
- Senior Centers serving more than 11,000 clients.
- KidsVoice legal representation for more than 2,200 children and youth with dependency (child welfare) cases.
- Behavioral health services that insurance or Medicaid doesn't cover for more than 9,000 people.

For community members:

As a community member and voter in your district, I know the important impact of these services. *[Add any personal experiences you have with human services, how they've helped you, your family, and your community.]* I am deeply concerned about what any reductions to these services will mean for Allegheny County.

For service providers:

[Organization name] is one of hundreds of service providers that rely on funding from Allegheny County to do our work. Specifically, *[insert example of how DHS budget supports your organization's programs; consider adding % of program or overall budget that DHS funds]*. Any reduction in funding will be catastrophic for our clients and workforce.

For Foundation partners:

Additionally, the Allegheny County budget provides support for many of *[organization name]*'s focus areas including *[list areas of shared investment]*. We know from our deep relationships with service providers that reductions to their County funding will be catastrophic for their organizations, the people they serve, and their workforce.

Because of this, I urge you to pass the 2.2 millage tax increase proposed by County Executive Innamorato and fully fund the County Budget. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

[Name, Title, Organization, if applicable]

SAMPLE CALL SCRIPT

Hello, my name is *[Name]*, and I am a *[community member, service provider, other organization member]* in *[District number]*.

I'm calling to urge your support for the 2.2 millage tax increase proposed by County Executive Innamorato, which is necessary to fund the Allegheny County Budget.

Allegheny County is our region’s single largest funder of human services; its budget provides critical resources for our County’s most vulnerable residents, our human services provider network, and our human services workforce. As a [community member, service provider, other], I am deeply concerned about the potential impact of any County Budget cuts on the availability of human services for people in [Council District, neighborhood, or municipality].

Because of this, I urge you to pass the 2.2 millage tax increase proposed by County Executive Innamorato and fully fund the County Budget. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Zillow says my home’s value is \$165,000. How much will my taxes be impacted by this proposal?

The County property tax rate is applied only to your home’s assessed value -- *not* its market value or sales price, which is what is shown by Zillow. You can look up your home’s assessed value here: <https://realestate.alleghenycounty.us/search>.

Additionally, the County Executive is proposing to increase the County’s Homestead Exclusion, which reduces the taxable value for qualifying owner-occupied properties. As a result, many homeowners will see an impact of just \$15 per month (calculated on primary residence at median Allegheny County assessed value, see below).

	Median Home	
Assessed Valuation		110,400
LESS: Homestead Exemption		(18,000)
Taxable Assessment		92,400
Current Tax Bill	\$	437.05
Assessed Valuation		110,400
LESS: Homestead Exemption**		(21,000)
Taxable Assessment		89,400
New Tax Bill	\$	619.54
Monthly Change to Homeowner	\$	15.21

*Median Assessed Residential Value in Allegheny County - \$110,400

**\$3,000 increase to Homestead saves Residential Homeowners 5%

Is the property tax increase needed because the County’s Operating Budget is increasing?

The increase is needed to cover annual operating increases and to cover the structural deficit of \$81M. Important for human services, this increase includes additional match funding to ensure the County can fully draw down all state and federal human services funds available for Allegheny County residents – a campaign promise that County Executive Innamorato is making good on.

I heard the proposal to increase the County property tax rate by 2.2 mills is intended to replace pandemic-related funding. Wasn’t that used to support temporary projects and initiatives?

Through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, state and local governments like Allegheny County received fiscal recovery funds that could be used for general operating support and to make up for lost revenue. If it weren't for this funding, Allegheny County would have needed to increase taxes to avoid a deficit a lot sooner. So, while pandemic-era funding did support some special, temporary projects, this is not what the proposal to increase the County property tax rate is intended to support.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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