

Proposed Budget - Department Overview

FY 2026-27



Oregon Convention Center, 3/16/2026

Summary of Department Budget for FY26-27 Proposed Budget

Inspired by the region and centrally located in Portland, the Oregon Convention Center (OCC) serves as a premier venue for conventions, trade shows, consumer events, and community gatherings. The center is committed to fostering economic impact, promoting sustainability, and supporting equity and inclusion. OCC plays a pivotal role in attracting out-of-town visitors while also providing space for local events that enrich Portland's cultural and economic landscape.

- **Funding Sources:** Total OCC revenue in the FY26-27 budget is \$51.4 million. The majority, \$32 million (62 percent), of this revenue is enterprise activity, rental fees, parking, and food and beverage sales.
 - Additional funding sources include:
 - **Government Support:** \$17 million (33 percent) from the Visitor Facilities Trust Account
 - Historically, OCC has received approximately \$1.2 million in Transient Lodging Tax Pooled Capital. Due to VFTA constraints, there are no allocations projected in FY26-27.
 - **Other Support:** \$2.4 million (5 percent) from interest earnings, transfers and miscellaneous sources
- **Accomplishments/work over the fiscal year:**
 - **Sustainable Events Platinum Certification:** OCC earned Platinum-level certification from the Event Industry Council's Sustainable Events Standard Certificate Program, recognizing excellence in sustainability, diversity, and social impact.
 - **Space to Grow Program:** program established to expand event access for historically underrepresented communities. \$150,000 has been allocated in in-kind support.
 - **Largest National Conference in Portland:** OCC hosted the National Education Association's annual meeting, bringing 7,000 educators to Portland. This was the largest conference hosted in Portland's history.
 - **Orbit Cafe:** the cafe was remodeled and opened in July 2025, featuring a grab-and-go model
- **Total Costs (appropriations budget)**
 - The OCC's \$53 million in operating expenses for FY26-27 are allocated as follows:
 - **Personnel Services:** \$15 million (28 percent)
 - **Materials and Services:** \$30 million (57 percent)
 - **Cost Allocation Plan (Metro Support):** \$8.3 million (16 percent)
- **FTE to support proposed service level**
 - The OCC has 98.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions budgeted for FY26-27.

Ongoing Department Growth and/or Reductions included in FY26-27 Proposed Budget

Looking ahead, OCC faces significant financial headwinds. Soft regional tourism recovery, fewer contracted conventions in the next two years, and negative reputation and media coverage are putting pressure on Transient Lodging Tax collections and OCC enterprise revenues.

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Opportunities center on deeper collaboration between OCC and the Expo Center, which enables more strategic cross-venue bookings and improved operational efficiency. Additional upside exists in capturing shorter booking-window events to help fill calendar gaps and maintain momentum. These opportunities are balanced by several risks, including flat or declining lodging tax revenues and rental car taxes distributed through the Visitor Facilities Trust Account (VFTA) to support OCC operations, continued pressure on client budgets, uneven business pace between FY26-27 and FY28-29, and Portland's national reputation, all of which can affect booking conversion and competitiveness. Further risks include unfunded capital needs, constrained staffing capacity following the FY25-26 Reduction in Force, rising personnel service costs, and fund balance limitations that reduce flexibility to absorb disruption or invest in modernization.

Highlighted Significant Changes from FY25-26 Budget

The FY26-27 OCC budget reflects modest year-over-year change, with operating revenue increasing by 1 percent and expenses rising by 2 percent, following significant cost reductions implemented in FY25-26. In that prior year, OCC reduced materials and services by \$1.9 million (6 percent) and lowered personnel costs by \$4 million (23 percent) to stabilize operations. Given these reductions, further cuts are no longer viable without compromising service quality, as the management team is operating at capacity while also overseeing the Expo Center. Additional reductions would jeopardize service continuity across both venues. While the FY26-27 proposed budget uses \$2.4 million in fund balance, this approach is not a long-term solution.

Any Other Overall Impacts that Require Council Direction and/or Attention

In years before the pandemic, OCC annually received substantial pooled capital resources from Transient Lodging Taxes. In the years since, tax collections have not recovered and nearly no pooled capital resources have been provided to OCC to address major capital maintenance and equipment replacements. OCC has historically been maintained and updated regularly and the lack of capital funding for multiple years is now resulting in deferred maintenance and questions about how to fund several costly upcoming Capital Improvement Plan projects, including the OCC cooling system (chillers, cooling towers, etc.) expected around 2028 and OCC expansion roof replacement around 2030.