



Statement of Joseph R. DiPietro, Acting Architect

Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request, Architect of the Capitol

Legislative Branch Subcommittee | Senate Committee on Appropriations
May 15, 2024

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Fischer, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 budget request for the Architect of the Capitol (AOC). We are committed to working closely with you and your staff to ensure the AOC meets the needs and expectations of the U.S. Senate in service to the American people.

On behalf of myself and the AOC leadership team, allow me to express our deep gratitude to the 2,400 hardworking, devoted AOC employees who tirelessly carry out their duties each day to support the functions of Congress, the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress (Library), and the many other AOC-managed facilities.

I joined the AOC in 2023 as the Chief of Operations. This office oversees the lifecycle operations and maintenance of the Capitol campus's buildings, grounds, gardens and infrastructure. In this role, I establish policies, standardize procedures, and coordinate operations and facility management functions across the AOC's operational jurisdictions.

As you know, I was asked to take the mantle of agency leadership as the Acting Architect effective February 9, 2024. Leading our team is both an honor and great responsibility which I take with dedication and care. One of my initial goals is to work closely with AOC staff to continue to foster trust and confidence in AOC leadership and emphasize our appreciation for their exceptional work. I am committed to transparent and timely communication to ensure accountability and coordination with this Subcommittee, Congress and AOC-internal entities.

I. Overview

The AOC plays a vital role in supporting the day-to-day operations of Congress, the Supreme Court and the Library. Our staff works tirelessly to preserve and maintain over 18.4 million square feet of facilities, 570 acres of grounds, and thousands of works of art. This 24 hour a day, seven day a week operation works in concert to preserve our historic buildings and improve aging infrastructure.

The FY 2025 budget request of \$1.03 billion reflects an 8.8 percent increase from the FY 2024 enacted funding. It builds upon the accomplishments of the previous fiscal year by addressing critical and urgent priorities such as physical security, life safety and critical infrastructure needs of the Capitol campus. Furthermore, this budget request includes funding to increase staffing levels necessary to oversee planning, acquisition and project management in order to deliver quality services to Congress. The FY 2025 budget submission acknowledges the fiscal challenges facing our nation and the Committee.

Prioritizing Physical Security & Life Safety

Ensuring physical security and life safety is paramount.

With your support, the AOC has made significant strides in enhancing security measures across the campus. Projects identified after the completion of the physical security assessment in 2022 are prioritized to implement consistent security standards campuswide. The FY 2025 budget request aligns with our coordinated approach to address security projects, consisting of significant construction or system replacement requirements to support the missions of the United States Capitol Police and House and Senate Sergeants at Arms.

The life safety of our workforce and visitors is also a critical focus. Across the agency, we dedicate time and attention to safety training, processes, procedures and operations. This budget request recognizes these essential measures, with projects and requests that focus on supporting our concentrated effort to avoid hazards, risks and interruptions.

II. Supporting the Senate Community

The AOC's FY 2025 budget request highlights significant priorities for the Senate office buildings and Senate operations. Developed in close collaboration with this Subcommittee and the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, the FY 2025 budget request ensures that the critical needs for the Senate office buildings and operations are met.

The Daniel Webster Page Residence project will repair the building's infrastructure deficiencies, correct non-accessible conditions, and modernize the facility to ensure safety and meet the needs of the Senate Page Program. The FY 2025 budget request for phase two of this project is critical to support this historic building's interior and exterior restoration needs. In phase two the AOC plans to upgrade the interior spaces, modernize the elevator and mechanical systems, address interior non-compliant accessibility conditions, improve the site landscape and hardscape, repair the roofing system, remove and rebuild the foundation and footings at lightwells and the east stair, implement a stormwater management system, and replace the electrical distribution panel. These improvements will provide an accessible and reliable building with improved comfort, convenience and functionality that fits within the appropriate aesthetic of a residential-scale dormitory and school located within a historic building.

Two additional priorities in the FY 2025 budget request are the Senate Committee Hearing Room Upgrades and Elevator Refurbishment Programs. This funding request covers the second year of a comprehensive renewal of the Senate's 32 hearing rooms and related infrastructure over a projected 15-20-year period. The Senate Elevator Refurbishment Program budget request covers one year of a multi-year program to refurbish and modernize 46 elevators and associated elevator machine rooms in the Senate buildings. Senate elevators require full refurbishment every 15-20 years. The work will be scheduled to refurbish one elevator per bank at a time, which will minimize disruption to the Senate community. The budget request will provide funding to refurbish six elevators a year at an estimated cost of \$500,000 for each elevator.

III. Modern Management of Aging Infrastructure

Aging facilities and infrastructure pose ongoing challenges exacerbated by increasing material costs and competition for skilled laborers. The AOC's funding request addresses essential issues like hearing room modernization, mechanical system replacements, and fire alarm and sprinkler replacement. The AOC is committed to a long-term approach to facilities management — focused on maintaining and preserving the Capitol campus while also modernizing these facilities. The AOC is also developing an Enterprise Asset Management system to provide a structured approach for developing, coordinating and controlling asset-related activities across their life cycle. An established asset management system will provide additional detail to improve data-driven fiscal decisions and prioritize projects. This approach will also help address backlog and deferred maintenance needs.

IV. Recognizing Employee Accomplishments & Meeting Mission Requirements

The AOC remains focused on improving employee development and morale. Our Human Capital Strategy revolves around three pillars: talent acquisition, talent development, and engagement and retention of employees.

The AOC's talent acquisition goal is to attract, recruit and onboard a highly skilled and diverse workforce to meet the agency's current and future mission needs. Once on our team, we work to develop and retain these talented employees. Notably, our staff accomplished more than 40,000 individual staff and career development trainings in FY 2023 and have completed 22,000 trainings year-to-date in FY 2024. The AOC is dedicated to providing training and resources for our employees to excel in their roles and support seamless operations.

V. Conclusion

On behalf of the hardworking public servants at the AOC, I extend our gratitude to this Subcommittee for your ongoing support. Your dedication and partnership in service to the American people is integral to our daily operations and mission accomplishment. Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Fischer, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for your time and support in consideration of the AOC's FY 2025 budget request.