

From Potholes to Public Schools: How the DC Budget Gets Set

September- December

Agencies Develop Budget Requests



The CFO's Role

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) develops the Current Services Funding Level (CSFL), which is the amount each agency needs to maintain existing services.



The Mayor's Role

The Mayor's office sets a budget target for each agency, often set below the current budget, to encourage agencies to look for savings. Agencies prepare budget requests that meet those targets, but also are allowed to submit requests for targeted service enhancements.

March- Early May

Mayor Submits Proposed Budget to DC Council



The Mayor's Role

The Mayor submits a proposed budget to the DC Council in mid- to late March. Many key budget decisions are made in the few weeks before the budget is submitted.



The DC Council's Role

Each DC Council committee holds "budget oversight" hearings on the proposed budgets for the agencies it oversees.

Later, in early May, each committee meets to make changes or "markup" their portion of the budget. The committee can add funding to selected programs, but needs to find this funding by increasing taxes and fees, cutting other programs, or finding savings.



The Residents' Role

DC residents and advocates play an important role in shaping budget changes by testifying at hearings. Residents also meet with councilmembers to encourage funding increases for programs that are important to them.

September

October

November

December

January

February

March

April

May

June

January- February

DC Council Holds Agency Performance Hearings



The CFO's Role

In February, the CFO issues a revenue forecast. The budget the Mayor will release in the spring is based on this forecast.



The Mayor's Role

The Mayor's "budget review teams" meet with each agency to review their budget requests. In particular, the Mayor considers enhancements she will include. When the economy is strong, more enhancements are possible. When the economy is weak, the Mayor may have to make service cuts.



The DC Council's Role

Each DC Council committee holds "performance oversight" hearings for the agencies it oversees. This means examining the agency's operations as well as effectiveness in implementing last year's budget.



The Residents' Role

Residents and advocates are encouraged to testify at the performance oversight hearings. They can also submit questions for Council committee members to ask agency officials at the performance oversight hearings.

May- June

Budget Gets Voted On and Sent to Congress



The DC Council's Role

About a week after committee markups, the full Council meets to vote on the entire budget. Like all DC legislation, the budget has a second vote, or "second reading" a few weeks after the first vote. The budget is sent to the US Congress for approval, but they rarely change anything.



The Resident's Role

Advocacy by DC residents and advocates continues through the full Council votes. These last-minute efforts can make a big difference in the final budget.