

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Public Hearing - November 18, 2024
Haslet Armory Room 133 (10 a.m. – 1 p.m.)
Maj. Gen. Michael R. Berry, Adjutant General of the Delaware National Guard

Good morning. It is my distinct honor to represent the Delaware National Guard as we present our Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Operating and Capital Budget Requests.

The DNG's FY26 Operating Budget Request does not include enhancement growth. However, the operating budget submission identifies a specific proposal to support a top priority for next fiscal year should the opportunity arise:

- A 1% up proposal of \$59.7K in education assistance funding to mitigate the continual budget shortfall. This program is a vital recruiting & retention tool for the Delaware National Guard which I fully support.
- Additionally, two door-openers were submitted for consideration. \$43K in funding to support ongoing operating costs for the new Pandemic Readiness Center in New Castle and \$26.7K in funding (an annualization) for the remaining salary of the newly approved Admin Officer position/FTE in FY25.

Minor capital improvement funding continues to be a critical budget item for the Delaware National Guard to ensure proper maintenance, repair and acceptable standards of our 10-aging readiness centers. When our antiquated Guard facilities fall into disrepair, this adversely affects readiness, recruiting and retention.

Our FY26 capital budget submission requests \$2.5M in minor capital improvement funding to supplement millions of federal dollars received annually to help maintain our older facilities. If authorized, this funding will help support the many projects listed in our formal capital budget submission.

In addition, we are requesting \$7.85M in major capital funding in support of four projects:

- First is the Cheswold Readiness Center. Funding is requested for design, site prep and construction to support a new 44,829 SF Readiness Center that supports training, administrative and logistical requirements of the 1049th Light Transportation Company. The cost of project completion is estimated at \$27.6M with a cost share to the State of \$3.85M in FY26 and \$6.8M in FY28. Due to inflationary measures and long lead times, the Delaware Army National Guard has requested an additional 30% from the federal government which may increase the state share by \$2.1M increasing the estimated cost of completion to \$36M.
- Second is the Civil Support Team (CST) Expansion. Funding is requested to sustain existing 4,895 SF facility and construct additional 3,000 SF of vehicle bays. This addition directly supports the housing of emergency vehicles that are equipped with sensitive high-tech equipment. The projected cost of project completion is estimated at \$1.5M. State funding will be used to leverage federal funding.
- Third is the Bethany Beach Training Site Road Improvements/Paving. Funding is requested to sustain and modernize existing 90-year-old road network and parking. Project to include but not limited to asphalt, multi-model paths and parking plans to reflect modern requirements and current design guidelines. The projected cost of project completion is estimated at \$2M. State funding will be used to leverage federal funding.
- Fourth is the Pigman West Organizational Parking Paving. Funding is requested to construct a 12,000 SF military organizational parking area to support military operations and vehicle maintenance in Seaford. Project to include but not limited to concrete parking, asphalt roads, fencing, lighting and all requirements based on design guidelines. The projected cost of project completion is estimated at \$1.5M. State funding will be used to leverage federal funding.

As our footprint in the State grows, it is imperative to sustain normal operations in meeting both our state and federal missions without interruption. Both our FY26 operating, and capital budget requests validate the funding needed to sustain the high level of operational readiness and effectiveness of the Delaware National Guard during the next fiscal year.

Your continued support is invaluable in taking care of our outstanding National Guard Soldiers and Airmen as they meet today's unprecedented challenges and accomplish the many missions the National Guard carries out here at home and around the world. Your Guard is proud to serve the citizens of this great State and our Nation when called.

Together, we will ensure Delaware's National Guard remains "Always Ready, Always There!"

I am prepared to answer any questions you may have regarding our FY26 budget requests.