

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Report

**FY2026 Budget Report
Millage Rate Hearings
April 9 and 17, 2025**

Updated Budget Development Calendar



- **Thursday, November 21, 2024: 5:15 PM School Board Work Session**
 - Action:
 - Board Report: Revenue Constraints and Budget Development Calendar
 - Board Report: Recent School Board Priorities
 - Solicit School Board Member Budget Priorities – Due December 12, 2024



- **Thursday, December 12, 2024: 5:15 PM School Board Work Session**
 - Action:
 - Board Report: Revenue and Expense Forecast
 - School Board Submission and Discussion of FY2025-26 Budget Priorities



- **Thursday, January 16, 2025 @ 5:15 PM – School Board Work Session**
 - Action:
 - Board Report: Budget Development Status Report



- **Thursday, February 13, 2025 @ 5:15 PM – School Board Work Session and Meeting**
 - Action:
 - Board Report: Budget Development Status Report
 - School Board Business Item: School Board Consideration of Resolution to Opt Out of Floating Homestead Exemption



- **Thursday, March 20, 2025 @ 5:15 PM & 7:00 PM – School Board Work Session and School Board Meeting**
 - Action:
 - Board Report: Superintendent's Recommended Tentative FY26 Budget
 - School Board Business Item: School Board Table Superintendent's Recommended Tentative FY26 Budget



- **Thursday, April 17, 2025 @ 7:00 PM – School Board Meeting**
 - Action:
 - School Board Business Item: School Board Consideration of the Superintendent's Recommended Tentative F26 Budget

Public Hearing Dates

1. Opt Out of State Floating Homestead Exemption



- Wednesday, February 5, 2025 @ 11:30 AM



- Thursday, February 13, 2025 @ 11:30 AM



- Thursday, February 13, 2025 @ 6:30 PM

2. Proposed Millage Rate



- Wednesday, April 9, 2025 @ 11:30 AM



- Thursday, April 17, 2025 @ 11:30 AM



- Thursday, April 17, 2025 @ 6:30 PM

SUPPORTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY GOVERNANCE MODEL

Core Beliefs

1. All students are highly engaged in their education and capable of reaching their full learning potential.
2. Employees are trusted and supported as professionals and provided with resources to elevate student outcomes.
3. Families and our community are involved partners in student success and can expect all students to receive the best education possible.
4. Schools are positive and welcoming environments with clear expectations and accountability in all academic and operational areas.

Core Policies

Policy **BAB**: School Board Governance
Balanced Autonomy with Supportive Accountability
Cohesive System of Teaching & Learning

- Standards
- Instructional Resources
- Monitoring Student Learning

Accountability & Support

- Superintendent Evaluation
- Aligned School Improvement Goals
- Targeted Support

Policy **(IFBD)**: Literacy in CCSD Policy

Student Achievement Goals

	READING			ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS			MATHEMATICS	
	Baseline (2024) / GOAL (2027)			Baseline (2024) / GOAL (2027)			Baseline (2024) / GOAL (2027)	
3 rd Grade	72%	→ 78%		47%	→ 53%		57%	→ 65%
4 th Grade	65%	→ 71%		47%	→ 53%		61%	→ 70%
5 th Grade	78%	→ 84%		56%	→ 62%		56%	→ 65%
6 th Grade	63%	→ 69%		48%	→ 54%		44%	→ 50%
7 th Grade	74%	→ 78%		45%	→ 54%		48%	→ 60%
8 th Grade	75%	→ 81%		48%	→ 54%		51%	→ 59%
High School	80%	→ 86%		56%	→ 62%		49%	→ 55%

Key Priorities

1. Elevate the Excellence in academics and achievement for all students
2. Elevate the Excellence in effective School Board-Superintendent Governance
3. Elevate the Excellence in the district's coordination of goals, systems, and processes
4. Elevate the Excellence by embracing a pervasive high-quality school environment defined by high standards, effective supports, and consistent practices

Elevate the Excellence!

Actions Required to Achieve a Balanced Budget

The balanced budget prepared for FY26 invests more than ever in resources impacting students, our teachers and support staff, and school safety and security. The following actions were required to accomplish this task:

- Cut the central office operations budget by more than 3%.
 - Total central office expenditures decreased by \$2.4M.
- Reduce redundancies and shed/re-align resources.
- Re-allocate (beyond the 3%) \$1.4M from central office department funds to school-based allocations.
- Re-align \$9.1M (beyond the 3%) from the general operating budget to other eligible sources (i.e. grants, Ed-SPLOST).

Superintendent's Recommended Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26

1. Invest in resources as close to students as possible

- Improve teacher-student ratio in 4th and 5th grade (+20 teachers)
- Increase school psychologist (+2 school psychologists)
- Invest in comprehensive K-12 English Language Arts (Reading & Writing) and K-12 Mathematics Instructional Resources to build the toolbox of resources for teachers and improve the print and digital resources available for students (+\$8.3M)
- Increase school-based budgets to support consumable instructional materials, classroom supplies, and instructional expenses (+\$1.4M)

2. Invest in teachers and the staff that are providing direct support and services to students

- Increase teacher salaries by 3% in addition to the longevity step increase (+\$11.2M local expense)
- Increase support staff salaries by 3% in addition to the longevity step increase (+\$8.1M local expense)
- Honor the current salary schedule (steps) for Administrative Staff on the District Organizational Chart
- Fully fund the employer portion of the increase in State Health Benefit Plan premiums and TRS for all employees (+\$5.2M local expense)

Superintendent's Recommended Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26

3. Invest in resources to advance school safety & security

- Add one Campus Security Monitor for high school campuses with multiple buildings (+3 monitors for CHS, EHS, and SHS)
- Equip School Police with body cameras

4. Invest in the future for Cherokee County students by being excellent stewards of public funds

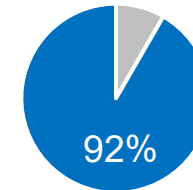
- Shed redundant, duplicative and/or non-aligned programs and materials
- Leverage current operations and systems to make the best and most efficient use of existing resources
- Continue building fund balance (Reserves) to ensure at least three months of operating expenses
- Maintain the historically lowest millage rate of 17.95 mills

How Does Cherokee County School District Use Local Property Tax Revenue?

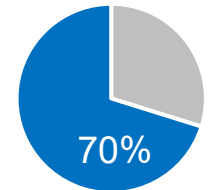
Local funds are derived primarily from property taxes and fill the gap between the Quality Basic Education (QBE) formula funds provided by the State and the actual cost of providing services above and beyond the basics to the students of Cherokee County. The table below shows a few of those gaps between what is considered basic by the State and the cost in local funds to provide excellence to our students and community in FY24.

CATEGORY	STATE FUNDS	LOCAL FUNDS	TOTAL
Student Transportation	\$2,483,834	\$27,274,581	\$29,758,415
School Nurses	967,825	2,277,879	3,245,704
Safety and Security	1,914,477	4,511,758	6,426,235
Teacher Compensation	134,836,242	63,452,349	198,288,591
Kindergarten Paraprofessionals	2,180,627	1,648,715	3,829,342
Pre-K	2,765,597	3,847,965	6,613,562
Benefits	81,377,566	67,600,423	148,977,989
Special Education	48,220,967	28,241,339	76,462,306
Technology/Hardware/Software	2,166,898	15,071,647	17,238,545
TOTALS	\$276,914,033	\$213,926,656	\$490,840,689

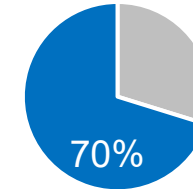
FY24 FUNDING RATIOS



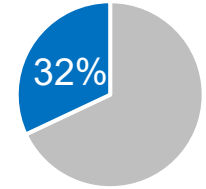
Transportation



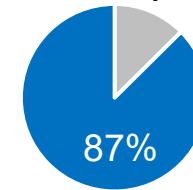
Nurses



Safety &
Security



Teacher
Compensation



Technology

LOCAL \$
STATE \$

FY2026 Recommended Budget Summary

	TOTAL ALL FUNDS	GENERAL FUND	BUILDING FUND	DEBT SERVICE FUND	FED./STATE/ COMP. GRANTS	SCHOOL NUTRITION	OTHER FUNDS
REVENUE							
Local Revenue	\$ 421,405,468	\$ 326,596,116	\$ 59,572,740	\$ 25,086,767	\$ -	\$ 8,519,957	\$ 1,629,888
State Revenue	281,876,891	276,810,480	3,153,686	-	1,166,631	746,094	-
Federal Revenue	31,811,639	217,661	-	-	17,252,877	14,341,101	-
Investment Earnings	9,475,409	2,715,621	4,495,548	1,606,513	-	650,240	7,487
Miscellaneous Revenue	2,548,750	-	-	2,548,750	-	-	-
TOTAL REVENUE	747,118,157	606,339,878	67,221,974	29,242,030	18,419,508	24,257,392	1,637,375
EXPENDITURES							
Instructional Services	467,356,136	417,147,732	39,241,914	-	10,966,490	-	-
Pupil Services	34,922,251	29,475,078	-	-	5,447,173	-	-
Improvement of Instructional Services	24,740,891	23,956,981	-	-	783,910	-	-
Instructional Staff Training	2,857,681	832,126	-	-	2,025,555	-	-
Educational Media Services	6,583,454	6,583,454	-	-	-	-	-
General Administration	4,883,925	4,221,363	-	-	-	-	662,562
School Administration	37,429,021	37,429,021	-	-	-	-	-
Support Services-Business	4,828,784	4,361,108	467,676	-	-	-	-
Maintenance & Operation of Plant Services	35,785,121	35,785,121	-	-	-	-	-
School Safety and Security	4,189,555	4,189,555	-	-	-	-	-
Student Transportation Services	32,387,934	31,865,199	-	-	522,735	-	-
Support Services-Central	7,762,092	7,583,041	-	-	179,051	-	-
School Nutrition Program	24,471,010	213,618	-	-	-	24,257,392	-
Community Services Operations	1,633,699	-	-	-	-	-	1,633,699
Facilities Acquisition and Construction Svs.	93,128,601	-	93,128,601	-	-	-	-
Debt Service	60,860,650	-	-	60,860,650	-	-	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	843,820,805	603,643,397	132,838,191	60,860,650	19,924,914	24,257,392	2,296,261
OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES)							
Proceeds from Sale of Assets	492,803	492,803	-	-	-	-	-
Bond Issuance	90,000,000	-	90,000,000	-	-	-	-
Premiums on Bonds Sold	7,830,000	-	7,830,000	-	-	-	-
Accounts Transfers In	28,367,975	-	-	26,258,758	1,505,406	-	603,811
Accounts Transfers Out	(28,367,975)	(2,109,217)	(26,258,758)	-	-	-	-
TOTAL OTHER FIN SOURCES (USES)	98,322,803	(1,616,414)	71,571,242	26,258,758	1,505,406	-	603,811
NET CHANGE FUND BALANCES	1,620,155	1,080,067	5,955,025	(5,359,862)	-	-	(55,075)
FUND BALANCES - BEGINNING	275,271,563	129,456,617	78,423,364	48,129,650	-	19,071,221	190,711
FUND BALANCES - ENDING	\$ 276,891,718	\$ 130,536,684	\$ 84,378,389	\$ 42,769,788	\$ -	\$ 19,071,221	\$ 135,636

CCSD Investments in Excellence

Excellent Stewardship of Taxpayer Resources

- Reduced the overall millage rate by 1.5 mills in 2022 saving taxpayers over \$23M annually
- Repaid long term debt early, saving taxpayers over \$15M
- Supported the expansion of the Senior Homestead Exemption, saving senior taxpayers almost \$14M annually
- Aa1 Moody's Credit Rating (Earned in 2024, Reaffirmed 2025)
- 11 Consecutive years of Unmodified audits (no findings and no questioned costs) as determined by independent auditors
- Awarded the Government Finance Officers Association Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the last 3 consecutive years

Cherokee County School District

Comparison of Cherokee County Gross Taxable Value

Fiscal Year 1995-25

Digest Year	Gross Taxable Value (40%)*	M/O Exemptions	Net Taxable Value**	% Increase/ (Decrease)	Exemptions as % of Value	M&O Millage	Bond Millage	Total Millage
1995	2,289,154,497	(267,131,954)	2,022,022,543		-11.7%	18.45	0.50	18.95
1996	2,460,463,440	(276,407,358)	2,184,056,082	8.01%	-11.2%	18.45	0.50	18.95
1997	2,627,425,494	(333,601,391)	2,293,824,103	5.00%	-12.7%	18.45	0.50	18.95
1998	3,237,705,037	(418,917,997)	2,818,787,040	22.90%	-12.9%	18.45	0.50	18.95
1999	3,441,471,849	(488,702,267)	2,952,769,582	4.75%	-14.2%	18.45	0.50	18.95
2000	4,045,018,142	(594,413,203)	3,450,604,939	16.90%	-14.7%	18.45	0.50	18.95
2001	4,588,094,545	(683,642,173)	3,904,452,372	13.20%	-14.9%	18.45	0.50	18.95
2002	5,265,433,460	(795,286,475)	4,470,146,985	14.50%	-15.1%	18.45	0.50	18.95
2003	5,656,800,123	(732,347,900)	4,924,452,223	10.16%	-12.9%	18.45	0.50	18.95
2004	6,202,270,368	(792,025,490)	5,410,244,878	9.86%	-12.8%	18.45	0.50	18.95
2005	6,901,638,075	(891,539,827)	6,010,098,248	11.09%	-12.9%	18.45	0.50	18.95
2006	7,724,770,497	(1,032,031,566)	6,692,738,931	11.36%	-13.4%	18.45	0.50	18.95
2007	8,822,751,247	(1,261,068,184)	7,561,683,063	13.00%	-14.3%	18.45	0.50	18.95
2008	9,205,864,576	(1,378,141,983)	7,827,722,593	3.50%	-15.0%	18.45	0.40	18.85
2009	9,001,790,326	(1,469,174,114)	7,532,616,212	-3.80%	-16.3%	18.45	0.40	18.85
2010	8,246,552,393	(1,448,932,993)	6,797,619,400	-9.80%	-17.6%	19.45	0.40	19.85
2011	7,760,014,632	(1,439,817,130)	6,320,197,502	-7.00%	-18.6%	19.45	0.40	19.85
2012	7,196,329,256	(1,369,698,949)	5,826,630,307	-7.80%	-19.0%	19.45	0.40	19.85
2013	7,368,167,992	(1,431,414,715)	5,936,753,277	1.90%	-19.4%	19.45	0.40	19.85
2014	8,106,843,649	(1,623,570,343)	6,483,273,306	9.21%	-20.0%	19.45	0.00	19.45
2015	8,709,172,122	(1,866,128,237)	6,843,043,885	5.55%	-21.4%	19.45	0.00	19.45
2016	9,384,998,956	(2,070,919,374)	7,314,079,582	6.88%	-22.1%	19.45	0.00	19.45
2017	10,308,589,455	(2,318,265,927)	7,990,323,528	9.25%	-22.5%	18.95	0.50	19.45
2018	11,038,459,263	(2,559,918,061)	8,478,541,202	6.11%	-23.2%	18.95	0.50	19.45
2019	12,068,972,035	(2,877,484,612)	9,191,487,423	8.41%	-23.8%	18.45	1.00	19.45
2020	12,950,560,618	(3,169,860,065)	9,780,700,553	6.41%	-24.5%	18.45	1.00	19.45
2021	14,286,110,243	(3,569,409,925)	10,716,700,318	9.57%	-25.0%	18.20	1.25	19.45
2022	17,642,430,831	(4,323,459,432)	13,318,971,399	24.30%	-24.5%	16.45	1.50	17.95
2023	21,375,329,395	(5,238,350,667)	16,136,978,728	21.20%	-24.5%	16.45	1.50	17.95
2024	22,738,437,226	(5,710,095,340)	17,028,341,886	5.52%	-24.6%	16.45	1.50	17.95
2025	24,077,921,005	(6,555,757,175)	17,522,163,830	2.90%	-27.2%	16.45	1.50	17.95

965%
Increase

Projected

Cherokee County School District

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2009	9,001,790,326	(1,469,174,114)	7,532,616,212	-3.80%	-16.3%	18.45	0.40	18.85
2010	8,246,552,393	(1,448,932,993)	6,797,619,400	-9.80%	-17.6%	19.45	0.40	19.85
2011	7,760,014,632	(1,439,817,130)	6,320,197,502	-7.00%	-18.6%	19.45	0.40	19.85
2012	7,196,329,256	(1,369,698,949)	5,826,630,307	-7.80%	-19.0%	19.45	0.40	19.85
2013	7,368,167,992	(1,431,414,715)	5,936,753,277	1.90%	-19.4%	19.45	0.40	19.85
2014	8,106,843,649	(1,623,570,343)	6,483,273,306	9.21%	-20.0%	19.45	0.00	19.45
2015	8,709,172,122	(1,866,128,237)	6,843,043,885	5.55%	-21.4%	19.45	0.00	19.45
2016	9,384,998,956	(2,070,919,374)	7,314,079,582	6.88%	-22.1%	19.45	0.00	19.45
2017	10,308,589,455	(2,318,265,927)	7,990,323,528	9.25%	-22.5%	18.95	0.50	19.45
2018	11,038,459,263	(2,559,918,061)	8,478,541,202	6.11%	-23.2%	18.95	0.50	19.45
2019	12,068,972,035	(2,877,484,612)	9,191,487,423	8.41%	-23.8%	18.45	1.00	19.45
2020	12,950,560,618	(3,169,860,065)	9,780,700,553	6.41%	-24.5%	18.45	1.00	19.45
2021	14,286,110,243	(3,569,409,925)	10,716,700,318	9.57%	-25.0%	18.20	1.25	19.45
2022	17,642,430,831	(4,323,459,432)	13,318,971,399	24.30%	-24.5%	16.45	1.50	17.95
2023	21,375,329,395	(5,238,350,667)	16,136,978,728	21.20%	-24.5%	16.45	1.50	17.95
2024	22,738,437,226	(5,710,095,340)	17,028,341,886	5.52%	-24.6%	16.45	1.50	17.95
Projected 2025	24,077,921,005	(6,555,757,175)	17,522,163,830	2.90%	-27.2%	16.45	1.50	17.95

Cherokee County School District

Comparison of Cherokee County Gross Taxable Value

Fiscal Year 1995-25

Digest Year	Gross Taxable Value (40%)*	M/O Exemptions	Net Taxable Value**	% Increase/ (Decrease)	Exemptions as % of Value	M&O Millage	Bond Millage	Total Millage
1995	2,289,154,497	(267,131,954)	2,022,022,543		-11.7%	18.45	0.50	18.95
1996	2,460,463,440	(276,407,358)	2,184,056,082	8.01%	-11.2%	18.45	0.50	18.95
1997	2,627,425,494	(333,601,391)	2,293,824,103	5.00%	-12.7%	18.45	0.50	18.95
1998	3,237,705,037	(418,917,997)	2,818,787,040	22.90%	-12.9%	18.45	0.50	18.95
1999	3,441,471,849	(488,702,267)	2,952,769,582	4.75%	-14.2%	18.45	0.50	18.95
2000	4,045,018,142	(594,413,203)	3,450,604,939	16.90%	-14.7%	18.45	0.50	18.95
2001	4,588,094,545	(683,642,173)	3,904,452,372	13.20%	-14.9%	18.45	0.50	18.95
2002	5,265,433,460	(795,286,475)	4,470,146,985	14.50%	-15.1%	18.45	0.50	18.95
2003	5,656,800,123	(732,347,900)	4,924,452,223	10.16%	-12.9%	18.45	0.50	18.95
2004	6,202,270,368	(792,025,490)	5,410,244,878	9.86%	-12.8%	18.45	0.50	18.95
2005	6,901,638,075	(891,539,827)	6,010,098,248	11.09%	-12.9%	18.45	0.50	18.95
2006	7,724,770,497	(1,032,031,566)	6,692,738,931	11.36%	-13.4%	18.45	0.50	18.95
2007	8,822,751,247	(1,261,068,184)	7,561,683,063	13.00%	-14.3%	18.45	0.50	18.95
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Projected

Superintendent's Recommended Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26: Key Points

- The millage rate remains constant at its all-time low of 17.95 mills (16.45 for Maintenance and Operations and 1.5 for Debt Service)
- Increase teacher salary scales by 3% to make strides toward closing the gaps in teacher salaries with peers in the region
- Increase School-based budgets by 34% for classroom instruction
- Decrease Central Office operating expenses by 5.2% (\$2.4M)
- Investments made in people and materials closest to the classroom and decrease expenditures on district initiatives
 - Aside from increases in school allocations, operating expenses in every other category of the budget decreased from FY25, except for an increase in liability insurance premiums

The complete budget book can be found at <https://www.cherokeek12.net/open-ccsd>

Updated Budget Development Calendar



Thursday, November 21, 2024: 5:15 PM School Board Work Session

- Action:
 - Board Report: Revenue Constraints and Budget Development Calendar
 - Board Report: Recent School Board Priorities
 - Solicit School Board Member Budget Priorities – Due December 12, 2024



Thursday, December 12, 2024: 5:15 PM School Board Work Session

- Action:
 - Board Report: Revenue and Expense Forecast
 - School Board Submission and Discussion of FY2025-26 Budget Priorities



Thursday, January 16, 2025 @ 5:15 PM – School Board Work Session

- Action:
 - Board Report: Budget Development Status Report



Thursday, February 13, 2025 @ 5:15 PM – School Board Work Session and Meeting

- Action:
 - Board Report: Budget Development Status Report
 - School Board Business Item: School Board Consideration of Resolution to Opt Out of Floating Homestead Exemption



Thursday, March 20, 2025 @ 5:15 PM & 7:00 PM – School Board Work Session and School Board Meeting

- Action:
 - Board Report: Superintendent's Recommended Tentative FY26 Budget
 - School Board Business Item: School Board Table Superintendent's Recommended Tentative FY26 Budget



Thursday, April 17, 2025 @ 7:00 PM – School Board Meeting

- Action:
 - School Board Business Item: School Board Consideration of the Superintendent's Recommended Tentative F26 Budget

Public Hearing Dates

1. Opt Out of State Floating Homestead Exemption



- Wednesday, February 5, 2025 @ 11:30 AM



- Thursday, February 13, 2025 @ 11:30 AM



- Thursday, February 13, 2025 @ 6:30 PM

2. Proposed Millage Rate



- Wednesday, April 9, 2025 @ 11:30 AM



- Thursday, April 17, 2025 @ 11:30 AM



- Thursday, April 17, 2025 @ 6:30 PM

Type of Audit	Governing Agency	Requirement	Cost	Status
Independent Audit December 2024 (FY24)	GA Department of Education GA Department of Audits and Accounts GA Department of Early Care and Learning US Department of Education	Annual Submitted to Various State and Federal Agencies Submitted to School Board Published on Website	\$60K	Published December 2024
Preliminary Official Statement/Official Statement	Investors	Required Ahead of Bond Issuance Published on the Electronic Municipal Market Access System (EMMA)	\$50,000	Published January 2025
Credit Rating	Moody's	Required Ahead of Bond Issuance	\$110,850	Published February 2025
Credit Rating	S&P	Required Ahead of Bond Issuance	\$105,640	Published February 2025
Internal Audits	CCSD Finance Division	Desk Audit of All Schools Annually Full Procedural Audit Upon Change of Leadership and/or Bookkeeper and Randomly Selected Annually	Performed by Staff	Published As Completed
Federal Cross Functional Monitoring	GA Department of Education	Every 3-5 Years or Upon Risk Assessment Title Programs (I, II, III, IV, VI) Published on GaDOE Website	None	Completed March 2025 Awaiting Publication of Results
Federal Program Audit	GA Department of Education US Department of Agriculture	School Nutrition Program	None	Completed March 2025

Georgia Department of Education

- The Georgia Department of Education defines audits for districts as independent assessments of their internal controls and operations, focusing on effectiveness, efficiency, and compliance with legal requirements. These are performed by qualified, independent auditing agencies to ensure compliance with mandated fiscal requirements of the State of Georgia. If applicable, the audit must include required Compliance Supplement for Federal Programs as prescribed by U. S. Code of Federal Requirements for Federal Awards, Part 200 (Uniform Administrative Requirements).

Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts

- Under Transparency in Government Act, School Districts submit information to the Department of Audits and Accounts to be published on the website. The Department of Audits and Accounts exists to provide independent, unbiased information and impactful recommendations to promote accountability and improve government.