



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON ANNOUNCES 2026 BUDGET ENGAGEMENT ROUNDTABLES**

*The citywide initiative fosters equity-driven dialogue and expand community voice and insights in shaping next year's budget priorities*

**CHICAGO** – Mayor Brandon Johnson, together with the Mayor's Office of Community Engagement (MOCE) and the Office of Budget and Management (OBM), today announced the launch of the City of Chicago's 2026 Budget Engagement Roundtable events. This citywide exercise is an expression of co-governance and centers Chicagoans' voices to help shape the future of City services through a series of dynamic, co-designed public meetings focused on collaboration, transparency, and shared priorities.

Chicago is entering a tough budget season, confronting a \$1 billion shortfall even before any potential federal cuts. These roundtables allow the City to hear directly from Chicagoans about which services matter most, what programs should be prioritized, and where spending can be realigned. More than ever, the 2026 Budget must be driven by purpose and impact, each public engagement roundtable will guide how valued programs are evaluated and where decisions will need to be made.

This year, similar to last year's budget engagement process, Mayor Johnson is hosting four interactive roundtable events across the city—three for the general public and one tailored specifically for youth, ages 13-24—each designed with input from community stakeholders.

"Our City works best when the people of Chicago and their input is placed front and center in our decision-making," said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. "Through these roundtables, we are deepening our commitment to equity and transparency—ensuring the voices of everyday Chicagoans help shape the budget that governs their lives. Even during a tough budget season, we are committed to building a government that listens to, responds to, and evolves alongside its residents."

The 2026 budget engagement effort marks the third year of the Johnson administration's comprehensive public engagement strategy, led in partnership with the Great Cities Institute at the University of Illinois Chicago. This process centers equity, education, and collaboration while staying grounded in community input gathered during previous engagement cycles.

For the past two years, Mayor Johnson hosted deep-dive budget session, with key stakeholders, to provide a baseline understanding of City finances and strategy meetings to identify community priorities across the following five focus areas:

- Affordable Housing & Homelessness Services
- Mental Health & Public Health
- Community Safety
- Environmental Justice & Infrastructure
- Neighborhood/Community Development and Arts/Culture

The process was co-designed with a diverse coalition of community leaders and advocates to assist in shaping the format, structure and themes of the 2026 Budget Roundtable events.

"We're entering a budget season unlike any the City has experienced," said **Budget Director Annette Guzman**. "The City faces difficult decisions ahead and we want to know residents' priorities so we can be strategic and laser focused with our budget—it's Chicagoans' voices that will help us get there."

The four roundtable events will occur before departments submit their budget requests to OBM, giving City departments a direct opportunity to incorporate community feedback into their budget proposals. Department leadership will be present to listen and engage directly with residents. During last year's roundtables, residents prioritized youth job creation, environmental justice investments and expanded access to mental health services—priorities that were reflected in the FY2025 budget through expanded youth employment programs, sustainable infrastructure projects and the continued reopening of neighborhood mental health clinics.

After this year's roundtables conclude, the City and Great Cities Institute will publish a public report summarizing the engagement findings, which will coincide with the release of the FY2026 Executive Budget Recommendation. Drawing on the success of the FY2025 Inaugural "Lakeside Chat"—which offered a candid conversation, between Mayor Johnson and Budget Director Guzman about Chicago's budget outcomes—MOCE and OBM will reprise the format, later this fall, to walk residents through the goals of the new budget and its impact while discussing how public input influenced the final 2026 budget proposal.

Residents are encouraged to get involved by visiting the [FY2026 Budget Engagement website](#) and watching the City's Budget 101 Video. Feedback can be submitted through the Public

Comment Portal and by completing the Budget Engagement Survey, accessible through the 2026 Budget Engagement [Website](#).

Each public roundtable event, with the exception of the final youth event, includes a City Resource Fair that will open one hour prior to the event's start time, where residents can engage with City departments and learn more about available services.

All events will be live streamed on the City's social media platforms for those unable to attend in person. ASL will be available at all events. Closed captioning (CC) will be offered at Harry S. Truman College and Spanish interpretation will be provided at Malcolm X College.

## **BUDGET ENGAGEMENT ROUND TABLES**

### **ROUNDTABLE I**

Saturday, June 28, 2025

10:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Harry S. Truman College – 1145 W. Wilson Ave.

### **ROUNDTABLE II**

Monday, June 30, 2025

6:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Malcolm X College – 1900 W. Jackson Blvd.

### **ROUNDTABLE III**

Tuesday, July 1, 2025

6:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Kennedy-King College – 6301 S. Halsted St.

### **ROUNDTABLE IV – YOUTH EVENT (Ages 13–24)**

Wednesday, July 9, 2025

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Harold Washington Library, Crystal Garden – 400 S. State St.

Register through the City's Budget Engagement Website: <https://chi.gov/3TGSc03>

Pre-registration is encouraged but not required.

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