

The District Budget Process -- Step-by-Step

Updated 09/05

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STEP 1:

Budget Instructions

September. The Office of Budget and Planning (OBP) prepares instructions for the development of agency budget submissions including the allowed increase and enhancements.

STEP 2:

Agencies Develop Budget Submissions

September - December. Agency submissions include funding for maintaining services and extras, or enhancements.

Advocacy Tips!

- ✓ Give your recommendations to agencies.
- ✓ When you make recommendations to an agency, be as detailed as possible, providing the agency with budget information that includes staffing and other resources.
- ✓ Also share your recommendations with the City Council and the Mayor!

Some often used tools



Personal meeting



Mail



E-mail



Phone calls

STEP 3:

Budget Scrubbing

January. OBP "scrubs" the agency budget submissions. This means that redundancies are eliminated, costs are verified. OBP and agency staff meet during this time to review the agency's submission, negotiate details and develop a much cleaner budget that will be presented to the mayor.

STEP 4:

Council Develops Budget Priorities

Early in the calendar year. The City Council sets its budget and policy priorities including revenues (taxes), debt management, human services issues, public safety, and the like. The Council also considers things such as constituent needs and wants.

Advocacy Tip!

- ✓ Share your budget recommendations with the City Council before their retreat.

STEP 5:

Mayor Develops Proposed Budget/Mayor Presents Budget

January - March. OBP delivers the baseline (scrubbed) budget to the mayor so he can prepare his proposal. He adds his priorities and may make other adjustments. The mayor may also present a supplemental budget for the current fiscal year.

Advocacy Tip!

- ✓ Share your recommendations with mayor's staff, deputy mayors and their staff.

STEP 6:

Budget Hearings

March and April. The City Council schedules public hearings at which members of the community can testify. At all hearings, the government is represented. At some hearings, the government testifies first; at others, the public does. No matter, the Council encourages the agency to attend the hearing in its entirety.

STEP 7:

Budget Markups and Council Votes (2) on Budget

June. The City Council marks up the budget proposed by the mayor. Following the mark-ups, the entire Council votes on the budget twice.

Advocacy Tip!

- ✓ Be diligent during the mark-up process and particularly before/between votes.

STEP 8:

Signed Budget Goes to Congress

June - ?. After the mayor signs the budget, Congress reviews it. Congress often adds special items to the budget. Typically, the Congress does not approve the city's budget until after October 1 resulting in having to operate on what is known as a continuing resolution. This prevents the city from expanding programs or starting new ones.

Note:

Regular communication with elected and appointed officials (Mayor, City Council, agencies) is important. So plan to be in touch about your views whether or not there is a public hearing, etc.

Note:

Members of the public generally do not receive a copy of the budget at the press conference. Copies are available a few days later by calling 727-6343.

STEP 9:

DC Implements Budget

At any time during the fiscal year, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer may identify what are known as spending pressures. This may result in reducing budgets or other efforts to slow spending.

This guide was prepared as part of DC Action for Children's Budget Advocacy Project. For more information about the project, call (202) 234-9404.

**Budget
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P r o j e c t



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