

Charles County Government FY2027 Budget Engagement

Engagement Period:
February 12 - March 31, 2026



FY2027 BUDGET ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW



Who participated?

655 completed online surveys (802 submissions with at least one response)

General public, partner agencies, Charles County Government employees



How were people reached?

- Social media
- E-newsletters
- Public meetings
- Let's Get Fiscal podcast
- Outreach to key stakeholder groups
- Community events
- News media

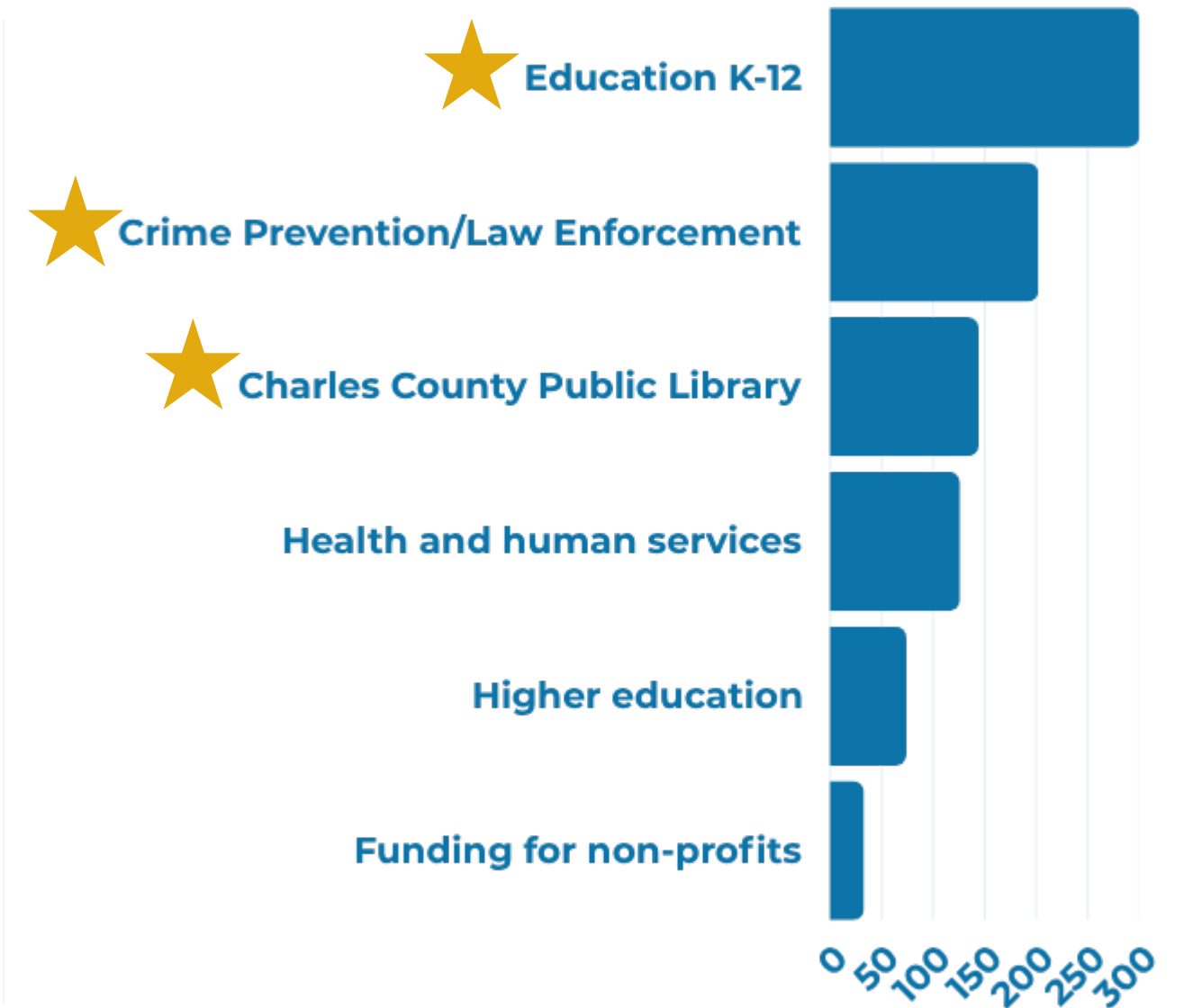
Budget Priorities

Participants were asked to select the top 3 areas that should be improved through increased funding of services.

Charles County Government Services



Partner Agency Services





FY2027 Engagement: Who Participated?

655 survey completions

802 submissions with at least one response

- A majority of participants were in the following age groups: **35-44 (26%), 45 -54 (24%), and 55 -64 (17%)**.
- **63.1% of participants identified as White (Non -Hispanic or Latino)**.
- **55.9% of participants have lived in the County for 20+ years**.
- **86.17% of participants own their home**

Key Stakeholders:

- Charles County Sheriff's Office
- Charles County Public Schools
- Citizens Academy Ambassadors
- Charitable Trust
- CSM Nonprofit Institute
- Board of Elections
- College of Southern Maryland
- Charles County Department of Health Department
- Official Piscataway Conoy Tribe Inc.,
- Charles County Department of Social Services
- Town of La Plata
- CPPL
- SMECO
- College of Southern Maryland
- Town of Indian Head
- Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
- PFLAG
- LifeStyles
- NAACP
- Strong Towns Charles County
- Charles County Chamber of Commerce
- Charles County Fire and EMS Volunteer Association



FY 2026 vs FY 2027 Engagement

Participation

- The FY27 survey **reflects a slightly younger, more racially balanced, and less long-tenured population** compared to FY26, while still being dominated by homeowners and midlife residents.
 - **Younger tilt:** More input from 25–44 residents
 - **More racially balanced (Black/White),** but less diversity overall
 - **Still homeowner-dominated,** limiting renter perspectives
 - **Slightly less “legacy resident” influence,** with more mid-tenure voices

Areas of Improvement

- Continued underrepresentation of:
 - Renters
 - Younger adults (under 25 still very low)
 - Smaller racial/ethnic groups
- Continue to increase number of engagement; resident feedback on priorities is vital
- Future engagement should increase efforts to ensure that participation reflects our community, so that all diverse voices and feedback can be included in decision-making.



FY2027 BUDGET PRIORITIES

Top Government Service Priorities

- Emergency Medical Response — 45.9%
- Children, Youth & Family Programs — 45.7%
- Transportation & Roads — 43.9%

Top Partner Agency Priorities

- K–12 Education (Public Schools) — 78.5%
- Crime Prevention / Law Enforcement — 52.9%
- Public Library — 37.7%

Key Insights

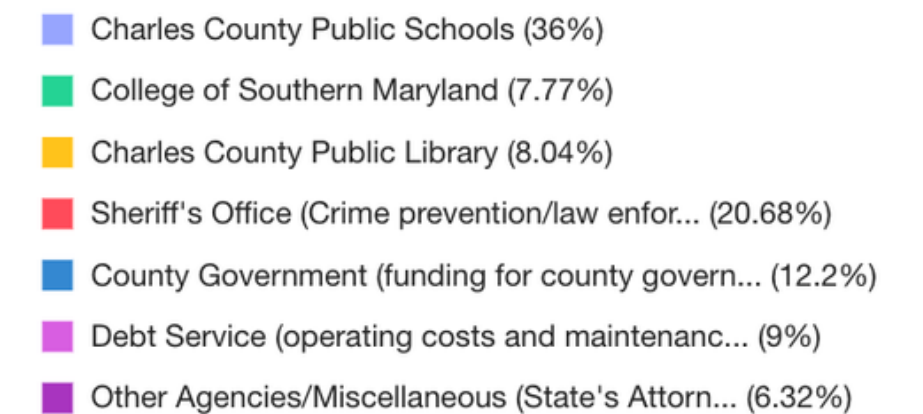
- Children, Youth & Family Programs rank highest across most age groups, especially ages 25–44
- Government Accountability is a higher concern for residents 65+ than senior programs
- Long-term residents (20+ years) prioritize EMS and transportation infrastructure
- Ages 18–54 strongly favor K–12 education, while 55+ prioritize public safety
- Library support remains steady across all demographics

Budget Feedback: Annual Budget for Charles County Government



Participants were asked to allocate hypothetical funds in the Annual Budget for Charles County Government.

- **Categories** that received the **highest allocation of hypothetical funds** were **Charles County Public Schools (36%), Sheriff's Office (20.68%) and County Government (12.2%)**.
- Categories that received the **lowest allocation of hypothetical funds** were **Charles County Public Library (8.04%) and College of Southern Maryland (7.77%)**.
- **Young adults aged 25 -34 displayed a significant preference for higher funding allocations to Charles County Public Schools,** especially at the highest budget ranges. Conversely, older age groups, particularly those 75 and above, showed minimal engagement across all funding brackets.





Budget Feedback: Open -Ended Comments

52% of participants provided feedback on the FY2027 budget. Below are the identified themes:



Support and Concern for Education

- Strong demand to fully fund Charles County Public Schools (CCPS)
- Concerns about:
 - Teacher pay and retention
 - Overcrowded classrooms
 - Loss of funding share over time
 - Lack of resources and supplies



Public Safety and Emergency Services

- Strong concern about EMS staffing shortages and response capacity
- Mixed but generally supportive views on law enforcement funding
- Rising concern about crime trends



Infrastructure Strain & Growth Concerns

- Widespread perception that growth is outpacing infrastructure
- Strong opposition to continued residential development without capacity improvements
- Traffic congestion and road conditions
- Water/sewer capacity concerns
- Hospital and healthcare capacity
- “Stop building” sentiment



Tax Burden & Government Spending Concerns

- Strong resistance to tax increases
- Calls for:
 - Efficiency
 - Reduced spending
 - Accountability
- Property tax concerns
- Opposition to “wasteful spending” or “pet projects”
- Skepticism about government growth and staffing
- Desire for audits and performance reviews



Budget Feedback: Open -Ended Comments

52% of participants provided feedback on the FY2027 budget. Below are the identified themes:



Growth vs. Quality of Life Tradeoff

- Concern that development is:
 - Reducing green space
 - Increasing congestion
 - Changing community character
- Environmental protection (water, forests)
- Overdevelopment (housing, commercial)
- Lack of community planning
- Desire for balanced growth



Economic Development & Jobs

- Desire to reduce “bedroom community” status
- Support for attracting businesses—but with caution
- Need for local jobs
- Mixed views on data centers
- Support for small/local businesses
- Commercial vacancies vs. new construction



Recreation, Youth, and Community Services

- Demand for more activities for youth and families
- Recreation seen as preventative (reduces crime, improves well-being)
- Lack of teen activities
- Need for community spaces (“third places”)
- Libraries and arts funding
- After-school programs and transportation