

## **2026 BUDGET MESSAGE FROM COUNTY EXECUTIVE DANIEL P. McCOY**

In the face of recent federal funding cuts and ongoing economic uncertainty, Albany County is doing what we've always done best: Adapting, innovating, and putting our residents first. We're consolidating where we can, finding new efficiencies, and working with public and private partners to keep our critical services running strong. That means protecting programs that families rely on, continuing our support for small businesses, and making sure taxpayer dollars go as far as possible. These aren't easy decisions, but I'm approaching them with a steady hand and clear focus on our community's long-term needs.

Over the past decade, we've steadily reduced the effective tax rate, despite rising costs, and that track record is something in which I take pride. But today, we are facing a much different set of circumstances. Like all other local and county governments, we are being asked to do more with less support from our state and federal partners, and while there will once again be a reduction in the effective tax rate in next year's budget, there will be a modest increase in the tax levy. This is due in part to increased property valuation growth across the county.

While we work to control growth in spite these circumstances, I also know our community values honesty and leadership grounded in facts. We've gone line by line through this budget, cut back where we could, and prioritized only the most essential spending. We will continue to look for cost cutting measures and reevaluate our priorities moving forward.

The full impact of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1) on New York State is not yet fully known, but it will certainly pose significant challenges for municipalities across the state. This legislation will increase costs for county governments and minimize federal support. The most substantial cuts were made to social safety net programs that many residents rely on, and current estimates project that up to 1.5 million New Yorkers could lose health insurance and 300,000 households could lose Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. We are hopeful that the state does not pass the burden of these changes down to us at the county level.

Our community has weathered tough times before, and this situation is no different. Notwithstanding recessions, a global pandemic, economic shutdowns and federal government gridlock, we've managed our finances responsibly, built up our fund balance, and our reserves remain strong. In fact, we're in a far healthier position than many counties across the state. But reserves are not a long-term solution. They are meant for emergencies, not to fund reoccurring, essential services year-to-year. And while we are currently well-positioned fiscally, we need to remain vigilant and continue to be fiscally responsible and cautious with our spending going forward to maintain the long-term financial health of Albany County.

I would like to thank the County Legislature, Sheriff Craig Apple, Sr., Clerk Bruce Hidley, Comptroller Susan Rizzo, District Attorney Lee Kindlon, and our department heads for their cooperation and flexibility during the budget process. When we work together, we are able to provide the highest level of services at one of the lowest tax rates in the state. It has not always been easy, but we remain disciplined and stay the course for the benefit of all. This budget continues to utilize best practices in governmental accounting and finances and firmly positions ourselves for prosperity in the future.