



Office of the Common Council

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TO: Mayor Rhodes-Conway
FROM: Karen Kapusta-Pofahl, Common Council Chief of Staff
DATE: July 18, 2025
SUBJECT: Common Council Operating Budget Transmittal Memo
CC: Deputy Mayors; Finance Director; Budget Manager

Goals of Agency's 2026 Operating Budget

The goal of the Common Council Office 2026 budget request is to strengthen support for the alders and the Council as a body to do the important work of representing their constituents and the city through the reallocation of existing funds. Our 2026 workplan focuses on implementing an annual alder onboarding/offboarding cycle now that staggered terms are in effect. We are also planning to build out additional staff capacity through the hiring of fall/spring paid intern(s). Additionally, we will be exploring additional ways to further the goal of providing support and resources to the City's boards, commissions, and committees.

99.25% Budget for General, Library, and Fleet Funds

The Council Office expects to be able to absorb a .75% base budget reduction (-\$9,627) without impacting our level of service in 2026. Historically, the Common Council Office underspends its overall annual budget by at least 2% each year.

Note: A request for a position study for one of our staff positions is pending with HR, which, depending on the outcome, could require some of our funds to be used to address any change in classification. Additionally, by dedicating \$6,547 to hiring an additional paid intern at the AASPIRE rate, we can expect that amount to be consistently spent in the future. As a result, it is possible that any further reduction to the Common Council Office budget in 2027 and beyond could negatively impact the level of service.

Reallocation and Other Changes

To expand capacity in the Council Office and to support our community engagement efforts, this budget request includes the reallocation of a total of \$7,647 in existing funds. This reallocation results in the reallocation of the underutilized Alder Intern Matching Program funds (\$5,000) and a \$2,647 reduction in the funds available for alder training and conflict mediation (from \$21,176 to \$18,529).

Additional Paid Intern

This request reallocates funds to be able to fund additional (fall/spring) paid intern(s) at the 2025 AASPIRE intern pay rate of \$20.46 per hour for up to 320 hours per year (\$6,547 total).

- Reallocate \$5,000 from the Benefits major to the Salaries major, eliminating the individual alder intern stipends of \$250 per alder
- Reallocate \$1,547 from the Purchased Services major to the Salaries major, shifting \$1,547 of the alder conflict mediation funds to funding a paid intern

Small Business FAM Tour

The Common Council Office collaborates with the Economic Development Division to provide alders with an annual opportunity to learn more about local businesses that receive City funds. In order to properly share the costs of the event with EDD, this request dedicates \$500 from the alder training and conflict mediation funds to cover half of the cost of any Metro staffing costs for the day-long event, along with supplies. This amount assumes the Economic Development Division, who is our partner for this event, will cover the other half of any Metro staffing costs. The Economic Development Division is aware of this request.

Promotional Items

The Council Office provides small promotional items (“swag”) when staffing information tables at events around the city. This request reallocates \$600 from the alder training and conflict mediation funds to purchase promotional items (such as magnets, pens, buttons, or similar).

Future Planning

We would like to also take this opportunity to flag the need to create dedicated staff position(s) to assist with the management and support of City boards, commissions, and committees (BCCs) through the training of BCC staff, officers, and members, as well as working to improve the consistency of operations across the entire BCC system. I will be discussing possible options for such a position with my colleagues in the [BCC Administrative Services Team steering group](#), including questions of agency placement, type of work, classification, and so on.