

Financial Sustainability: 2026 Pledge Campaign Results

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are pledges important?

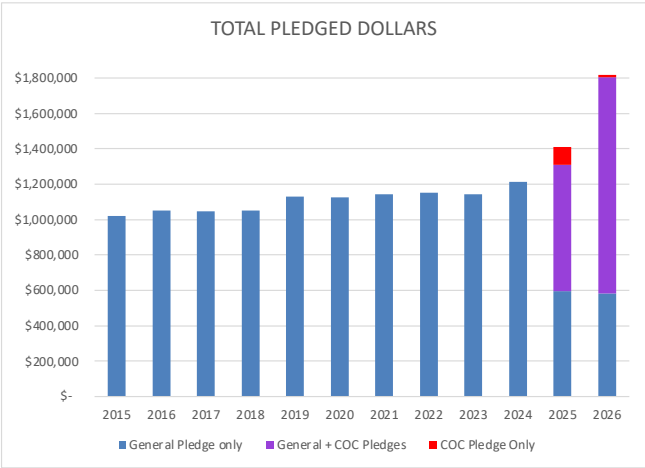
Across both the General and COC Budgets, individual contributions- gifts from individuals and families- account for 70-75% of our total income, and 90% of these contributions are pledged. Pledged income allows us to responsibly balance expected income with budgeted expenses.

What are the key results of the 2026 pledge campaign?

Both General Fund and COC pledged dollars increased, sustaining the significantly increased level of giving we saw in 2025 (pledged and unpledged, including Second Mile Giving). The number of pledging households also increased.

How do these results compare to prior years?

From 2015-2024, year-over-year growth in pledged giving ranged from -1% to +8%. COC pledges were introduced in 2025, and over the subsequent two years (2024-2026) total pledged giving has grown 50%, from \$1.2M to \$1.8M.



Yikes. Does this mean our expenses have also grown by 50%?

No! Due to the efforts of many staff and volunteers, total General Budget expenses increased only 3.6% from 2024 to 2025, and they are budgeted to increase only 1.6% for 2026.

Then why do we need so many pledged dollars?

For many years our budget had a structural deficit- we were spending approximately \$200,000 more each year than our regular income. We were using one-time dollars to make up the difference (e.g. government pandemic relief dollars, memorial gifts, a portion of a recent bequest etc.), and these one-time dollars are gone. We also moved just over \$300,000 in expenses from the General Budget to a newly created COC budget, without a plan in place for how the COC budget would be funded. The current increased level of pledged giving is an important step on our road to financial sustainability.

How much do households pledge?

2026 pledges ranged from \$100 to over \$75,000. 45 households pledged \$10,000 or more, accounting for 48% of total pledged income. The median pledge was around \$2,000; 50% of households pledged more than \$2,000 and 50% pledged less than this amount. One-quarter of households pledged \$1,000 or less. To put these amounts in perspective, it costs \$7,300/day to operate our campus (total personnel and non-personnel costs).

What is dual pledging, and why does it matter?

Dual pledging means pledging to both the General Fund and COC. These households give more on average, are more likely to continue pledging, and this year account for 67% of total pledged dollars.

Did we gain new pledges?

Yes. We are pleased to report 109 new pledges, resulting in a net increase in giving of approximately \$121,000.

Did we lose any pledges?

Yes. 52 pledgers from 2025 did not return in 2026, resulting in approximately \$165,000 in lost pledges.

Are there risks we should be aware of?

Yes- donor concentration, an aging donor base, and year-to-year volatility if large pledges are not fulfilled.

What do you mean by donor concentration?

Over time we are relying on higher contributions from a smaller base of donors, and some of these donors have already doubled and tripled their giving over the past couple of years. For 2026 we are relying on 45 households for 48% of our total pledged income.

What do you mean by an aging donor base?

Pledging by age was reviewed in 2025, and ages were known for 76% of pledgers. 10% of pledged dollars came from individuals 90 and above. 25% of pledged dollars came from individuals 80 and above. 61% of pledged dollars came from individuals 70 and above. Less than 10% of pledged dollars came from individuals younger than 50.

Is pledge fulfillment reliable?

Yes. Pledge fulfillment has remained strong at 98–105% over recent years. While some households may not be able to fulfill their pledge, others make up the difference by giving more than they pledge. We are at risk, however, if a large pledge is unfulfilled.

What is the biggest takeaway?

The church is experiencing strong financial growth, but long-term sustainability depends on broadening the donor base and increasing participation across all generations.

What are the priorities moving forward?

Strengthen donor retention, expand dual pledging, engage younger donors, and build a broader giving base.

What can I do?

Fulfill your pledge, make a pledge if you have not already done so, consider dual pledging, encourage others, and stay engaged in the church's mission.

Who can I contact if I have additional questions?

Please email Finance@AsburyFirst.org