

OKC 2026 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM



Priorities

1 Los Angeles 2028 Olympic events in Oklahoma City: Security and transportation support

Oklahoma City is preparing for Olympic Canoe/Kayak and Softball Games in July 2028. There will be 16 days of competition, and 21 medals awarded in OKC. The sites will be at two venues: Riversport, south of Bricktown and Devon Park at USA Softball in the Adventure District. There will be infrastructure and security needs in these areas to ensure a successful event on the world stage.

2 Understanding PFAS impact and municipal liability protection

An issue, recently brought to the forefront, is PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) contamination in food, soil, and water throughout the country. PFAS have been used in industry and consumer products since the 1940s, but there is now a concern that these chemicals break down very slowly and can build up in people, animals, and the environment. Scientific research suggests that exposure to certain PFAS may lead to adverse health outcomes, but research is ongoing.

It makes sense to learn more about these chemicals and limit their use, but local governmental entities need to be protected from liability for remediation.

3 Advocate for investment in transportation and transit

The federal legislature should continue to pass appropriations bills that fully fund the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Capital Improvement Grant (CIG) program at levels authorized in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, as well as continue funding for the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) program.

The City actively competes for grants authorized through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) to complement local investments in transit. Support from Oklahoma's congressional delegation for these competitive grant applications is critical to the City's success.

Mayor & Council

David Holt, Mayor
Craig Freeman, City Manager
Bradley Carter, Ward 1
James Cooper, Ward 2
Katrina Avers, Ward 3
Todd Stone, Ward 4
Matt Hinkle, Ward 5
JoBeth Hamon, Ward 6
Camal Pennington, Ward 7
Mark Stonecipher, Ward 8

Contact Info

Jane Abraham
City Manager's Office
jane.abraham@okc.gov
405.297.2345

The long-established FTA Capital Improvement Grant (CIG) program provides competitive grants to New Starts (transit programs with \$100 million or more in federal funds), Small Starts (transit programs with less than \$100 million in federal funds) and Core Capacity projects (funding for existing at capacity fixed guideways). Continued funding and long-term authorization of the CIG programs are essential to advancing high-capacity transit projects nationwide.

The City of OKC, in partnership with Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority (COTPA) is currently seeking \$34,564,013 in CIG funding, paired with a 64% local match totaling \$61 million, to design and construct a 17-mile Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor. This corridor will deliver fast, frequent, and reliable service connecting residents, workers, students, and visitors in northeast and south OKC.

The City also supports continued funding for the BUILD program (replacement to TIGER), which has delivered meaningful transportation improvements to OKC. Past BUILD funding supported the development of the *RAPID* NW, which now serves an average of 40,000 riders per month.

As OKC plans for future growth, preserving and strengthening these programs—particularly Small Starts and BUILD, will be critical to financing future investments, including Bus Rapid Transit (*RAPID*), OKC Streetcar extensions, and regional commuter rail.

4 Advocate for affordable housing, including the ROAD to Housing Act

The Renewing Opportunity in the American Dream (ROAD) to Housing Act of 2025 is a bipartisan bill developed in the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs. The bill was introduced by Committee Chair Tim Scott (R-SC) and Ranking Member Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) in the summer of 2025.

It passed out of committee 24-0 and was passed by the full Senate on October 9th. It was included in the Senate version of the FY26 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) in December, but not in the House version.

The bill contains a wide range of strategies to address the nation's housing affordability crisis. The bill text incorporates part of at least 27 previously introduced pieces of legislation, 23 of which were introduced with bipartisan sponsors. The ROAD to Housing Act includes a wide range of policy approaches to address housing affordability, including provisions to boost supply, modernize financing options, reduce regulatory barriers, promote economic mobility, and enhance program oversight and coordination.

5 Sustain and enhance airport transportation infrastructure in OKC

OKC Will Rogers International Airport (OKC Airport) is a vital resource to OKC and the region. It's one of the largest small-hub commercial hub airports in the nation. The airport serves over 4.4 million passengers annually and averages 69 daily departures to 24 non-stop destinations. It has nearly 70 businesses that employ more than 12,000 workers. Air travel continues to increase and the recent expansion has positioned the OKC airport to grow national and international air travel.

Commercial airports require significant on-going capital investment to maintain and update the facility for passengers and airline operations.

It's important for the City to emphasize the need for continued funding for federal grants that support the airports' infrastructure and air traffic control towers. Also critical to OKC are the FAA operations at the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center (MMAC) and Transportation Security Administration (TSA) operations.

6 Continued funding for Economic Development and Local Grant Programs

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding

The federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program funding is a critical program for cities. We appreciate continued Congressional support for this program that supports the supply and affordability of housing for the City's residents and other important initiatives. For FY 25, OKC received an allocation of \$4.9 million.

The CDBG program is the primary Federal funding means used by the City to provide broad based housing rehabilitation services for low and moderate-income households and to provide public facilities and services in low-income areas. The CDBG and the Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program provided flexible sources of business funding that created low and moderate-income jobs.

Formula-based CDBG funding enables the City to take a long-term approach to addressing housing, community and economic development needs. Without consistent and reliable access to CDBG funding, the City would have missed out on notable economic developments like Dell, Inc.'s creation of over 1,500 jobs, and renovating historic buildings now home to the Skirvin Hotel (over 250 jobs), 21C Hotel (138 jobs) and most recently the First National Center (220 jobs). This funding helped to accomplish both job creation and the rescue of iconic historic buildings within the community.

The CDBG program also provides operating funds to the City's Urban Renewal Authority. The CDBG program, in partnership with HUD, has continued to address blighted areas within the community like, the Oklahoma Health Center, Central Business District, the John F. Kennedy district, and most recently the NE Renaissance Area. Recent efforts include buying dilapidated properties for demolition and redevelopment, developing mixed-income housing within the areas, and providing infrastructure improvements.

HOME Investment Partnerships Program

Administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Congress supports the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) program and recently increased its funding. The FY25 allocation to the City was \$2.6 M.

The HOME program is the City's primary federal funding mechanism for whole housing rehabilitation services in low -and moderate- income households, affordable rental and for sale housing construction, and down payment and closing cost assistance to people with low income. It also provided funding for senior and assisted living housing.

HOME is used to rehabilitate about 20 housing units under the City's Whole House Rehabilitation Program and provide down payment assistance to 40 households every year. HOME funds are also used to support construction of affordable apartments, and rehabilitation of existing units for those with low/moderate incomes. HOME also funds local non-profit Community Housing Development Organizations who build and rehabilitate affordable homes.

Support/Monitor

1 Support for FAA Operations in OKC

The FAA's Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center (MMAC) is Will Rogers World Airport's largest tenant. MMAC provides vital services and support missions for the FAA and the U.S. Department of Transportation. MMAC provides a significant number of high-paying jobs and brings hundreds of visitors for training.

The nearly 6,000 employees of the MMAC oversee the safety of U.S. private, corporate and commercial aviation. MMAC provides essential training in electronics, air traffic control, inspection and management, accounting and finance for the Department of Transportation. It also provides logistics, research, technical training and support for the National Airspace System (NAS), and regulates and certifies safety-related positions and equipment. The numerous and varied NAS support functions, at the MMAC distinguish it as the largest single site of NAS equipment within the FAA, underscoring its critical role.

2 Support for Tinker Air Force Base

OKC has supported Tinker AFB since its inception in 1941, when the City provided 1,440 acres of land. OKC has a good working relationship with Tinker, and with over 27,000 employees, the base is regionally important.

The City partnered with the Air Force and Oklahoma County to purchase 158 acres of land on the southwest side of the base to house a depot maintenance facility for the Air Force's next-generation aerial refueling aircraft, the KC-46A Pegasus. Tinker leaders believe supporting this will create the bedrock for the base for the next 50 years.

The land was formerly owned by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Co., where it operated a rail yard that served the former General Motors manufacturing facility.

Acquisition of this property wouldn't have been possible without partnership between all levels of government.

Recently, Tinker closed Douglas Blvd. from SE 44th to SE 74th to expand the footprint of the base to allow for more mission capacity. To accommodate this closing, the City is working to relocate a 60" water transmission line and provide infrastructure for increased traffic that will be diverted to Post Road. This project will include multiple partners to fund and construct this expansion.

3 Support for Amtrak and Passenger Rail Service

Passenger rail service has been in place from OKC to Fort Worth via the Amtrak Heartland Flyer since 1999. It had previously been absent from Oklahoma for 20 years.

The Heartland Flyer is state-sponsored by Oklahoma and Texas. Recently, funding for the service has come under fire as the state has been facing difficult budget cycles. This important passenger rail link between OKC and the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex is the only passenger rail service in Oklahoma. It was a key component in the City's efforts to secure a federal transportation TIGER grant to support the renovation of the Santa Fe Depot multimodal transportation hub.

The Heartland Flyer serves Oklahoma City, Norman, Purcell and Pauls Valley, then Gainesville and Fort Worth in Texas. Growing ridership is now about 81,000 annual passengers. Funding was halted by the Texas legislature in 2025, and the North Central Texas Council of Governments came through to provide funding for the current year.

Proposals to expand service to Kansas and Tulsa are part of the overall passenger rail conversation. There is funding specifically for Amtrak expansion included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the City has partnered with several communities in Oklahoma and Kansas to promote an extension of the Heartland Flyer.

Passenger and commuter rail service is also part of the Association of Central Oklahoma Government's (ACOG) regional long-range transportation plan. It's important to keep existing service and consider expansion.

4 Support for long-term reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

Oklahoma City is one of about 22,493 communities in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and has done so since 1972. Nationally, there are around 5 million policyholders with more than \$1.3 trillion in coverage through the NFIP. The NFIP requires property owners to buy flood insurance if in a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) designated high-risk for flooding (a 100-year floodplain, or area with an estimated 1% or greater risk of yearly flooding).

About 94 square miles of OKC (15% of the City) are designated as a floodplain or floodway. From 1977 to early 2020, OKC properties have filed 562 NFIP claims which paid out \$12.6 million (no inflation adjustment), an average of \$22,514 per claim.

From September 30, 2017 to March 2021, Congress passed 16 short-term extensions for the NFIP, some for as little as two weeks to avoid funding lapses. Lapses like the four from 2008 and 2012 prevent borrowers from getting flood insurance to close, renew, or increase loans secured by property within a floodplain. FEMA cites an estimate by the National Association of Realtors that a lapse might impact about 40,000 home sale closings per month. The current reauthorization has expired. It makes sense to provide a long-term funding authorization for this important program

5 Support legislation and funding to increase access to mental health services, including school-based mental health services

The Bi Partisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA), provided funding to help address mental health issues by doubling the number of school-based mental health professionals and tackling the nation's mental health crisis. The first allocation for funding went out in 2022, and more is expected in the coming years. All told, \$1 billion in BSCA funds will be awarded through the Department of Education. OKC supports this effort and other initiatives to expand access to mental health services.

6 Support for the First Americans Museum (FAM) and connecting infrastructure

The City of OKC has been a supporter of the First Americans Museum (FAM) since implementation. When OKC was selected for the site of what was originally called the American Indian Cultural Center, OKC provided the 298-acre site at no cost, and funding for the project was to come from state, federal and tribal partners.

The museum and surrounding development are a major tourist destination for our city and state. This location is along the Oklahoma River, close to the crossroads of I-40 and I-35. It needs investment in infrastructure and connectivity, which will bring people in and connect the area to OKC neighborhoods.

7 Support for National Weather Service operations

National Weather Service operations in the metropolitan area are significant to Oklahoma and nationally. Because of the risks that go along with severe weather conditions, this is an important public safety function of government that must be taken seriously.

8 Monitor enforcement and definitions of compliance with the Clean Air Act and EPA standards

The Clean Air Act reduced compliance standards for ground-level ozone from .075 parts per billion (ppb) to .070 ppb. The City, ACOG and state agencies monitor the metro's compliance, which has remained consistent, though the City partnered with ACOG, the OKC Chamber and other entities to fund a study to learn the economic impact of not complying.

The City's approach to promote clean air has included a multi-tier approach. In 2020, the City adopted adaptokc, which is Oklahoma City's first sustainability plan and an implementation element of the City's Comprehensive Plan (planokc).

Over many years, the City has invested in public transportation, bicycle facilities and alternative fuel fleet vehicles. These investments will take time, but as the City's population continues to grow, compliance will not be possible without alternative transportation options. The City continues to monitor the issue and collaborate with ACOG and our regional partners to promote clean air activities.

9 Support for the Historic Preservation Fund and its long-term reauthorization

The Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) provides financial support for many historic preservation programs and grants, including our annual Certified Local Government grant. This grant provides funding for hosting workshops, conducting surveys, and completing National Register nominations.

HPF also provides funding for the State Historic Preservation Offices, which supports their ability to review things like historic tax credit projects, which has been a critical tool for redevelopment and preservation in OKC. The authorization expired in 2023 and has not been reauthorized, putting this funding at risk.

10 Ensure tax-free status of municipal bonds

As federal budget challenges continue, several concepts will either raise revenue or cut expenditures, like the elimination of local tax-exempt status for bonds.

OKC and its trusts use bonds to fund capital projects. If local bonds lose federal tax-exempt status, the cost to the City in lost opportunities to fund capital projects would be about \$9 million and about \$13 million for the state.

11 Monitor issues that affect water and wastewater

One of the primary functions of local government is to provide drinking water and wastewater services to residents. Currently, the Oklahoma City Water Utility provides drinking water for 1.4 million people in central Oklahoma. It's important to maintain the quality and quantity of drinking water for a significant percentage of Oklahomans.

12 Monitor proposals that could affect remote sales tax collections

For decades, cities and states worked together to advocate for the collection of sales tax on remote sales. This was finally resolved with the Wayfair vs. South Dakota supreme court decision in 2018. Oklahoma cities and towns rely on sales tax collections as their primary source of revenue. Remote sales tax collections have been critical to maintaining services for our residents.

