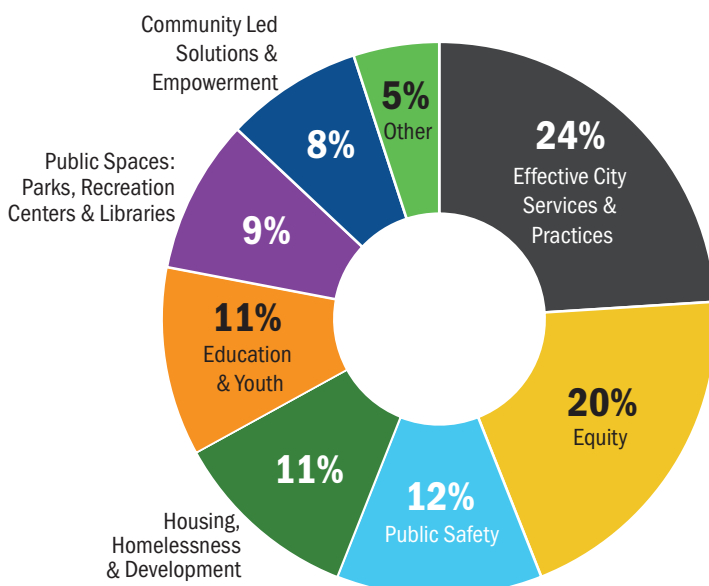


FY25 Budget Engagement Overview

To better understand the needs of Philadelphians and use those insights to inform the FY25 Budget, the City of Philadelphia held roughly 30 community engagement sessions with nearly 774 community members during the fall of 2023. Participants included city employees, community members, business leaders, representatives from nonprofits, as well as arts and cultural organizations. Participants shared their thoughts, concerns, and ideas regarding the City's budget and services. Increased community education and engagement in the City budget helped inform spending decisions for the FY25 Budget that led to significant investments to make Philadelphia the safest, cleanest, greenest big city in the nation with access to economic opportunity for all. Additionally, this work aims to better align the City budget with community needs, lived experiences, and ideas.

Priority Areas Identified by Participants



“More allocation for public safety and back to basics.”

- Community participant, Fall 2023

During Mayor Parker's transition, over 550 residents working across 13 topical subcommittees provided input to inform strategic budget priorities before the Mayor took office. Insights from those subcommittees were shared with City leaders, including commissioners and department heads, prior to the introduction of the FY25 Budget.

After proposing the FY25 Budget, Mayor Cherelle L. Parker expanded budget engagement by hosting Budget Town Hall meetings in communities across the city. Attendees were able to connect with local resources, ask questions, and learn more about the FY25 Proposed Budget during these events. Turnout at the Town Halls was robust with well over 2,000 residents taking part in sessions throughout the city. The Administration views engagement as a year-round priority and this overview provides a snapshot of the budget engagement from Fall 2024 to Spring 2025.

Community Engagement Process

To gather community insight before the FY25 Proposed Budget was drafted, focus groups were held from August through December 2023. Focus groups involved educating participants on how the City budget process works, while providing residents space to share their perspectives on budgetary needs and lived experience within the city. Resident feedback was also collected from follow-up surveys. Over 700 unique responses were gathered through the focus groups and follow-up surveys. This feedback – all gathered in advance of departmental budget submissions being submitted in early January 2024 – was used to shape the community priority areas and key takeaways noted below.

Community Feedback Overview

High-level takeaways from resident feedback included:

- Philadelphians would like to see further investment in services that impact their quality of life such as Sanitation, 311, CLIP and Parks and Recreation.
- Residents are interested in the City budget and would like the creation and review process to be more collaborative, transparent, and accessible.
- Participants highlighted that the needs of the City are deeply interconnected across issues and want more well-rounded approaches that aim at the root causes of longstanding inequities such as housing insecurity, public safety, and education.

“More low-income homes and fixing up some of the abandoned buildings for the homeless.”
- Community participant, Fall 2023

Engagement Snapshot

For the FY25 Engagement period, roughly 30 sessions were held from August through December 2023, engaging nearly 775 Philadelphians through virtual and in-person focus groups.

19 Community Sessions

7 virtual sessions
12 in-person sessions with community partner organizations
316 community members engaged

2 Virtual “Grasstop”¹ Sessions

153 participants from the business community, arts community, and City boards

¹“Grasstop” members are leaders in local and national non-profit organizations and industry advocates.

8 Employee Sessions

1 in-person session
7 virtual sessions
305 employees engaged

“Racial equity can solve a majority of the problems because most of the issues that concern Philly now, race is at the center of it. Supporting racial justice initiatives can help develop low-income housing, a better social safety net as well as community policing with a better police force.”
- Community participant, Fall 2023

FY25 Priority Areas and Investments in the FY25 Budget

These priority areas are listed from highest to lowest occurrence of response as shared from engagement participants. These priorities were reflected in the final budget, as outlined in the examples below.

PRIORITY AREA: Effective City services and practices

- **Select FY25-29 investment:** \$96M for expanded corridor cleaning program, \$25M for district-based residential cleaning, and new funding for PHL Open for Business and Better Services PHL over the FY25-FY29 Five-Year Plan.

PRIORITY AREA: Equity²

- **Select FY25-29 investment:** \$1M each in support to the Dell and Mann Center with continued support of the Catto scholarship program as well as the new City College for Municipal Employment and Office of Minority Business Success

PRIORITY AREA: Public safety

- **Select FY25-29 investment:** \$45M for a new forensic lab and 10 new community outreach and 9 victim advocate positions.

PRIORITY AREA: Housing, homelessness and development

- **Select FY25-29 investment:** \$34M in rental assistance plus continued investments in housing support programs such as Turn the Key, Restore, Repair Renew, and the Basic Systems Repair Program (BSRP).

PRIORITY AREA: Education and youth

- **Select FY25-29 investment:** \$125M for additional School District support over the next five years, with an additional \$5M in operating support to the Community College of Philadelphia.

PRIORITY AREA: Public spaces (parks, recreation centers, and libraries)

- **Select FY25-29 investment:** \$44.9M in City funds for capital investments for Parks and Recreation facilities, with an additional \$11.5M for capital investments and \$5.5M for targeted cleaning for Free Library facilities.

PRIORITY AREA: Community led solutions and empowerment

- **Select FY25-29 investment:** \$500M in street paving through the Capital Program, as well as new positions for anti-violence programming through the Office of Public Safety.



²This priority was formerly labelled 'racial equity' but has been expanded to capture feedback related to needs, issues or communities that specifically connect to race, gender, ability, language, mental illness, public health, income, climate change and more. Feedback for this priority often took the form of members advocating for more direct engagement, resource support, acknowledgement and visibility.