



Supervisor

Caleb A. Kershner

Catoctin District



Loudoun County
VIRGINIA



The FY 2024 Budget Process Has Begun!

Dear Catoctin residents,

The FY 2024 budget process is now in full swing. County Administrator Tim Hemstreet [introduced the proposed FY 2024 budget](#) to the Board in a public presentation on February 15. It contains \$4.2 billion in appropriations for the county government and LCPS. You can read that full presentation [here](#).

Here are the highlights from this proposed budget, and how you can participate in the budget process this year.

Your Tax Dollar at Work FY 2024 Proposed Budget

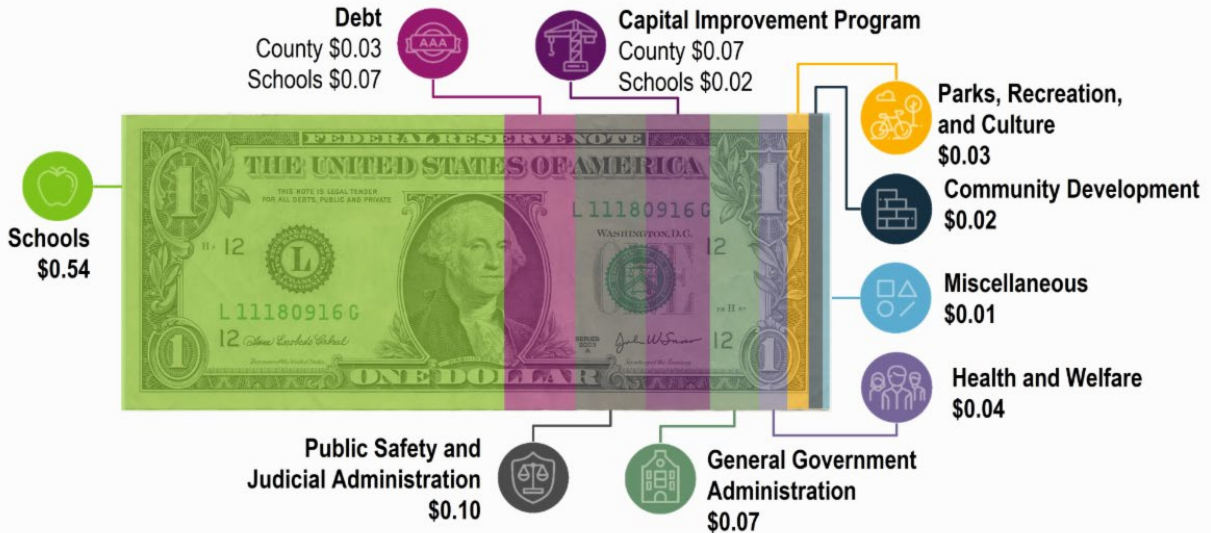


Image credit: [Dollar graphic](#) for FY 2024 proposed budget / Loudoun County

Highlights from the Proposed Budget

You can read the entire FY 2024 proposed budget [here](#). The budget is split into two separate volumes. The [first volume](#) covers the county's operating budget, while the [second volume](#) covers the county's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget.

Real Property Taxes Would Go Up

The proposed budget would set the real property tax rate at \$0.87 per \$100 of assessed value. That's 2 cents below the current real property tax rate of \$0.89, which seems encouraging at first glance. When you factor in how much everyone's home assessments have increased this year, however, that means the average homeowner's tax bill would actually go up by \$302.

I strongly believe the county should set its tax rate at the equalized rate instead. That means finding the tax rate that would keep the average real property owner's tax bill the same as it was last year. For this year, that equalized rate would be \$0.805 to keep the tax bills steady for all real estate owners, or \$0.83 to keep the tax bills steady for homeowners.

Over the next few weeks, I will do everything in my power to move the tax rate as close as possible to the equalized rate.

Increases in County Spending

As proposed, this budget would add 40 county employee positions, who will staff newly opened county facilities and/or support the Capital Improvement Program. It also proposes a \$14.3 million increase to the base budget for providing the county's core services, as well as a \$27 million increase for employee compensation (which includes \$1.5 million for a hiring and retention bonus program). In addition, it provides \$6.5 million in funding for affordable housing, which continues the Board's policy of dedicating a half-cent of the real property tax rate to housing needs.

LCPS Would Receive \$69.1 Million More

Under this proposed budget, the Loudoun County Public Schools would receive \$69.1 million more than what the county gave them last year. This would bring the annual county funding of the schools to more than \$1.1 billion. It is also still \$6.2 million less than the School Board requested. And a state revenue calculation error may leave the schools with an additional \$7.4 million shortfall, which could lead them to ask us for for even more funds.

The school funding question remains a frustrating issue for our county. On the one hand, we want to pay our teachers a reasonable wage, build new schools as they're needed and maintain the existing ones, and fund the other vital elements of our school system. That is an important and reasonable expectation for our county.

But when our student population grows, LCPS asks for more money. When our student population shrinks, LCPS asks for more money. And when the school system has millions of dollars left over at the year's end, which would be returned to the county, [they spend it down](#), and then ask the county for more money.

This is not a sustainable approach. The School Board needs to clearly explain what funding they truly need, and where they can economize on expenses. Our students, families, and teachers need that from them.



Image credit: [Photo](#) of the Loudoun County Government Center / Loudoun County

How to Participate in the Budget Process

I strongly encourage you to read this budget proposal and then weigh in on it. You can sign up to speak at one of the budget public hearings that will be held next week. After that, you'll have the opportunity to watch the Board discuss and debate each part of the proposal in a series of budget work sessions.

Budget Public Hearings

The Board will hold three budget public hearings next week:

- **Budget Public Hearing #1**
 - **WHEN:** Wednesday, March 1, at 3 PM
 - **WHERE:** The Board Room at the Loudoun County Government Center, 1 Harrison Street SE, Leesburg

- **Budget Public Hearing #2**
 - **WHEN:** Wednesday, March 1, at 6 PM
 - **WHERE:** The Board Room at the Loudoun County Government Center, 1 Harrison Street SE, Leesburg

- **Budget Public Hearing #3**
 - **WHEN:** Saturday, March 4, at 9 AM
 - **WHERE:** The Board Room at the LCPS Administration Building, 21000 Education Court, Ashburn

You can sign up to speak at one of those public hearings by calling (703) 777-0204. Speakers get a limited amount of time to speak, so if you have more points to cover, you can email those to the Board, either before or after the public hearing. You can also bring a printed handout of your remarks and give it to the clerk, who will make sure that each supervisor gets a copy afterwards.

In addition, you can always send your thoughts to the Board as a whole or to individual supervisors. You can call the Board's main office at (703) 777-0204, or you can email the whole Board at bos@loudoun.gov. If you'd prefer to contact a specific supervisor, you can find our contact information on our county webpages [here](#).

Budget Work Sessions

All budget work sessions will be held in the Board Room at the Loudoun County Government Center. You can watch these in person or online, and watch the members of the Board work through the details of the proposed budget. I've noted which county departments, constitutional officers, and other funding areas are scheduled to be discussed at each session.

- **Monday, March 6, at 6 PM**
 - **Resource requests** from the Sheriff's Office, Family Services, Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Development Services (MHSADS), and Community Corrections
- **Thursday, March 9, at 6 PM**
 - **Resource requests** from Parks, Recreation, and Community Services, Elections and Voter Registration, the Commissioner of the Revenue, Planning and Zoning, and the Circuit Court judges
- **Monday, March 13, at 6 PM**
 - **The Capital Improvement Program** and other capital funds
 - **Resource requests** from the Commonwealth's Attorney
- **Thursday, March 16, at 6 PM**
 - **Funding request** from the Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS)
 - **Wrap-up**

Additional "If Needed" Work Sessions

Finally, the Board has scheduled some extra budget work sessions. These are marked on the calendar, but will only be used if necessary:

- Saturday, March 11, at 9 AM
- Saturday, March 18, at 9 AM
- Monday, March 20, at 6 PM
- Thursday, March 23, at 6 PM
- Saturday, March 25, at 9 AM

Sincerely,

Supervisor Caleb A. Kershner

*Catoctin District Supervisor
Loudoun County Board of Supervisors
Loudoun County, Virginia*

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Sent by caleb.kershner@loudoun.gov in collaboration with

