

Berks County

2026 Proposed Budget



Berks County Commissioners' 2026 Budget Goals

- Balanced operating budget without use of reserves
- No property tax increase
- Limit wage growth to projected inflation
- Limit headcount growth
- Fund new facility infrastructure needs with new debt & reserves
- No new, unfunded programs
- Maintain commitment to farmland preservation, education, economic development, library, and park systems
- Maintain long term financial stability
- Prioritize capital improvement to:
 - Facility, Park & Bridge infrastructure projects
 - Technology/Software

Updated Berks County Tax Impact Surplus (Deficit) (in Millions)

In Millions	(Incr.) Decr.
Total County Budget Surplus - All Funds	\$2.9
Berks Heim Net Loss	\$2.9
Liquid Fuels Fund	\$2.7
Spec. Legislation/Act 198/Parking Garage Funds	(\$0.2)
Act 13 Green Space Fund	\$0.3
Aging/Human Service Development Funds	(\$1.3)
Bond Proceeds	(\$25.0)
Hazmat Fund	(\$0.2)
Agland Preservation Restricted Fund Balance	\$0.0
Use of Fund Balance for COVID Community Expenditures	\$8.0
Bond Funded Capital	\$1.8
General Fund - Capital	\$8.1
Operating Budget - Tax Impact Surplus (Deficit)	\$0.0

- 12.31.26 Projected unassigned reserves \$148.0M
- Use of General Fund reserves for one-time capital & debt expenditures - GFOA best practice.

Berks County 2026 Budget

(In Millions)

General Fund:	2026
Total Revenue	\$290.9
Total Expense	\$293.1
Less Total Adjustments	\$14.0
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$16.2)

All Funds:	2026
Total Revenue	\$676.1
Total Expense	\$672.5
Less Expense Adjustments	\$0.7
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	\$2.9

- No tax increase
- Tax rate 9.013 Mill
- Tax \$901 per \$100K AV

- Net 2026 Tax Duplicate Billing of \$174.0M
- Assessed Value – Decrease (0.18%)
- Total Tax Rev \$180.0M (includes \$5.6M billing/interims/TC)

For comparison to 2025 Adopted Budget see written budget message

Berks County 2026 Budget Highlights

- Interest Income \$7.4M, decrease (\$0.7M) / 8.7%
 - **Lower reserves, lower interest rate average 4.0%**
- Headcount (2.5) FTE- Reductions in Library and Employment & Training
- Total Wages \$146.2M, increase \$5.3M / 3.80%
 - **3.09% base pay avg rate increase & 0.7% increase in Berks Heim overtime pool**
 - **Employer Cost Index for State & Local Government Q2 Annualized 3.6%**
- Net fringe benefit \$52.4M, increase \$1.2M / 2.35%
 - **Pension cost \$7.6M - \$1.3M increase - Higher wages**
 - **Employee health contribution \$4.6M - \$0.4M increase. - higher rate, higher enrollment**
- Total Debt Service \$11.9M, decrease (\$2.1M)
 - **New Bond Issuance amount lowered from \$35M to \$25M**
 - **Revision to capital plan and deferred to 2026 for better financing rates**

Berks County 2026 Budget Highlights – Cont'd

- Juvenile Probation Office – \$9M increase due to higher demand for out of home placements including BCYC, Community-based, Institutional and State facilities in addition to vendor rates increases for services and placements.
- Berks Heim contribution to the General Fund \$1.5M
 - **Reduce tax burden**
 - **Sufficient Unrestricted Net Assets to maintain 60-day GFOA best practice fund balance level recommendation**
- Maintains the following commitment to:
 - **Economic Development \$1.0M (Personnel/Business outreach/GRCA\$500K)**
 - **Library System \$3.9M - Includes \$900K to RPL**
 - **Parks System \$3.8M - Operations and park improvements (capital)**
 - **SCTA/BARTA \$533K - Sponsor, mandatory 5% increase**
 - **RACC \$3.25M - Sponsor, operating stipend plus \$1.0M Redevelopment Authority contribution**
 - **Connections Work \$543K –R3 Program \$252K, Reentry Works support \$291K**
 - **COCA \$1.23M - Drug and alcohol treatment plus \$300K RDA contribution & \$195K Opioid Funds**
 - **Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority \$100K**

Berks County 2026 Capital Plan Highlights

2026 Summary Capital Plan (in Millions)

County Bridges	\$6.2	Berks Heim Improvements	\$1.0
Facility Upgrades	\$1.4	Ag Land Easements	\$1.0
Space Study Fit Out	\$6.3	Park Facility Improvements	\$0.7
Jail Improvements	\$0.6	Other Equipment/Upgrades	\$0.9
Total Capital			\$18.1

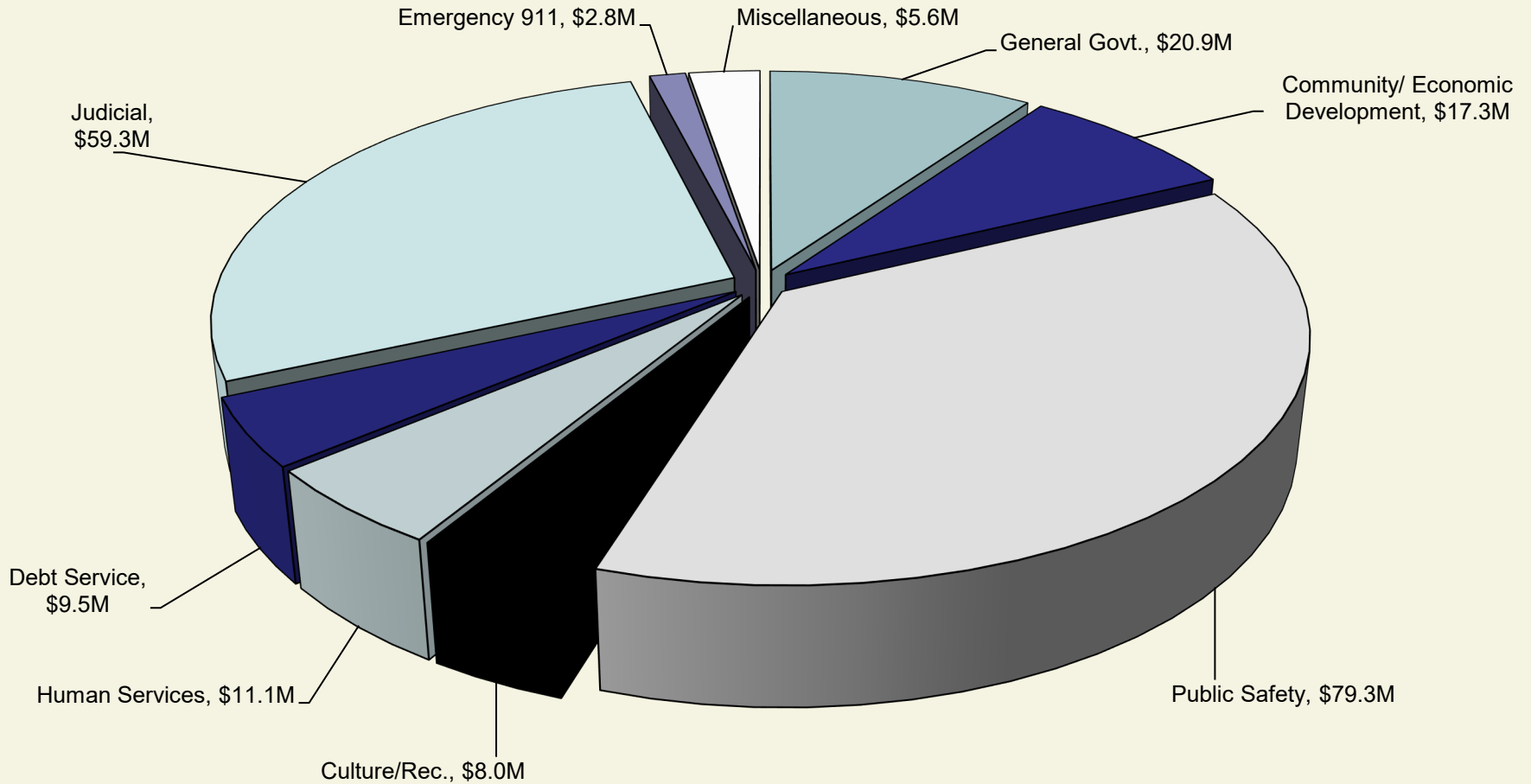
Highlights:

- Includes \$1.8M in new bond financed capital
- Facilities – County Security, Tributary Wall Rebuild
- Space Study Fit Out – Phase I Downtown Campus Improvements
- County Bridges – Griesemer’s Mill, Moselem Springs
- Parks – Action Park Re-Build, Gruber Wagon Works Repainting
- Jail – Water Heater Upgrades, Roof Walkway and Railing

Berks County 2026 Budget Potential Risks/Rewards

- Berks Heim impacts:
 - Berks Heim Census growth - 320 per day (**currently 320**)
 - Staffing, agency, and O.T. costs
 - Continued tight labor market
 - Continuation of State IGT program (**Current net benefit \$9.5M**)
- Economy impact on:
 - Pension assets performance and value at 12.31.25 (**assumes \$622M**)
- Headcount changes:
 - Claim trend - worker comp & health costs
- State funding level, budget cuts & unfunded mandates
- Growth in Jail ADP (**assumes 800 average daily population**)
- Youth Detention Center (**4 county regional facility**)
- Debt guarantees
- New funding for off-budget discretionary programs
- Timing and cost of 911 Radio System End-User Radio Replacements

2026 Proposed Budget Consumption of Taxes and Fund Balance By Function



Berks County Proposed 2026 Budget Schedule

Next Step – Public Review

- Adopt 2026 Budget December 18, 2025
- 2026 Proposed Budget Book, Message, and Presentation are available at the following locations:
 - **County Website:** www.Berkspa.gov
 - **Budget Office**
 - **Commissioners' Office**

Comments and Questions

