



FUNDING THE NEXT GENERATION

NEWSLETTER

START NOW TO IMPACT YOUR CITY AND COUNTY 2024- 2025 BUDGET



What is a local budget?

It is a detailed map of how your city or county will spend its public resources. It is so much more than numbers - it must be seen as a moral document reflecting what the community values.

Rule of thumb for those who think services for kids should get more money in the budget:

NEVER LET A BUDGET PROCESS PASS YOU BY. What gets budgeted, gets done. Your engagement in the process can make a huge difference.

Preparing the budget for your city or county is a year-round process - as soon as one budget is approved, city officials start work on the next. January is a perfect time to jump in.

What's wrong with local budgets?

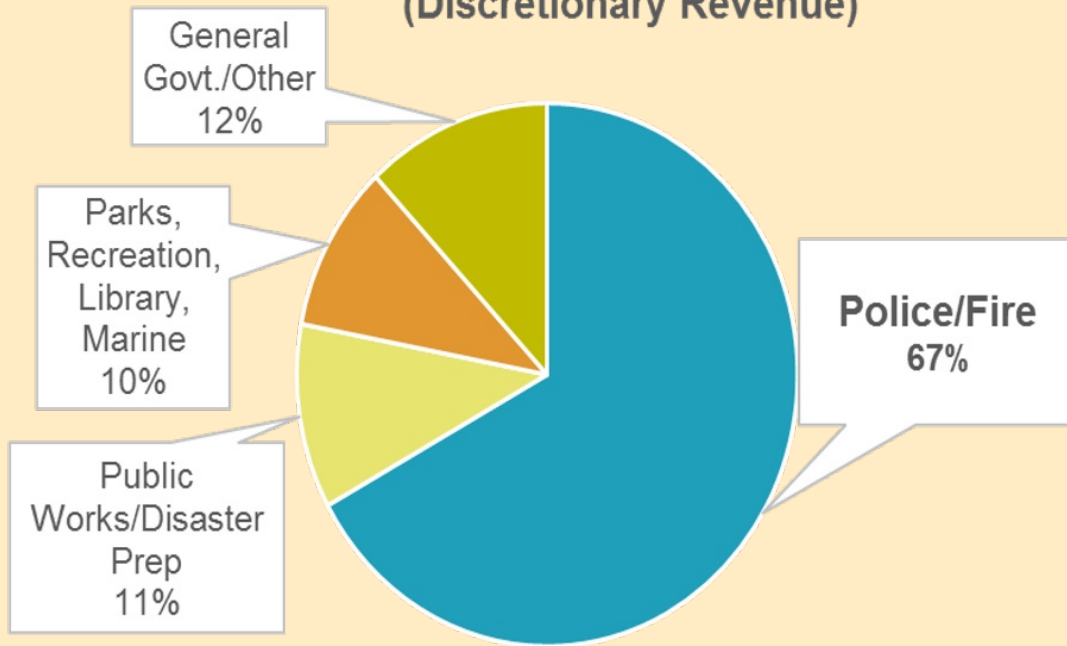
Most money is spent on "public protection," especially law enforcement.

Little money is spent on prevention.

Budgets are filled with "sacred cows" that politicians refuse to touch. Every item reflects some piece of turf that someone somewhere wants to protect.

Below is a typical city budget - majority expenditures are for police and fire; very few expenditures are for children and youth.

City of Long Beach General Fund (Discretionary Revenue)



BUDGET ADVOCACY STEPS

- Assess local budget landscape
- Develop a budget "ask"
- Create compelling fact sheet/proposal
- Communicate budget "ask" to decision-makers and to public
- Organize/mobilize supporters
- Participate in all aspects of budget process
- Advocate and campaign for "ask"



CONTINUUM OF BUDGET ADVOCACY OPTIONS - from a simple start to major transformation.

Start here - Ask questions. Demand information. Raise issues. Then you can advocate to:

- Prevent budget cuts in key programs; or
- Expand existing program, e.g., end waiting lists; or
- Add new line items/programs; or
- Work in coalition on comprehensive issue-specific budget agenda, e.g., Youth Employment Coalition, Early Care Coalition; or
- Work in a budget coalition for broader structural changes and budget

expansions, e.g., Children's Budget coalition, Budget Justice Coalition; or.

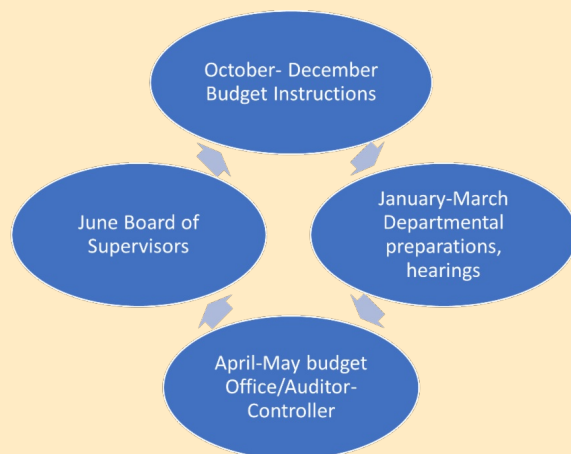
- Reform the budget process - demand transparency and opportunities for input; or
- **CREATE A NEW FUNDING STREAM BY USING THE BALLOT!**

Advisory tip: Before launching a ballot measure, get your feet wet through budget advocacy. Try one of the above.

WHAT IS THE BUDGET PROCESS?

REMEMBER: IT IS YEAR-ROUND.

MAJOR CHANGES CAN REQUIRE SUSTAINED EFFORT OVER YEARS.



HOW CAN YOU INSERT YOURSELF INTO THE BUDGET PROCESS TO GET MORE FOR KIDS?

Oct. - December - Advocate with administrator, mayor and/or legislative body to include your issues in the budget instructions - what

should be prioritized in the coming year's budget.

January - March - Advocate with departments, such as health, recreation, social services, to include your priorities in their proposed budget - meet with administrators, and advisory bodies.

April - May - Meet with city or county budget office and/or controller to advocate for priorities. Go public - start using media. Gather allies and supporters.

June - Attend every budget hearing. Bring crowds. Provide forceful testimony. Try petitions, demonstrations, letter-writing.

Types of Funds in your local budget

- **General Fund** – Pay most attention to this one! This is where local flexibility lies. It is money raised and spent in your community.
- **Capital Fund** (buildings and infrastructure) - While most children and youth items are in other funds, you can start negotiations with the capital committee in your city or county to get things like childcare and youth centers on the capital list.
- **Special Revenue** – sources (usually from state and federal government) that can only be used

Questions to ask:

- Are children and youth getting their fair share?
- Are there glaring inequities in allocation of resources?
- Are there large expenditures with limited accountability?

FYI: Does your city or county have an award for budget excellence? If not, encourage your finance people to look into these programs that award high budget standards (example below).

You can contact the Government Finance Officers Association or the

for specific purposes. But within limited regulatory constraints, these funds can be shifted to prevention and new services. Look to shift to higher priorities.

· **Enterprise** – Government functions that bring in money and spend it only on that function, e.g., airports - limited options here, but, for instance, airports can provide youth internships or childcare centers for employees. Think creatively.

Note: Your city or county general fund will have a "reserve." It should be enough to carry your city or county for 15 - 25% (max) - more than that, start advocating for a piece for the children and youth emergencies that are ongoing.

California Society of Municipal Finance Officers for more information—but your finance people should already be members and probably know all about these awards programs.



WHAT SHOULD YOUR BUDGET "ASK" BE? - Big enough to matter - Small enough to win.

Criteria for consideration:

- Availability of resources.
- Popular with public - responds to felt need.
- Supporters willing to engage.
- Brings a cost-benefit.
- Results are visible.
- Builds power - prepares for next fight.
- Engages impacted parents and youth.





ADVOCACY TIPS

- Make your budget ask concrete and specific - how much is needed, and for what.
- Use persuasion AND Pressure – Competition for resources if fierce. Be Prepared for opposition.
- The voices of impacted youth and parents have the most power - more than professionals. Let them lead the way.
- The Media is a bullhorn to communicate your priorities – and drama helps.

MORE ADVOCACY TIPS

- Allies and coalitions - Elected decision-makers know how to count supporters and audiences; the more support, the better.
- Find champions and informants within government - they can provide info and support, often behind the scenes.
- Demand accountability - Praise politicians who support, and blast those that don't.
- Persistence is essential – this is a multi-year process.

WHY WE LOVE TRANSMITTAL LETTERS

What is it? The “cover” letter the executive (CAO, City Manager, Mayor) sends to the legislative body with the budget proposal in May. In most cities and counties, this is chocked full of incredibly valuable info about demographics, the economy, fiscal policies, comparisons with other cities/counties, goals of city/county, performance measures, history, + summary of expenditures and revenue. USE THE TRANSMITTAL LETTER AS YOUR GUIDE. Consult with last year's letter.

10X Goals



Eliminate Homelessness

Ensure the availability of diverse and affordable housing for all residents with the goal of eliminating homelessness in Alameda County.



Healthcare for All

Ensure healthcare for all with a focus on providing preventive and supportive services to vulnerable populations.



Employment for All

Deliver services through highly skilled, agile, and responsive County employees and support full employment of the hard to employ throughout the County.



Eliminate Poverty and Hunger

Ensure all residents' basic needs are met including eliminating poverty and hunger, while building resiliency and self-sufficiency among vulnerable populations.



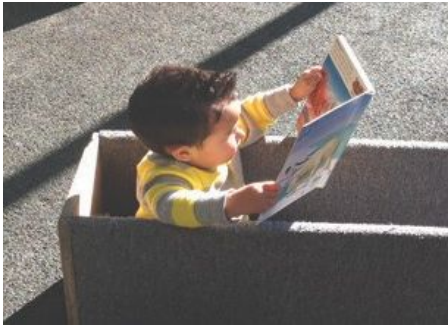
Crime Free County

Implement robust criminal justice strategies that lead to a crime free county through responsive and innovative community engagement while providing effective support for victims and reentry populations.



Accessible Infrastructure

Implement smart, accessible, and adaptive public infrastructure that enables the deployment of future technologies while optimizing the return on investments of existing infrastructure.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON LOCAL BUDGETS AND BUDGET ADVOCACY

[Link to recording](#) of Funding the Next Generation webinar on Winning Local Budget Battles for Kids.

Power points from webinar - [Budget 101](#), [Budget Advocacy](#)

CONSIDER JOINING OUR BALLOT

FORWARD GROUP for community leaders and coalitions considering a ballot measure for funding for kids. The Ballot Forward group meets monthly to learn and share information

about preparing for the ballot. The next meeting will be Friday January 26 from noon to 1:00 - zoom [at this link](#). Contact Margaret Brodkin if you are interested in joining and getting on the mailing list. [Here is the powerpoint](#) on early steps for a campaign, presented at a previous meeting. The next meeting will be about decisions you will need to make as you proceed. Most current members are considering a campaign for 2026.



Funding the Next Generation has now merged its work with [Children's Funding Project](#), our fiscal sponsor and partner. Its website is chocked full of useful information about what is happening around the country. We are delighted to coordinate our work and build a stronger movement to fund opportunities for children and youth, in California and nationally.

As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions, ideas or requests for support - no matter how big or small. With a team of some of the best experts in the country, we provide free technical assistance on everything related to local revenue measures for kids and budget advocacy with your city or county.

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[Check out our website full of information.](#)



Try email marketing for free today!