



PRESS RELEASE

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SARATOGA COUNTY UNVEILS 2025 TENTATIVE BUDGET

Budget Maintains County's Low Property Tax Rate Amongst Counties Statewide; Continues Investments in Public Safety, Health and Human Services, and Economic Development

BALLSTON SPA, NY – Saratoga County officials today unveiled the County's 2025 tentative budget, reducing the property tax rate for the fourth consecutive year, maintaining its position as having the lowest property tax rate of all 55 upstate counties, and continuing its investment in vital services and programs.

The proposed \$432 million budget keeps the levy within the state's property tax cap and reduces the property tax rate by 5%, continuing to provide Saratoga County homeowners with the lowest property tax rate amongst Upstate counties at \$1.87 per \$1,000 of assessed value. This equates to a 15% reduction in the property tax rate over the past four years.

The County makes a conservative sales tax revenue projection for 2025 of \$170 million, amidst higher inflation, a sluggish economy, and uncertainty in future consumer spending habits. The conservative projection comes as the County saw a slower growth rate during the second half of 2024, a trend which officials expect to continue in 2025.

Saratoga County Board of Supervisors Chairman Phil Barrett (Clifton Park) said, "We're proud to once again reduce the property tax rate for property owners, continuing Saratoga County's standing as having the lowest rate amongst all 55 upstate counties, while also ensuring residents have access to quality services and programs. The 2025 tentative budget demonstrates that our conservative fiscal values and smart investments in public safety, our community, and our workforce continue to make Saratoga County one of the most desirable places to live, work, and visit."

Saratoga County Board of Supervisors Vice Chairman Matthew Veitch (Saratoga Springs) said, "In the face of higher inflation, unfunded mandates, and a sluggish economy, the 2025 tentative budget is a testament that Saratoga County's conservative fiscal practices and responsible spending choices that help to maintain the County's low property tax rate while also delivering robust programs and services our residents rely on."

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County Administrator Steve Bulger said, “With the 2025 tentative budget, the County continues its focus on ensuring sufficient staffing levels to provide mandated services across various departments and making strategic investments in programs to ensure residents of all ages have access to vital services, may continue to live in one of the safest counties in the State, and may enjoy the quality-of-life Saratoga County is known for.”

In 2025, unfunded state and federal mandates will cost Saratoga County more than \$80 million. This is more than the county’s share of the property tax levy, requiring 100% of the County property tax to be allocated to unfunded mandates, which includes Medicaid, temporary assistance, early intervention, among many others. The burden of unfunded mandates was further strained in 2024 when the State shifted federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage payments from localities to its own coffers. Despite rising costs of unfunded mandates, the County continues to make considerable investments in critical programs and services residents depend on, such as public safety, health, and human services.

To maintain the high standard of services Saratoga County is known for, the Board of Supervisors is supporting the County workforce through this budget with significant investments in personnel, benefits, and training across all departments.

The tentative budget continues the County’s investment in public safety with funding for law enforcement training, updates to critical emergency communications systems, and continued support for emergency preparedness and response efforts. Saratoga County continues to invest in its public safety workforce, welcoming more than 30 new deputies over the past 12 months and ensuring ongoing funding for key training initiatives for seasoned staff as well as new hires. These efforts supported in the 2025 budget will ensure first responders have the necessary skills and equipment to respond to man-made or natural disasters, such as the July 2024 tornado in the towns of Edinburg and Day, as well as day-to-day public safety matters.

The 2025 tentative budget prioritizes resources for health and human services initiatives and programs. Saratoga County continues to support its large aging population with considerable allocations to the Senior Nutrition Program, which provides home-delivered and congregate meals to senior citizens countywide and transportation services that provide elderly residents with safe and reliable transit to and from important destinations such as medical appointments or grocery shopping; and other support services.

The 2025 tentative budget prioritizes funding and staffing for social services programs residents of all ages depend on, including early intervention, child welfare, foster care, Medicaid, and temporary assistance. In 2025, the County will also continue to pursue a permanent Code Blue Shelter location to help address homelessness.

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The proposed budget also continues the County's commitment to veterans. With the largest veteran population in the Capital District, Saratoga County's proposed 2025 budget provides support for the PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Peer Support program, which helps veterans re-assimilate to civilian life.

Saratoga County continues to support youth and families through funding for programs that encourage youth to abstain from drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and vaping. To that end, the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors will welcome back its special speaker's series for school districts, which addresses addiction and empowers students to choose abstinence. The tentative budget also provides for increased funding for the Adolescent Tobacco Use Prevention Act (ATUPA) program to prevent the sale of tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, and accessories to anyone under the age of 21.

As the County continues its environmental health expansion, the 2025 tentative budget provides for a funding increase of more than one million dollars for the Department of Health for technology upgrades including a new online payment and permitting system and clean water supply testing equipment.

The County continues its investment in elections security and integrity initiatives to ensure safe and secure elections across Saratoga County. These investments include equipment upgrades, including new voting machines, and staff training.

The Board of Supervisors also continues its commitment to preserving open space, maintaining its partnership with Saratoga PLAN as land manager for the Graphite Range Community Forest and with its expansion of the popular Zim Smith Trail, which sees more than 300,000 travelers annually.

Saratoga County continues to prioritize economic development through partnerships with organizations such as SEDC and Discover Saratoga as well as support of the 250th Anniversary of the Battles of Saratoga commemoration and the Belmont Stakes at Saratoga. These important investments help to create sustainable growth, job opportunities, and enhanced quality of life for Saratoga County residents, businesses, and visitors.

For more information, to view the budget brief, and to read the full 2025 tentative budget, please visit www.SaratogaCountyNY.gov.

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