

Financial Sustainability: Proposed 2027 Operating Budgets

Frequently Asked Questions

How much does it cost to run Asbury First?

The full cost of our all-campus operations is approximately \$2.8M per year, or \$7,700 per day.

Why aren't we talking about an Annual Operating Plan (AOP)?

We are no longer using this term. Asbury First has two annual operating budgets: The General Budget (general church operations) and the COC Budget (Community Outreach Center operations).

What is meant by predictable, repeatable income?

Predictable, repeatable income refers to pledged and unpledged individual giving, sustainable endowment distributions, property usage etc.

Why so much emphasis on pledges?

Pledged giving accounts for 69% of the budgeted income for the General Budget, and 50% of the budgeted income for the COC Budget. While unpledged gifts are always welcome (and greatly appreciated), pledges allow us to know how much individual giving we will likely receive so that we can budget expenses accordingly.

Where can I learn more about how our budgets are supported by endowments?

Please see archived [Financial Sustainability Updates](#)

We fully funded the 2026 General Budget, so why was there a mid-year staffing reconfiguration?

Personnel costs (clergy + non-clergy) account for 54% of our total General Budget expenses. The 2026 mid-year staffing reconfiguration was not about 2026- rather, this reconfiguration was about preparing us for 2027 budget realities (e.g. several large gifts we knew would not be repeated in 2027, increased Ministry Shares and rising facilities & custodial expenses). Rather than waiting until the end of 2026, the timing of these changes ensured there would be 2026 budget dollars available for severance packages- and ensured those eligible for July reappointment would have that opportunity. This reconfiguration reduced our total baseline personnel costs by \$84,500. \$34,500 of this baseline savings is needed to cover 2027 healthcare cost increases (medical insurance premiums are increasing by close to 20%) and for allow for minimal cost of living adjustments for our staff. \$50,000 of this baseline savings is preserved in the 2027 budget to help partially offset increases in other operating costs such as Ministry Shares and facilities & custodial expenses.

What are Ministry Shares, and why are they increasing?

As United Methodists, we are part of a connectional church, pooling resources with other congregations to accomplish work collectively. Local congregations contribute a specified percentage of their total operating income as Ministry Shares (previously called apportionment). These dollars represent Asbury First's apportioned contribution to the shared ministries of the United Methodist Church, supporting both Upper New York Conference ministries and the broader connectional ministries of the UMC nationally and globally. Our 2027 Ministry Shares are based on our 2025 total General Budget income (not counting any COC designated dollars). Because our 2025 income grew significantly (to begin closing our chronic structural deficit), our 2027 Ministry Shares will be approximately \$64,000 higher.

Why do we talk so much about Facilities & Custodial expenses?

Utilities (gas, electric, water, city & county services), janitorial & maintenance supplies, property care contracts and insurance together account for almost 20% of our total expenses, so our ability to accurately budget for this category is especially important. These expenses were significantly over-budget in 2022, 2023 and 2024. Over the past two years we have greatly improved our ability to forecast these expenses and to rein in these costs whenever possible. In 2025 overall facilities & custodial expenses were on-budget, and we are on-track for the same in 2026. We are also improving our ability to forecast utilities expenses for each of our buildings; for more information, please see [Update: Asbury First Utilities Expenses \(as of September 2026, released October 5, 2025\)](#)

[Where can I learn more about the importance of budgeting for fixed asset replacements?](#)

Please see archived [Financial Sustainability Updates](#)

[Who developed the COC Budget?](#)

The COC Budget was developed by Rev. Pat DuPont and the Outreach Committee, in coordination with each of the COC-based ministry teams: Community Garden, Dining & Caring Center, Grocery Bag Ministry, Storehouse and UR Well Clinic.

[Who is on the Finance Committee \(and what groups are represented\)?](#)

Fred Aten (Investment Committee & Legacy Giving Team), Michelle Bogue-Trost (Senior Minister), Deb Bullock-Smith (Staff), Paul Campbell (Property Stewardship Committee), Jim Connell (At-large member), Tim Mahan (Financial Sustainability Task Force), John Ormsbee (Staff), Dawn Riedy (Chair & Outreach Committee rep), Joe Stankaitis (Generosity Team), Scott Turner (Audit Team), Beth Wilkens (SPRC), Ellen Williams (Memorials Team)

[Who is on the Outreach Committee?](#)

Jonathan Carroll-Nellenback, Diana Carter (Chair), Bob Castle, Mary Church Smith, Patrick DuPont (Outreach Pastor & COC Director), Andy Dutcher, Robyn Gage, Claudia Nolan, Dawn Riedy, John Smalt

[Who is on the Financial Sustainability Task Force \(and what groups are represented\)?](#)

David Allen (SPRC), Michelle Bogue-Trost (Senior Minister), Deb Bullock-Smith (Director of Operations), Pat Dupont (COC), Jim Farrar (Property Stewardship Committee), Patrick Fulford (Investment Committee), Tim Mahan (Chair), Rick Phillips (Legacy Giving Team), Dawn Riedy (Finance Committee)

[How can I help?](#)

Pray for Asbury First. Support and pray for those who represent you on the Governing Board, committees and teams. Continue to pledge and give generously. Stay engaged and informed. Share your ideas and ask questions.

[Who can I contact if I have suggestions or additional questions?](#)

Please email finance@asburyfirst.org