

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**



**FY 2026 – FY 2027 Budget Oversight Hearing**

Testimony of  
Kimberly A. Bassett  
Secretary of State of the District of Columbia

Before the  
Committee on Executive Administration and Labor  
Council of the District of Columbia  
The Honorable Anita Bonds, Chairperson

John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

April 29, 2026

Good afternoon, Chairperson Bonds, members, and staff of the Committee on Executive Administration and Labor. I am Kimberly A. Bassett, Secretary of State of the District of Columbia. I am pleased to be here to discuss the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Budget for the Office of the Secretary of the District of Columbia, as outlined in Mayor Bowser's Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Proposed Budget, *Grow DC: Our FY 2027 Budget*. The Office has worked diligently to develop an FY27 budget that is realistic and meets the needs of both our internal and external customers.

Today, I will be joined by our Agency Fiscal Officer, Paul Blake, and members of my team: Alma Candelaria, Deputy Secretary; Victor L. Reid, Administrator for the Office of Documents and Administrative Issuances and General Counsel; Dr. Lopez Matthews, Jr., State Archivist and Administrator for the Office of Public Records; Greer Hill, Director of Notary Commissions and Authentications; Terry Handy, Director of the Ceremonial Services Unit; Wiwiek Rembrandt, Operations Manager; and Bileh Dougsiyeh, Special Assistant for International.

The Office of the Secretary is the official resource for protocol, legal records, the District of Columbia's history and records, notary services, and recognition for the public, governments, and the international community.

The Office of the Secretary is comprised of four (4) offices and one (1) unit located in three (3) different buildings. These components include the Office of Notary Commissions and Authentications (ONCA); the Office of Documents and Administrative Issuances (ODAI); the Office of Public Records and Archives (OPR); the Office of Protocol and International Affairs (OPIA); and the Ceremonial Services Unit (CS).

The Office of the Secretary works with several key internal and external stakeholders to coordinate various ceremonies, conventions, parades, and festivals, including the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Commission, DC Emancipation Commemoration Commission, the National Cherry Blossom Festival, and the District of Columbia 250 Commission. The Office of the Secretary also has a role in the Mayor's Swearing-In ceremony and oversees the DC One Fund and the DC Democracy Grant program.

The Office of the Secretary's FY 2027 proposed operating budget is approximately \$5.5 million (\$5,546,869), which includes 29 full-time equivalents (FTEs) to support our operations. The budget comprises approximately \$4.45 million (\$4,453,962) in Local funds and \$1.1 million (\$1,092,907) in Special Purpose Revenue (SPR) funds. In addition to the operating budget, OS also has a capital budget to build the new archival facility. There is no proposed funding requested for FY27.

OS FY27 proposed budget represents a 1.2 percent increase from FY26. There is no significant change in the FY27 proposed budget. The increase of \$63,443 in Local funds contributed to projected salary and fringe benefit costs across multiple programs. OS requests the same budget authority for Special Purpose Revenue (SPR) funds as in FY26. OS SPR funds are derived from revenues at the Office of Notary Commissions and Authentications.

I will now provide a brief description of the proposed FY27 budget according to each program.

**Agency Management** is where the Executive Office of the Secretary and most of our administrative functions are located. Under this program, there are currently five (5) FTEs recommended.

**Ceremonial Services** is supported by two (2) FTEs. The Ceremonial Services Unit is responsible for processing all requests for ceremonial documents from the Mayor. The office prepares about 1,200 letters every year.

There are two (2) FTEs supporting **Protocol and International Affairs**. In FY26, one FTE from International is temporarily assigned to the Office of Notary to help address and improve the Notary's operations.

**Office of Documents and Administrative Issuance** consists of six (6) FTEs. The Office of Documents continues to publish DC Registers weekly. In FY26, during the government shutdown, the Office processed and issued 604 marriage licenses.

**Office of Notary Commissions and Authentications (ONCA)** includes six (6) FTEs and is funded through Special Purpose Revenue funds. ONCA continues to improve its operation by streamlining the notary application process. The past average processing times of 8–12 weeks have been reduced to fewer than 3 weeks in most cases.

The FY27 proposed budget for the **Office of Public Records and Archives (OPR)** includes eight (8) FTEs with no changes from FY26. This year, the Office celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Mayor Bowser continues to commit her support to the construction of the new DC Archives at the UDC campus to preserve the District's history. As outlined in *Grow DC: Our FY 2027 Budget*, Mayor Bowser has reiterated her commitment to the \$121 million additional funding for the DC Archives, which brings the total estimated funding for this project to \$168 million (\$168,064,059). As the implementing agency

for DC Archives, DGS manages the OS capital budget.

The Office of the Secretary is also charged with managing and administering the DC Democracy Grant program. Each year, the Office of the Secretary administers \$200,000 in grant funds to qualified community-based organizations.

In closing, Mayor Bowser's Fiscal Year 2027 proposed budget, *Grow DC*, gives the Office of the Secretary the resources necessary to maintain its critical role in executing key, high-profile projects on behalf of the Mayor. Thank you, Chairperson Bonds and members of the Committee on Executive Administration and Labor, for the opportunity to testify in support of the Mayor's FY 2027 budget. This budget reflects many tough choices, but we are fortunate that the District remains well-resourced even in challenging times and can continue delivering world-class programs and services.

I look forward to answering your questions at this time.