

2026 SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN ^x

The City of Columbus is accepting applications for its Summer Youth Program Grant to support youth programming. Applications are due by 5 p.m. Feb. 13.

[Learn More About Summer Youth Program Funding](#)

WE PLAY TO WIN: THE WEEKLY PLAYBOOK

DEC. 9, 2025

SPOTLIGHT ON CULTURE

CELEBRATE TOGETHER AT THE ALL STAFF HOLIDAY HOP

Celebrating together builds strong connections and strengthens our culture. Ring in the holiday season with your colleagues at the All-Staff Holiday Hop at Dodge Community Center on Dec. 11 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.! Enjoy a free pancake brunch, hot chocolate bar, crafts, activities, a silent auction and raffles as Dodge is transformed into a holiday wonderland. Bring your holiday spirit, your best bids for the silent auction and cash for the 50/50 raffle. All centers and programs will be closed during the event to allow staff to attend.

[RSVP now, and don't miss out!](#)

NEWS AND INFORMATION

PROTECT WHAT MATTERS: VOLUNTARY BENEFITS ENROLLMENT ENDS DEC. 15

Open enrollment for [voluntary benefits through Colonial Life](#) runs through Dec. 15. Options include accident, cancer, critical illness, disability, hospital indemnity, life insurance and a Dependent Care Account. To learn more, schedule a virtual session with a Colonial Life Benefit Counselor through PES-One. Counselors are available Monday-Friday, 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Call 614-477-0390 or email Support@Pes-One.com.

PLAYBOOK COLUMBUS NEARS THE FINISH LINE

[Playbook Columbus](#) is entering its final phase as we move from big-picture ideas to specific strategies and action steps for the next decade. Many of you helped shape the Vision Plan through surveys, focus groups and workshops focused on operations, programming, and physical projects. These strategies will become the

English 

foundation for each section’s annual playbook, with more details coming soon about how it all connects. A full

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The 2026 Quarterly Staff Leadership Meetings will be held on the fourth Tuesday of the first month of each quarter: Jan. 27, April 28, July 28 and Oct. 27. Extended Leadership members should plan to attend, and all staff are welcome.

Have a burning question? [Submit it online](#)—anonymously if you’d like—for a chance to have it answered live or featured in the *The Weekly Playbook* newsletter.

KNOW WHO TO CALL: POLICY & LEGAL QUESTIONS

Steve Dyer, our Legal and Policy manager, left the department for a new opportunity closer to home. With this change, there are some new contacts for important legal and policy matters.

- For all City Attorney Office needs, policy and legal questions, MOUs, lease agreements and public records requests, email Shannon Prince at SOPrince@columbus.gov.
- Most fee waivers can be processed by following the [existing policy](#), but requests from the Mayor’s Office, City Council, the CRPD Commission or outside government agencies—and any specialized requests your supervisor can’t answer—should be sent to Steve Hiland at SHHiland@columbus.gov.

1/12/2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

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KEY DATES

DECEMBER

[Staff Holiday Hop](#)

Dec. 11 | 10 a.m.-1 p.m. | Dodge Community Center

[Colonial Life Open Enrollment Closes](#)

Dec. 15

Empty Bowls

Dec. 19 | 11 a.m.-1 p.m. | 1111 E. Broad St., Hungry Soldier Room

JANUARY

Empty Bowls

Jan. 9 | 11 a.m.-1 p.m. | 1533 Alum Industrial Dr.

Quarterly Leadership Meeting

Jan. 27 | 1-3 p.m. | 1111 E. Broad St.-Continental Room

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

LIFTING OUR COMMUNITY AND DEPARTMENT

Letha Pugh

President, Columbus Recreation and Parks Commission



Lift Each Other Up:

Congratulations to Letha for being named one of YWCA Columbus' 2026 Women of Achievement honorees! This recognition celebrates leaders who strengthen our community—and Letha does that every day.

Letha joined the Commission in 2021 and was elected president in 2023. In this role, she helps guide the vision and direction of our department, always pushing us to serve Columbus with intention and heart.

Her leadership extends far beyond our walls. Letha is deeply involved in Service!, the Parsons Area Stakeholders Group, Black, Out and Proud, and serves on the boards of The Women's Fund of Central Ohio, the Columbus Sports Commission and Freedom Equity. She helped launch Café Overlook, a workforce development initiative supporting restored citizens, and was part of the inaugural Emerging Developers Accelerator Program at the Affordable Housing Trust.

As if that weren't enough, she also co-founded two beloved local businesses—the gluten-free bakery Bake Me Happy and Preston's Burger.

Congratulations to Letha on this well-deserved honor! Her dedication, creativity

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NOMINATE A COWORKER FOR THE STAFF SPOTLIGHT

[Fill out this form to nominate a coworker.](#) The employee and their assistant director will be notified that they were nominated.

LIVING OUR VALUES

ADOPT A CENTER: LIFTING OUR COMMUNITY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



Lift Each Other Up: We're making the holidays a little brighter across Columbus through the Adopt a Center program. Thanks to the generosity of individuals, businesses and our own staff, thousands of residents are experiencing meaningful moments of joy this season.

In November alone, we served more than 2,800 hot Thanksgiving meals at 34 events. And we're not slowing down—December brings 33 more events, where the community will receive 3,300+ meals, along with gifts and warm winter clothing.

This effort takes serious coordination and heart. A big congratulations to Alaina Reimer for leading the logistics, and to our Community Center teams for planning and hosting each event. We're also grateful for our volunteers, donors and the Community Relations team for keeping this work moving.

There's still time to help! You can make a financial contribution or purchase a gift from the Amazon Wish List. You can also bring a toy to the Staff Holiday Hop this Thursday. [Learn more and donate.](#)

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ARCHIVE

2025



2024



2023



2022



NATURE

[Nature](#)

[Conservation](#)