



STEVEN M. FULOP
MAYOR OF JERSEY CITY

CITY OF JERSEY CITY
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY HALL | 280 GROVE STREET | JERSEY CITY, NJ 07302
P: 201 547 5500 | F: 201 547 5442



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Contact: Kimberly Scalcione

Press Secretary

KScalcione@jcnj.org

***** PRESS RELEASE *****

Mayor Fulop Introduces \$620M Municipal Budget for 2021 Including Tax Reduction for Residents

Creating a Fairer Budget; Mayor Fulop Follows Through on Commitment to Offset Increasing Water Rates with Reduced Municipal Taxes

JERSEY CITY - **Mayor Steven M. Fulop** introduced today the \$620 million CY 2021 municipal budget, which will *cut taxes for Jersey City residents* by an average reduction of \$967 a year for every household. The City Council will vote to introduce the 2021 budget at the next Council meeting scheduled for June 16.

Despite the crippling financial implications municipalities nationwide are facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Fulop Administration’s aggressive efforts have effectively led the City to overcome the biggest budget instability Jersey City has faced in its history. While local governments around the state are turning to tax increases to close budget gaps, the City’s cost-effective initiatives will avoid further burdening taxpayers while enhancing critical programming and resources for residents.

“Since day one of this pandemic, our commitment to helping our already overburdened residents has been the driving force behind our efforts to overcome the historic financial deficits and provide relief to taxpayers,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “This budget also commits more resources to expand recreational programs for our youth, affordable housing, mental health and public health services, infrastructure improvements, among other critical services our residents rely on.”

As many people are facing increased late payments and delinquencies, the Fulop Administration’s tax reduction creates stabilization for Jersey City taxpayers to offset various other financial burdens imposed during these unprecedented circumstances. This includes the JCMUA solid waste services, an average increase of \$25 a month per household, implemented this year to create more fairness so that all entities citywide pay their fair share, just as every other resident has been doing for years.

The 2021 budget includes \$69 million in federal aid through the American Rescue Plan, which will fund continued testing and vaccine operations, relieve lost revenues, and other public health initiatives. The federal funding will allow the City to recoup costs incurred throughout the pandemic and provide revenue relief from

some of the more severely impacted lost revenues, including lost hotel taxes, suspended parking fees and taxes, and slowdown in construction permitting.

Other Highlights of the 2021 Municipal Budget

- Nearly \$5 million has been budgeted to fully fund the Department of Recreation and Youth Development and ensure all recreational programs are fully reinstated, with all safety protocols in place.

- A new JCPD De-escalation Training Facility will also be funded under the proposed budget to provide Jersey City Police Officers with the necessary training to maintain public safety, keeping the community safe while also ensuring police officers are able to maintain their own safety when responding to calls for service.

- The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) budget will increase to \$7.5 million to support the historic increases in demand for public and mental health services outside of vaccinations and testing. HHS has been instrumental throughout this entire pandemic, leading the charge for all public health services, including the implementation and operation of various testing and vaccine sites spanning the citywide, as well as meeting a 300% increase in demand for Meals on Wheels services. This funding will help to meet the community's needs through HHS with significantly expanded resources that Jersey City residents are relying on more than ever before.

- The \$620 million budget also includes \$4.9 million towards capital improvement projects to strengthen Jersey City's infrastructure with investments that will benefit the community for generations to come. These projects include:

- Pathside Building Renovations
- De-escalation Training Facility
- St. Lucy's Homeless drop-in center
- Skyway Park
- New Police District Buildings
- Washington Ave Creative Center
- Citywide Engineering projects such as traffic signals, speed humps, bike lanes, etc.

“For other municipalities, a budget that expands city resources, addresses devastating budget gaps, and still reduces taxes for residents by double-digits is unheard of. For Jersey City, it's the latest example of how the Mayor and administration remain at the forefront of the issues that affect our community the most,” said **Council President Joyce Watterman**.

Mayor Fulop has also worked to provide direct assistance to residents and businesses owners throughout the pandemic. Earlier this year, over \$2.5 million in rent relief and utility assistance was distributed to over 1,600 low-income households throughout Jersey City, with 95-percent of the grant money used to provide direct aid to residents in The Heights and south west sections of the City. Nearly 600 Jersey City small business owners were also awarded upwards of \$20,000 each when Mayor Fulop allocated the \$9 million dollars in CARES Act funding to help struggling businesses of 25 employees or less.

Mayor Fulop's efforts to strengthen Jersey City's financial policies has recently been credited by Moody's Investors Service. Moody's cites his leadership on financial management policies and fiscal goals with an added focus on greater transparency and accountability for putting the City's finances on a positive trajectory.

All media inquiries should be directed to Kimberly Scalcione at KScalcione@jcnj.org.