

# Budget Process

## Budget Process

### CAO Recommended Operational Plan

The budget process begins annually with submittal of the Chief Administrative Officer's (CAO) Recommended Operational Plan. This document is a comprehensive overview of the CAO plan for the County's operations for the next two fiscal years. It is submitted to the Board of Supervisors in May of each year.

### Public Review and Hearing

Prior to adopting a budget, the CAO presents the Board of Supervisors and the public with an overview of the information contained in the CAO Recommended Operational Plan. The operational plan presentation takes place in May and is an opportunity for the Board and the public to understand key changes from year to year and ask questions. In addition, the Board conducts a public hearing in mid-June for 10 calendar days. Pursuant to California Government Code §29081, the budget hearing may be continued from day to day until concluded, but not to exceed a total of 14 calendar days.

All requests for revisions to the CAO Recommended Operational Plan, whether from members of the Board of Supervisors, County staff, County advisory boards or members of the public, must be submitted to the Clerk of the Board in writing by the close of the public hearing in June to be included in a Revised Recommended Operational Plan. These may include:

### Change Letter

Change Letter is the phase where changes to the CAO Recommended Operational Plan are submitted by the CAO and/or members of the Board of Supervisors. The CAO Change Letter updates the CAO Recommended Operational Plan with information that becomes available after the latter document is presented to the Board of Supervisors. Such modifications may be due to Board actions that occurred subsequent to the submission of the CAO Recommended Operational Plan, or as a result of changes in State or federal funding, or other actions. The CAO Change Letter typically contains a schedule of revisions by department along with explanatory text.

## Referrals to Budget

Referrals to Budget are items on which the Board has deferred action during the current fiscal year so that they may be considered in the context of the overall budget. Each business group tracks their Referrals to Budget. As the Board's Budget Deliberations approach, the status of each referral is updated and included in a compilation of all the referrals made throughout the year. This document is submitted to the Board for review and action during Budget Deliberations.

### Citizen Advisory Board Statements

Citizen Advisory Board Statements are the comments of citizen committees on the CAO Recommended Operational Plan.

## Budget Deliberations

Budget Deliberations occur at a public meeting of the Board after the conclusion of public hearings. During budget deliberations, the Board discusses the CAO Recommended Operational Plan, any requested amendments and public testimony/recommendations with the CAO and other County officials, as necessary. Based on these discussions, the Board gives direction to the CAO regarding the expenditure and revenue levels to be included in the final Operational Plan. Board Budget Deliberations are completed by the end of June.

## Referrals from Budget

Referrals from Budget are requests made by the Board during Budget Deliberations for additional information to assist them in making decisions during the fiscal year. The applicable business group is responsible for providing the requested information to the Board of Supervisors.

## Budget Adoption

Budget Adoption occurs following the Board's Budget Deliberations. The budget, as finally determined, is adopted by resolution requiring a majority vote of the Board of Supervisors. Any changes to the CAO Recommended Operational Plan received after the close of the public hearings, but prior to adoption require a four-fifths vote of approval by the Board. Budget adoption occurs in June.

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## Adopted Operational Plan

The Adopted Operational Plan shows the Board of Supervisor's adopted budget for the immediate fiscal year and the plan approved in principle for the following fiscal year. The Adopted Operational Plan is an update of the CAO Recommended Operational Plan reflecting revisions made by the Board during Budget Deliberations. Unlike the CAO Recommended Operational Plan, which displays the two prior fiscal years' adopted budgets and the recommended amounts for the two upcoming fiscal years, the Adopted Operational Plan provides perspective by displaying actual expenditures and revenue at the group/agency and department level for the two prior fiscal years, as well as the adopted and amended budget for the immediate prior fiscal year.

The amended budget for each department is the budget at the end of the fiscal year. It reflects the adopted budget plus any amounts carried forward from the previous year through the encumbrance process and any changes that were authorized during the year. Any budget-to-actual comparisons are best made using the amended budget as a base.

## Budget Modifications

State Law permits modifications to the adopted budget during the year with approval by the Board or, in certain instances, by the Auditor and Controller. There are two options for requesting a mid-year budget adjustment from the Board of Supervisors which are described in the following sections.

## Board of Supervisors Regular Agenda Process

Budget modifications are generally made due to unforeseen and program-specific changes. In compliance with Government Code §29130, increases in appropriations require a four-fifths vote of approval by the Board after the budget is adopted. Such changes could include requests for additional appropriations as a result of additional unanticipated revenues for specific programs, or a contract modification. Items placed on the agenda that have a fiscal or budgetary impact are reviewed and approved by the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer/Chief Financial Officer. Contract modifications also require the approval of the Purchasing Agent. County Counsel reviews and approves all Board agenda items.

## Quarterly Status Reports

The CAO provides a quarterly budget status report to the Board that may also recommend changes to appropriations to address unanticipated needs or make technical adjustments to the budget. These reports are placed on the Board's regular agenda and are also posted on the County website.

# Financial Planning Calendar

## Calendar Year 2024

- Aug 19** Five Year Forecast begins
- Nov/Dec** Annual Financial Reports Release for Prior Fiscal Year

## Calendar Year 2025

- Feb 3** Countywide Operational Plan Kickoff
- Apr 11** Draft copy of balanced CAO Recommended Operational Plan sent to the Chief Administrative Officer and Deputy Chief Administrative Officer/Chief Financial Officer
- May 1** Recommended Budget document released to the public (no formal Board action)
- Jun 3** Public Hearing on CAO Recommended Op Plan (9:00 AM)
- Jun 3-12** Budget Hearings
- Jun 9** Public Hearing on CAO Recommended Op Plan (5:30 PM)
- Jun 12** Last day for written testimony on budget to Clerk of the Board, including Change Letter Budget board letter, resolution(s) to adopt budget, and any referrals to budget filed with the Clerk of the Board  
Revised Recommended Budget document available to the public
- Jun 24** Budget Deliberations & Budget Adoption