

Navigating the State Budget Process

Each year the Governor and Legislature work to craft the state's spending plan. While the January-to-June period gets the most attention, the process of developing the budget is an ongoing enterprise, giving Californians ample opportunity to stay engaged and involved year-round.

The Governor

The Governor has the lead role in developing the state budget. Each year the Governor proposes a spending plan, which is introduced as the budget bill in the Legislature. The Governor can sign or veto the budget bill passed by legislators as well as other bills in the budget package that make policy changes related to the budget. The Governor can also reduce or eliminate individual appropriations using the line-item veto.

The Legislature

The Legislature – made up of the Assembly and Senate – reviews the Governor's proposed budget and crafts its own version of the spending plan. The Legislature can maintain, modify, or reject the Governor's proposals, with review occurring through each house's budget committee and related subcommittees. The Legislature must pass the budget bill, but not other bills in the budget package, by June 15. The Legislature can override a Governor's veto by a two-thirds vote of each house.

The Public

The public has various opportunities for input during the budget process. Members of the public can meet with officials from the Governor's administration and with legislators and their staffs, testify before budget committees and subcommittees, and write letters of support and opposition. Through individual engagement or as part of coalitions, members of the public can express their budget priorities and areas of concern.

