



# Onondaga County Legislature

**JAMIE McNAMARA**  
Clerk

**TIMOTHY T. BURTIS**  
Chairman

**TAMMY BARBER**  
Deputy Clerk

401 Montgomery Street • Court House • Room 407 • Syracuse, New York 13202  
Phone: 315.435.2070 • onondagacountylegislature@ongov.net • [www.ongov.net/legislature](http://www.ongov.net/legislature)

## COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S 2026 BUDGET PRESENTATION TO THE ONONDAGA COUNTY LEGISLATURE SEPTEMBER 15, 2025

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Burtis, Mr. May, Mr. Meaker, Ms. Gunnip, Ms. Cody, Ms. Abbott, Mr. Romeo, Ms. Fiano, Ms. Palmer, Mr. Olson, Mr. McCarron, Mr. Knapp, Mr. Bush, Dr. Kelly, Mr. Garland, Ms. Hernandez

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mr. Brown

Chairman Burtis called the meeting to order at 11:10 a.m. and introduced County Executive Ryan McMahon.



*Good Morning*

*Chairman Burtis, Leaders May & Hernandez, Members of the Legislature and guests, thank you for being here. Today I stand before you to present my 2026 executive budget.*





*This budget reflects my unwavering optimism and excitement for the future of our community.*

*What a moment we are in. Together we have put Onondaga County back on a Global Stage. We are seeing billions of dollars of investment, job creation at historic levels, Property values are going up, thousands of new housing starts are happening, and Poverty rates are going down, Child Poverty rates are going down and elevated lead levels in our kids are going down. The Central New York Semi-Conductor Cluster is happening and The Sky is the Limit for the community we all call home.*

*This Budget is part of a road map to execute on our Regional goals and create opportunity for our residents. At the same time, this budget acknowledges the growing pressure caused by unfunded mandates and post Pandemic revenue growth. You've heard me repeatedly say that I view the budget as a statement of values and priorities. And this budget is no different.*

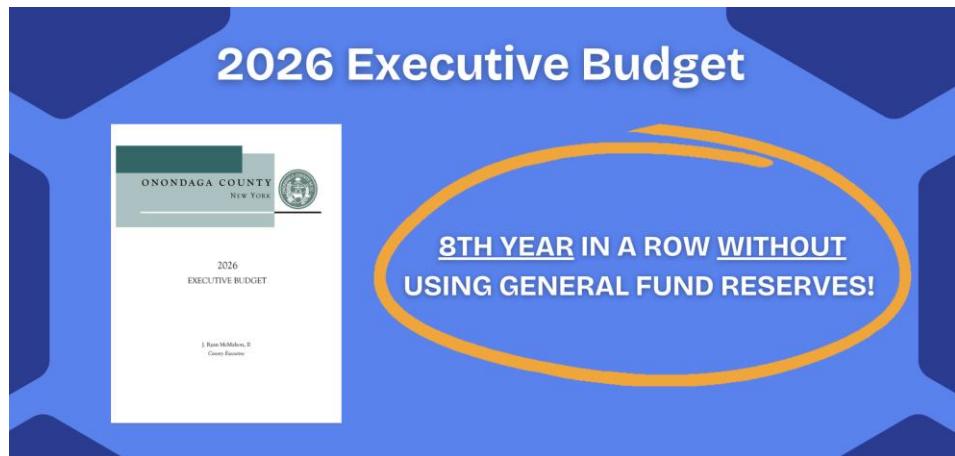
**Values & Priorities**

- Tax Relief
- Investments in Our People
- Public Safety
- Economic Development

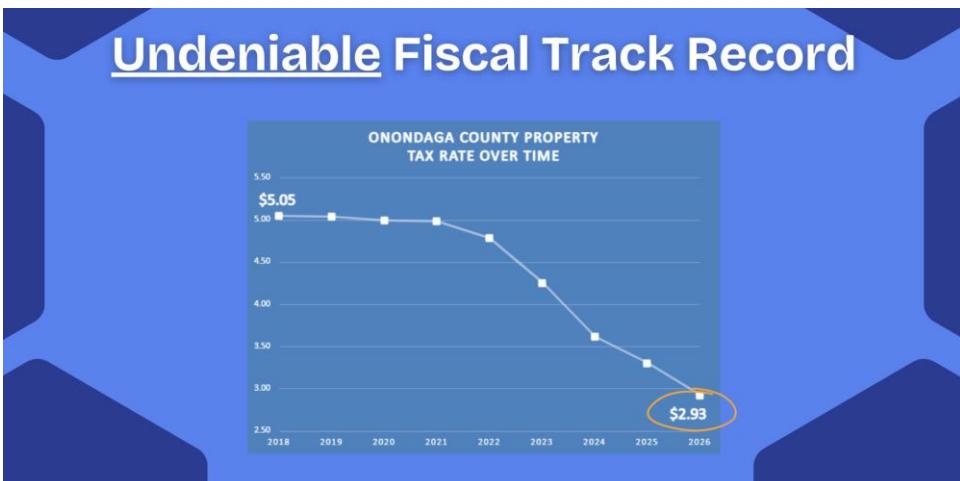
**Micron is coming to New York**

*My executive budget remains focused on delivering on our PIE Platform – focusing on poverty and barriers to employment, infrastructure and economic development. This Budget and our Capital Improvement Plan use our County Comprehensive Plan – Plan ON as a guiding tool for investment.*

*I stand before you today presenting a fully balanced 2026 budget. And for the 8th year in a row, it does not use any fund balance.*



*The strong and prudent fiscal track record of Onondaga County is undeniable. And this track record is what has allowed us to ultimately make substantial cuts in the property tax rate. Last year we proposed a cut in the tax rate from \$3.62 per thousand to \$3.31 per thousand. It equaled a 9% tax cut on the county property tax rate.*



*Affordability for our residents is a top concern. This year, I am proposing that we further cut the county property tax rate. My 2026 Executive Budget calls for reducing the property tax rate from \$3.31 per thousand to \$2.93 per thousand. An 11% cut to the property tax rate. To put this into further context, we would have the lowest County rate among major upstate counties.*



*If approved, we will have cut the property tax rate by nearly 42% since I became County Executive in 2018. While the County is not able to control every aspect of what drives your tax bill, one thing is for sure: We collectively have delivered tax relief to the taxpayers of this County.*

*Sales Tax continues to be an important source of revenue for the county. And I am pleased to report that so far, year over year, Sales Tax receipts have come in are in line with the 1% growth budgeted for 2025.*



*Recognizing that sales tax revenue has returned to more normal growth, newly confirmed CFO Kristi Smiley and her team are projecting a 1.5% growth in sales tax for 2026.*

*Earlier I mentioned the pressure unfunded mandates are having on the budget. Not only are the costs of these unfunded mandates growing, so are the number of them being passed down to county governments. Despite this harsh reality, the budget before you today builds upon the successes of previous investments and proposes additional strategic and thoughtful investments. Investments in our people, public safety and economic development – all of which advance our PIE Agenda and our county comprehensive plan.*

*And that starts with our kids. From day one, my administration has worked with the Early Childhood Alliance, investing nearly \$11.5 million dollars to set our kids up for success. This budget calls for a continuation of this important partnership with an additional \$2.3 million dollars.*

The graphic features a blue and white abstract background. On the left, the text "Continued Investments in the Early Childhood Alliance" is written in red. Below it, "Additional \$2.3 Million" and "Nearly \$11.5 Million total" are also in red. At the bottom left is the logo for "earlychildhoodalliance ONONDAGA" with a stylized "ECA" monogram. To the right is the "ONONDAGA COUNTY SEAL". On the right side, there is a photograph of a group of people, including a young child, standing together. A sign in the background reads "Get On Board Dolly Parton's Imagination Library".

*This budget also makes good on the promise we made to fund mental health services in our schools. To date, we have invested a total of 22 million dollars to ensure our kids have access to the mental health resources they need.*

## Investing In Our Youth

**\$22 Million Total**

**Mental Health Services**

*Last October, Onondaga County was awarded the largest federal grant ever to continue our lead abatement efforts. \$7.75 million dollars!*

## Tackling Lead

**\$7.75 Million in new federal funding**

**Over \$12 Million in additional local dollars for flexible lead spending**

**ONONDAGA COUNTY Lead Initiatives**  
J. Ryan McMahon II, County Executive

*These federal dollars are critical to our efforts, but they also have their limitations. And that is exactly why my administration has worked to secure over 12 million dollars in local funding, which provides greater flexibility to help us more comprehensively address this serious issue.*

*In the 2026 executive budget, I am proposing allocating another \$1.23 million in flexible lead funding to continue these efforts. If approved, it would amount to over 13 million in additional dollars allocated to tackle the issue of lead in our community.*

## Tackling Lead

**\$1.23 Million in Additional**  
**Flexible Lead Funding**

**ongovhealth**  
Onondaga County Health Department

**Lead Poisoning Prevention Program**

Public safety continues to be among the highest priorities of my administration. It is among the most important responsibilities we have as elected officials. That is why my 2026 budget contains several initiatives and investments critical to our public safety efforts.

First, I am proposing funding that will allow for the expansion of body worn cameras for our deputy sheriffs serving in the custody and correction divisions. Last year, in partnership with the Legislature, we funded a multi-million-dollar upgrade to existing body cameras worn by our road patrol deputies. The expansion of body cameras to our deputies in custody and corrections is the next logical step and long overdue.



A key component to effective public safety is flexibility. Crime does not operate on a schedule. That is why my budget also calls for \$300,000 in flexible funding to support public safety and surge initiatives that will enhance community security.

Drones are also becoming an important tool in public safety efforts. And NUAIR is a leader in those efforts.



NUAIR has developed a pilot program called “Drone as a first responder”. Leveraging FAA approved technology, this program will allow pilots of drones to safely operate beyond visual line of sight. We know that in any emergency, every second counts. This pilot drone program will mean our first responders will have even faster eyes on the scene which will allow them to respond accordingly. It also means that they can have eyes on a scene and gather information where it is determined that it is too dangerous to send a person in.

50 years ago, the Onondaga County Sheriff's Office Aviation Program was established. And for 25 of those years, it has used its current helicopter, commonly known as AIR ONE, for major public safety incidents. AIR ONE supports law enforcement and emergency services across Onondaga County and neighboring counties. Missions include pursuits, response to major criminal incidents, search and rescue operations for missing persons, and more.

While AIR ONE remains well-maintained, the systems and technologies are far too outdated. In this budget, I am calling for the authorization of funding to purchase a new, state-of-the-art helicopter to ensure that our partners in law enforcement can continue to provide the highest quality of protection to our residents.



One of our greatest strengths as a community is the diversity of our local economy. High Tech Manufacturing, Eds & meds to leisure travel to arts and entertainment are just a few of these key sectors.

And as Legislator Knapp often reminds me, so too is our local agriculture economy. Especially our flourishing ag tourism industry. And he's right. The agritourism grant program has been an undeniable success investing almost \$800,000 in grants across 53 local farms. So, let's keep the success going. My 2026 budget proposes allocating an additional \$200,000 towards this initiative.

## Investing In Our Farmers

**Additional \$200K for Agritourism Grants**

**Almost \$800K Total**

**PLAN ONONDAGA**

**SAVE THE DATE – ON FARM FEST IS THIS SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20TH!**





Consistent with our Comprehensive Plan, we will also invest in one of our Critical Centers – our Convention and Innovation District. We will give the Convention District a new look and also invest in the technology companies and Industries that will drive more Convention business.



We continue to Fund our Arts and Culture organizations and Visit Syracuse. All key partners in driving new revenue and Quality of life for our Community.

This budget cuts the tax rate by 11% to a new historic low, strengthens our County departments and invests in our neighborhoods and housing. This budget invests in our roads, sewer and water infrastructure. This Budget continues to be aspirational for the future and reflects our unwavering belief in the potential of our community. We will continue to build on the success we have seen and position ourselves to realize growth and promise like our community has never seen before.

We look forward to working with you in the weeks to come.

God Bless you all.

Chairman Burtis thanked County Executive Ryan McMahon, and stated that the Ways and Means Committee will commence the budget review process on Wednesday, September 17<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JAMIE McNAMARA, Clerk  
Onondaga County Legislature