

# Glossary



**ACTUAL:** Monies that have already been used or received; different from *budgeted monies*, which are estimates of funds to be spent or received.

**ALEXANDRIA JUSTICE INFORMATION SYSTEM (AJIS):** A client-server based, multi-agency computer system serving many criminal justice and public safety agencies in the City.

**ALLOCATION:** A dedication of governmental resources, within appropriated amounts, to a specific project or activity. City Council is responsible for authorizing the allocation of capital funds through a monthly review and approval process.

**AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA):** On March 11, President Joseph R. Biden signed the \$1.9 trillion ARPA of 2021, which established the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund.

**ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL REPORT (ACFR):** Annual audited results of the City's financial position and activity.

**APPROPRIATION:** An authorization made by City Council that permits City agencies to incur obligations against, and to make expenditures of, governmental resources in fixed amounts for a one-year period.

**ASSESSED VALUE:** The fair market value placed on personal and real property owned by taxpayers, as determined by the City's Finance Department.

**ASSESSMENT:** Any fee or charge that does not exceed the actual cost incurred for the design, construction, and financing of a local improvement, such as street paving, sidewalks or sewers.

**AUDIT:** Audit refers to examination of the financial records of an organization that is conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards.

**BALANCED BUDGET:** It is a budget where total expected revenues are equal to total planned spending. By law, local government budgets must be balanced; i.e., expenditures may not exceed revenues.

**BUDGET EQUITY TOOL (BET):** The City of Alexandria's Budget Equity Tool is designed to integrate explicit considerations of racial and social equity into the allocation of city resources. It was developed and first implemented in 2021 as a set of questions to guide City departments and their budget analysts in assessing how budget add and deletes advance race and social equity, benefit and/or burden BIPOC or other historically marginalized communities.

**BOND-GENERAL OBLIGATION:** A type of security sold for the purpose of financing capital improvement projects, with the principal and interest payments guaranteed by the full faith and credit of the City of Alexandria through its taxing authority.

**BUDGET:** A plan for financing the operations of City Government, including estimated expenditures for the coming fiscal year and the approved means of financing those expenditures in accordance with adopted policy.

**BUDGET AND FISCAL AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BFAAC):** The Budget and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee (BFAAC) advises and supports the City Council by examining the City's budget procedures and processes; and recommends ways of improving that process, including participation by the public.

**BUDGET CALENDAR:** The schedule of key dates that a government follows during the preparation and adoption of a budget.

**BUDGET ORDINANCE:** A legal amendment to the current budget that serves to (a) better align estimates with actual revenue increases or decreases; (b) transfer funding from one department or capital project to another; or (c) otherwise increase or decrease funding to a department, capital project, or fund. The City Council adopts or declines all budget ordinances.

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**BUDGET REVIEW PROCESS:** The evaluation of a proposed budget through public hearing and comment, followed by reconsideration by the City Manager and City Council, prior to final approval.

**BUSINESS, PROFESSIONAL, AND OCCUPATIONAL LICENSE (BPOL):** Business, Professional, and Occupational License (BPOL) refers to the license tax levied upon those doing business or engaging in a profession, trade, or occupation in the City of Alexandria.

**CAPITAL BUDGET:** Monies appropriated for the first year of the Capital Improvement Program.

**CAPITAL GOODS:** Long-lived assets that have a useful life of two or more years, can be identified permanently as a separate item, and cost over \$10,000.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP):** A ten-year plan of approved capital expenditures for long term improvements to the City's public facilities and public works, as well as to Alexandria City Public School capital projects.

**CAPITAL PROJECT:** A public improvement project undertaken as part of the Capital Improvement Program.

**CAPITAL PROJECT EXPENDITURE:** An expenditure of more than \$10,000 that acquires, expands, repairs, or rehabilitates a physical asset with a useful life of at least three years. It does not include day-to-day maintenance expenditures such as custodial or janitorial services, painting, minor carpentry, electrical and plumbing repairs, or repair/routine replacement of fixtures or furniture.

**CAREER LADDER:** A program that provides upward mobility to employees who grow in skill and capability and demonstrate readiness for increased job responsibilities.

**CARRYOVER GRANT:** Carryover grant funding is the process by which obligated funds remaining at the end of the budget period may be carried forward to the next budget period to cover allowable costs in that budget period. The carryover of funds enables grantees to use unexpended prior year grant funds in the current budget period.

**CASH BASIS ACCOUNTING:** The method of accounting where revenues are recorded when received and expenditures are recorded when paid.

**CASH CAPITAL FUNDING:** Monies appropriated for capital projects from the current operating budget.

**CHARACTER:** A category of expenditures that broadly describe its type. Personnel Services, Non-Personnel Services, Capital Goods Outlay, Interfund Transfers and Debt Service are the main expenditure character types.

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:** The process by which the City interacts with its residents to gather feedback and/or inform them on a particular subject.

**COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT (CBA):** A collective bargaining agreement for local government is a legally binding contract between a union and an employer that outlines the terms of employment.

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG):** It is a general purpose federal grant primarily used by the City to facilitate the production and preservation of low and moderate income housing.

**COMPENSATION PHILOSOPHY:** A policy document approved by City Council on May 27, 1997 and revised on February 1, 2023, which establishes policies and practices regarding the compensation of City employees that are under the jurisdiction of the City Manager. The Compensation Philosophy (a) addresses the establishment of fixed pay steps, which supersede the minimum-maximum salary schedule formerly in effect; (b) defines the City's comparative labor market, which includes the counties of Prince William, Prince George's, Montgomery, Arlington and Fairfax; and (c) establishes policies regarding career ladder development, education and tuition assistance and employee incentive awards. For more information, please refer to the Compensation Philosophy, which is published in Appendices of the budget document.

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**COMPONENT UNIT:** The Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) defines component units as legally separate organizations for which the elected officials of the agency are financially accountable.

**CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS:** Elected officials who are authorized by the Constitution of Virginia to head City departments, such as the Sheriff, Commonwealth's Attorney, and the Clerk of the Circuit Court.

**CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (CPI):** A measure commonly used to indicate the monthly rate of inflation, as calculated by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. The CPI-U is an index of prices for urban areas; a separate index, the CPI-U-DC, is published for the Washington Metropolitan Area.

**CONTINGENT RESERVES:** An amount of money included within the total General Fund budget that is set aside to provide City Council with some degree of expenditure flexibility should unforeseen events occur during the fiscal year. Monies budgeted in the contingent reserves account can only be expended after specific action by City Council to transfer these monies to other accounts. A transfer of monies from the contingent reserves account does not result in an increase in the total General Fund budget.

**DASH:** Logo referring to the Alexandria Transit Company's (ATC) local bus service. ATC is a non-profit corporation wholly-owned by the City.

**DEBT SERVICE:** The amount of interest and principal that the City must pay on its debt.

**DELIVERED SERVICES:** Services provided to individuals, at their residence, by a City agency.

**DEPRECIATION:** It is a method of allocating the cost of a tangible asset over its useful life.

**DISTINGUISHED BUDGET PRESENTATION AWARD:** It is designed and awarded by the Government Finance Officers Association to encourage governments to prepare budget documents of the highest quality to meet the needs of decision-makers and residents. In order to receive this award, a governmental unit must publish a budget document that meets program criteria as a policy document, an operations guide, a financial plan and a communication device.

**DOCKET:** An agenda of business matters for discussion and consideration by City Council at its various meetings; or, in the context of court proceedings, a list of legal cases to be tried or that register legal actions, such as judgments and liens.

**ENCUMBRANCE:** An accounting reservation of funds representing a legal commitment to pay for future goods and services.

**ENTERPRISE FUND:** A fund that allows for separate accountability of certain operations within the City of Alexandria, which are financed similar to private businesses.

**EXPENDITURE:** Actual outlay of monies for goods and services.

**EXPENSES:** Expenditures and other obligations (e.g., encumbrances) for goods and services.

**FISCAL YEAR (FY):** A twelve-month financial operating period. The City's fiscal year begins on July 1 and ends on June 30 of the following year. FY 2026 begins on July 1, 2025 and ends on June 30, 2026.

**FRINGE BENEFITS:** Job-related benefits, such as pension, paid vacation and holidays, and insurance, which are included in an employee's compensation package.

**FULL ACCRUAL BASIS ACCOUNTING:** A method of accounting for revenues and expenses when earned or incurred (in lieu of when cash is received or spent). Accrual Basis of Accounting can be done on a Full or Modified Basis. All funds within the City (General Fund, Special Revenue, Capital Projects and agency funds) use the Modified Accrual method of accounting.



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**FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE):** A measure for calculating personnel staffing, computed by equating a regularly scheduled 40 hour per week position at 2,080 hours of work per year with one full-time equivalent position. Police, Fire and Sheriff equate a different number of total hours, which varies by department.

**FUND:** A separate self-balancing accounting unit with its own specific revenues and expenditures, assets, and liabilities. Each fund in the City's accounting structure has been established to segregate a particular set of fiscal activities. Separate funds that have been established by the City include the General Fund, which is used to account for general operating expenditures; Special Revenue Funds, used to account for resources restricted to expenditures for specified current operating purposes; Enterprise Funds, used to account for operations financed in a manner similar to private business enterprises, where the intent is that the costs of providing goods or services to the general public on a continuing basis be financed or recovered primarily through user charges; and the Internal Services, used to account for depreciation charges against departments and associated expenditures to replace equipment.

**FUND BALANCE:** In the context of the City's budget discussions, Fund Balance generally refers to the accumulated total of all prior years' actual General Fund revenues in excess of expenditures (or "surplus") that are available for appropriation by City Council and that have not been designated for other uses. Maintaining a prudent level of undesignated General Fund balance is critical to ensuring that the City is able to cope with financial emergencies and fluctuations in revenue cycles. General Fund balance also provides working capital during temporary periods when expenditures exceed revenues. Read more about the fund balance requirements as part of the Debt Ratio Policies in the *Legislative References* section of this document.

**GENERAL FUND:** The General Fund is the primary operating fund of the City. This fund is used to account for all financial transactions and resources that are not required to be accounted for in another fund.

**GENERALLY ACCEPTED ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES (GAAP):** They are a collection of commonly followed accounting rules and standards for financial reporting.

**GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION (GFOA):** It is a professional association of state, provincial, and local government finance officers in the United States and Canada that aims to enhance and promote the professional management of governments for the public benefit.

**GOVERNMENTAL ACCOUNTING STANDARDS BOARD (GASB):** It is the ultimate authoritative accounting and financial reporting standards-setting body for state and local governments.

**GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS:** They are financial resources that are used in funding government projects and expenditures and classified into five fund types: general, special revenue, capital projects, debt service, and permanent funds.

**GRANTS:** A transfer of State or Federal monies to the City, usually for specific programs or activities.

**INDICATOR:** Performance measures used to assess the level of achievement by the organization.

**INTERFUND TRANSFER:** A transfer of resources between funds, in most cases from the general fund to any of the other non-enterprise funds. Transfers between funds are budgeted twice—once in the originating fund and once in the receiving fund. In order to show the complete appropriation for each fund without overstating actual spending, total revenues and expenditures are displayed with and without inter-fund transfers included.

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUE:** Revenue from other governments, such as the State and Federal government, in the form of grants, entitlements, shared revenue, or payments in lieu of taxes.

**INTERNAL SERVICES FUND:** A self-replenishing fund that is used to account for equipment depreciation charges against user departments and associated expenditures to replace equipment (such as vehicles and computers).

**LIABILITY INSURANCE:** Protection against risk of financial loss due to a civil wrong that results in property damage or bodily injury.

# Glossary



**MAJOR FUND:** The Government Accounting Standards Board defines Major Funds as funds whose revenues, expenditures/expenses, assets, or liabilities (excluding extraordinary items) are at least 10 percent of corresponding totals for all governmental or enterprise funds and at least 5 percent of the aggregate amount for all governmental and enterprise funds.

**MANAGER'S MESSAGE:** Written explanation of the budget and the City's financial plan and priorities, as presented by the City Manager to City Council.

**MARKET RATE ADJUSTMENT:** An increase in salaries to offset the adverse effect of inflation on compensation.

**MODIFIED ACCRUAL ACCOUNTING:** A basis of accounting in which revenues are recognized in the period they become measurable and available. With respect to real property, personal property, and other local taxes, the term "available" is limited to collection within 45 days of the fiscal year-end. Levies made prior to the fiscal year-end that are not available are deferred. Interest income is recorded as earned. Federal and State reimbursement-type grants are recorded as revenue when related eligible expenditures are incurred. Expenditures, other than accrued interest on long-term debt, are recorded when the fund liability is incurred.

**NON-PASS THROUGH MONIES:** Monies from sources outside the City that are paid directly to an agency or vendor and are not reflected in the City's financial records.

**NON-PERSONNEL SERVICES:** Expenditures relating to the cost of purchasing specific goods or services required for the operation of City agencies and departments.

**NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (NVTA):** Northern Virginia Transportation Authority is the regional authority created by the Commonwealth of Virginia to provide regional transportation planning.

**NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (NVTC):** Serves as a regional forum for discussion and analysis of transit issues that are critically important to our economy and quality of life. NVTC is charged with the funding and stewardship of WMATA and the Virginia Railway Express (VRE), which it co-owns. Because Northern Virginia is also home to six bus systems, NVTC works across jurisdictional boundaries to coordinate transit service.

**OPERATING EXPENDITURE:** Expenses that the City incurs through its normal business operations and includes the cost of contractual services, supplies, materials, and equipment. Also referred to as "Non-Personnel Expenses."

**ORDINANCE:** A statute or law that sets out general laws. Ordinances require public hearings before they may be adopted.

**OVERHIRES:** Positions authorized by the City Manager to be filled as a result of (a) the availability of special revenue sources for time-limited special projects or activities; (b) needs arising that require an immediate, temporary response, sometimes prior to the next budget cycle; and (c) positions needed to maintain a necessary level of actual, on-board on-duty staff due to expected turnover (such as sworn police or fire suppression staff).

**PART-TIME POSITION:** A position regularly scheduled to work no more than 39 hours per week. Part-time positions scheduled regularly to work at least 10 hours per week receive limited benefits.

**PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX:** A City tax levied on motor vehicles and boats based on published listings of values, and on machinery and tools based on a percentage of the item's original cost.

**PERSONNEL SERVICES:** Expenditures relating directly to the costs of compensating City employees, including both wages and fringe benefits.

**PROGRAM:** An organized set of department functions directed towards a common purpose.

# Glossary



**PROPRIETARY FUNDS:** These funds are used to account for activities that receive significant support from fees and charges, such as: Stormwater Utility Fund, Sewer Fund, and Solid Waste Fund.

**PURCHASED SERVICES:** Services that are provided to an individual or group of individuals by an enterprise that is under contract with the City.

**REAL ESTATE TAX:** It refers to tax levied by the City Council on real property in the City of Alexandria where real property is defined as land and improvements buildings.

**RECLASSIFICATION:** An administrative review process by which a City position is re-evaluated to determine if the position has been appropriately classified under the City's personnel classification system.

**RESIDENTIAL REFUSE FEE:** Residential customers are charged a Solid Waste User Fee on the residential tax bill on a bi-yearly basis for the City provided collection of trash, recycling, and yard waste once a week on a designated collection day.

**RESOLUTION:** A special or temporary order of a legislative body requiring less legal formality than an ordinance.

**REVENUES:** Monies received or collected by the City through taxation, grants, fees, fines, charges, and investments.

**SPECIAL REVENUE FUND:** A fund that accounts for resources restricted to expenditures for specified purposes (for example, state and federal grants, residential refuse, etc).

**SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION:** An increase to a department's budget approved by the City Council during the course of the fiscal year, when the need for funds is too urgent to be postponed until the next regular budget cycle.

**TAX BASE:** All forms of property wealth under the City's jurisdiction that are taxable.

**UNFUNDED POSITIONS:** Positions that departments have elected to hold vacant in order to achieve personnel expenditure savings beyond the normal expected turnover savings. These positions are not funded in the budget or reflected in the departments' FTE counts, however they remain eligible for departments to request restored funding at some future date.

**VACANCY SAVINGS:** The percentage and amount by which a department's personnel services budget is reduced in anticipation of a reduction in expenditures attributable to employee turnover.

**VIRGINIA JUVENILE COMMUNITY CRIME CONTROL ACT (VJCCCA):** The General Assembly enacted the VJCCCA in 1995 and appropriated additional funding so that all localities could implement programs and services to meet the needs of juveniles involved in the juvenile justice system.

**WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY (WMATA):** It is the regional agency that operates the METRO bus and subway systems.

# Acronym Table



ACPS: Alexandria City Public Schools	CPI: Consumer Price Index
ACFR: Annual Comprehensive Financial Report	CPS: Children Protective Services
ACJS: Alexandria Criminal Justice Services	CSB: Community Service Board
ACPS: Alexandria City Public Schools	CSO: Combined Sewer Overflows
ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act	CSU: Court Service Unit
ADC: Adult Detention Center	CY: Calendar Year
AEDP: Alexandria Economic Development Partnership	DBHDS: Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
AHD: Alexandria Health Department	DD: Developmental Disabilities
AJIS: Alexandria Justice Information System	DECC: Department of Emergency and Customer Communications
AMI: Area Median Income	DCHS: Department of Community and Human Services
ANSHI: Alexandria Neighborhood Health Services, Inc	DGS: Department of General Services
APA: Auditor of Public Accounts	DPI: Department of Project Implementation
APD: Alexandria Police Department	DWP: Department Work Plan
ARPA: American Rescue Plan Act	EEOC: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
DASH (ATC): Alexandria Transit Company	EHD: Enhanced Hazardous Duty
BCC: Board, Committee, and Commission	EHIP: Employee Homeownership Incentive Program
BET: Budget Equity Tool	EMPG: Emergency Management Performance Grant
BFAAC: Budget & Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee	EMS: Emergency Medical Services
BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color	EOY: End-of-year
BPOL: Business, Professional, and Occupational License	EV: Electric Vehicle
BWC: Body-Worn Camera	FEPA: Fair Employment Practices Agencies
CALEA: Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies	FICA: Federal Insurance Contributions Act
CBA: Collective Bargaining Agreement	FTE: Full-time Equivalent
CCCA: Clerk of Circuit Court of Alexandria	FY: Fiscal Year
CCF: Centum (hundred) Cubic Feet	GAAP: Generally Accepted Accounting Principles
CCTV: Closed Circuit Television	GASB: The Governmental Accounting Standards Board
CDBG: Community Development Block Grant	GFOA: Government Finance Officers Association
CFMP: Capital Facilities Maintenance Program	GIS: Geographic Information System
Chg: Change	HB: House Bill
CIG: Community Impact Grant	HOME: HOME Investment Partnerships Program
CIP: Capital Improvement Program	HR: Human Resources
COPS: Community Oriented Police	HUD: Housing and Urban Development
COTS: Commercial-off-the-shelf	HVAC: Heating Ventilation AND Air Conditioning
COVID-19: Coronavirus Disease 2019	

# Acronym Table



IPE: Intervention, Prevention Education	P&Z: Planning and Zoning
IT: Information Technology	ROW: Right-of-Way
ITS: Information Technology Services	RPCA: Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities
JAG: Justice Assistance Grant	RRI: Residential Rental Inspection
kWh: Kilowatt Hour	SA: Substance Abuse
LGBTQ+: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer	SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
LOD: Line of Duty	STI: Sexually Transmitted Infections
LTD: Long-Term Disability	SWM: Stormwater Maintenance
MH: Mental Health	SYEP: Summer Youth Employment Program
MS4: Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System	TANF: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
MWCoG: Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments	T&ES: Transportation & Environmental Services
NCIC: National Crime Information Center	TIP: Transportation Improvement Program
N/A: Not Available, Not Applicable	UASI : Urban Areas Security Initiative
NIMS: National Incident Management System	USDA: The United States Department of Agriculture
NOVA: Northern Virginia	VA: Virginia
NPCD: Neighborhood Planning and Community Development	VCIN: Virginia Criminal Information Network
NVCC: Northern Virginia Community College	VDA: Virginia Department of Aging
NVCJA: Northern Virginia Criminal Justice Training Academy	VDH: Virginia Department of Health
NVJDC: Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center	VJCCA: Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control Act
NVRPA: Northern Virginia Regional Parks Authority	VDEM: Virginia Department of Emergency Management
NVTA: Northern Virginia Transportation Authority	VDOT: Virginia Department of Transportation
NVTC: Northern Virginia Transportation Commission	VDSS: Virginia Department of Social Services
OCA: Office of the Commonwealth Attorney	VHSP: The Virginia Homeless Solutions Program
OCCE: Office of Communication & Community Engagement	VIEW: The Virginia Initiative for Education and Work
OMB: Office of Management and Budget	VLDP: Virginia Local Disability Program
OHA: Office of Historic Alexandria	VOIP: Voice Over Internet Protocol
OPA: Office of Performance Analytics	VPI: Virginia Pre-School Initiative
OPEB: Other Postemployment Benefits	VRE: Virginia Railway Express
OSTP: Out of School Time Program	VRRP: Virginia's Refugee Resettlement Program
OT: Overtime	VRS: Virginia Retirement System
PIO: Public Information Officer	VSMP: Virginia Stormwater Management Program
PCI: Pavement Conditions Index	WIC: Women, Infants, and Children
PREA: Prison Rape Elimination Act	WMATA: Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
PPTRA: Personal Property Tax Relief Act	
PWS: Public Works Services	