

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

# Executive Summary



Fiscal Year 2019

Gina M. Raimondo, Governor

# **Appendix F**

## **The Budget Process**



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# The Budget Process: A Primer

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The purpose of this primer is to clarify the annual budget and appropriations processes.

**Appropriation Process.** According to Article IX Section 16 of the Rhode Island Constitution, and the Rhode Island General Laws Section 35-3-7, the Governor must present spending recommendations to the Legislature. *The Budget* reflects expenditures for both the current and upcoming fiscal year and identifies the sources of financing for those expenditures.

On or before the third Thursday in January, unless delayed by act of the Legislature, the Governor must submit to the General Assembly a budget containing a complete plan of estimated revenues and proposed expenditures, with a personnel supplement detailing the number and titles of positions of each agency, and estimates of personnel costs for the next fiscal year. Commencing with the Governor's FY 2014 budget, this supplementary personnel information has been merged into the multivolume document entitled *Budget*.

The budget is proposed by the Governor and considered by the General Assembly, which may increase, decrease, alter, or strike out any item in the budget, provided that the action would not cause an excess of appropriations over anticipated revenue receipts. No appropriation in excess of budget recommendations may be made by the General Assembly unless it provides the necessary additional revenue to cover such appropriation. The Governor may veto legislative appropriations, although not on an individual "line item" basis. The Legislature may override any veto by a three-fifths majority vote. Supplemental appropriations measures must be submitted by the Governor to the General Assembly on or before the third Thursday in January. Supplemental appropriations by the General Assembly must also be supported by additional revenues.

The general laws of the state provide that if the General Assembly fails to pass the annual appropriation bill, amounts equal to those appropriated in the prior fiscal year shall be automatically available for expenditure, subject to monthly or quarterly allotments as determined by the Budget Officer. Expenditures for general obligation bond indebtedness of the state shall be made as required regardless of the passage of the annual budget or the amount provided for in the prior fiscal year.

**Fiscal Years.** It is important when reading the budget to consider which fiscal year is being discussed. The state *fiscal year* runs from July 1 to the following June 30 and is numbered for the calendar year in which it ends (e.g. FY 2018). The *current fiscal year* is the one which ends the coming June. The *actual fiscal years* are the years which concluded in June of the two previous years. The *budget year* refers to the next fiscal year, which begins the July following the Legislature's adjournment. Finally, *out-years* refer to any years beyond the budget year.

By law, *The Budget* must record two actual fiscal years of spending, as well as the Governor's revised spending recommendations for the current fiscal year, and the Governor's full recommendations for the budget year.

**Revenue Estimates and Caseload Estimates.** Receipt estimates for the current year and budget year are those adopted by the State Revenue Estimating Conference, as adjusted by any changes recommended by the Governor.

The State Revenue Estimating Conference was created by the 1990 General Assembly to provide the Governor and the Assembly with estimates of general revenues. It is composed of the State Budget Officer, the House Fiscal Advisor, and the Senate Fiscal Advisor, with the chair rotating among the three. It must

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meet no less than twice per year, in November and May, and can be convened at any other time by call of any member, and must reach consensus on revenues. The 1991 Assembly created a Medical Assistance and Public Assistance Caseload Estimating Conference similar to the Revenue Estimating Conference to adopt cash assistance entitlement caseload estimates. The 1998 Assembly amended the Medical Assistance and Public Assistance Caseload Estimating Conference to estimate medical assistance expenditures, upon which the Governor's expenditures budget shall be based, and the appropriations by the assembly shall be made.

The consensus revenue estimate is the official revenue projection for general revenue. Estimates of revenues for federal funds, restricted receipts, and other funds are prepared by individual state agencies, reviewed by the Budget Office, and included in *The Budget*.

**Classification of State Spending.** The State of Rhode Island classifies state spending by function of government and by category of expenditure.

**Function of government** classifies expenditures by grouping agencies that make expenditures for similar programs and purposes. There are six functions of government defined in *The Budget*: General Government, Human Services, Education, Public Safety, Natural Resources, and Transportation.

The following explains the six functions of government included in *The Budget*.

*General Government* includes the administrative and regulatory functions of state government. Certain elected officials (Governor, Lieutenant Governor, General Treasurer, Secretary of State), the Legislature, and the Department of Administration are agencies that perform an administrative function. The Department of Business Regulation, the Department of Labor and Training, and the Public Utilities Commission are examples of agencies that perform a regulatory function. The Department of Revenue coordinates revenue collection activities of several state divisions.

*Health and Human Services* includes agencies that provide services to individuals. These services provided include: the care of the disabled by the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals; child protective and social services provided by the Department of Children, Youth and Families; health programs at the Department of Health and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services; financial assistance and social services provided by the Department of Human Services; and pharmaceutical assistance and home health care at the Division of Elderly Affairs. The Executive Office of Health and Human Services centrally coordinates the legal, budgetary, and policymaking activities of the Human Services agencies.

The *Education* function provides educational services to Rhode Islanders. The State Board of Education and The Office of Postsecondary Education provide direct education services.

*Public Safety* is the function that provides safety and security services to Rhode Island citizens. Agencies in this function include the Department of Corrections, the Judiciary, the Attorney General and the Department of Public Safety.

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The *Natural Resources* function protects the natural and physical resources of the state and regulates the use of those resources. Agencies included in this function are the Department of Environmental Management and the Coastal Resources Management Council.

*Transportation* includes the Department of Transportation, which is the only agency in this function. It is responsible for maintaining and constructing highways in Rhode Island, and for planning and financing all surface transportation modes.

**Categories of expenditure** classify expenditures by budgeting and accounting objects of expenditure: personnel; state operations; aid to local units of government; assistance, grants, and benefits; and capital. Objects of expenditures define how funds are encumbered and expended.

*Personnel* includes the salaries, wages, and benefits of state employees, as well as personnel services purchased from outside contractors and vendors.

*Operating Supplies and Expenses* include expenses incurred while conducting the day-to-day business of state government. This category is often referred to simply as "operating". Operating expenses comprise non-personnel expenditures for operations of state government, including facilities maintenance, program and office supplies, rental of outside property, telecommunications, and insurance.

*Aid to Local Units of Government* is payments made to governmental units that provide services at the local level. Education Aid to local school districts is an example.

*Assistance, Grants and Benefits* constitutes payments to individuals and agencies which are not governmental units. Drugs, medicine and nursing facilities for the Medicaid programs, the pharmaceutical assistance program for the elderly, and cash assistance payments for the Rhode Island Works, Supplemental Security Income, and Child Care Assistance entitlements are a few examples.

*Capital Purchases and Equipment* include capital improvements and new capital construction financed via the Rhode Island Capital Plan Fund (RICAP), general revenues, or federal funds. Please note that the majority of capital improvements, supported by other forms of financing (i.e. state debt instruments), are generally found in the *Capital Budget*.

*Debt Service* includes payments on short term tax anticipation notes, long term general obligation bonds, Rhode Island Refunding Bond Authority lease payments, certificates of participation payments for the Intake Service Center, Attorney General's administrative office, Information Technology, and the Rhode Island School for the Deaf; and lease payments to the Convention Center Authority.

*Operating Transfers* include inter-fund and inter-agency transfers of financial resources.

**State Employees.** A major part of the state operations category of expenditures is salary and wage payments to employees. Public service in state government is divided into the classified service, unclassified service, and non-classified service. The classified service comprises all positions in state service, now existing or to be created, except as specifically provided under R.I.G.L. 36-4-2 for unclassified employees and R.I.G.L. 16-59-7 for Higher Education non-classified employees. The classified service is divided into a competitive branch and a non-competitive branch. Employees hired to fill positions in the classified service must be hired on the basis of merit and fitness. The non-competitive branch includes positions that require the performance of routine tasks, or those that require licenses, certificates, or registrations. These employees

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are also promoted and discharged on the basis of rules and regulations established and administered by the Rhode Island State Employees Merit System.

Certain positions are specifically designated for inclusion in the unclassified service. These positions are defined to include those in specific agencies, or types of agencies for specific purposes. Examples are employees of the Legislature, elected officials, and employees of the courts. Compensation for unclassified positions is governed by the Unclassified Pay Board and other matters are governed by rules and regulations of the unclassified system.

State service also includes special types of positions. In addition to regular full-time positions, there are *seasonal* positions in the classified service. Such positions may require the employee to work an irregular schedule such that the employee is on call when needed, or for only a portion of the year, and only for a maximum of 925 hours in a 12-month period. Employees of the Department of Environment Management who staff the state's parks, beaches, and wildlands in the summer are an example of seasonal employees.

**Financing of State Spending.** Frequent reference is made in *The Budget* to "general revenue" expenditures and expenditures from "all funds". Expenditures from all funds include both general revenue expenditures and expenditures from federal funds, restricted receipts, and other or special revenue funds.

General revenue receives the most attention in the budget because it is the largest of the "uncommitted" revenue sources available to the state. It is also the fund to which most general tax receipts are credited. The Legislature may appropriate general revenue dollars for any purpose.

Federal funds, restricted receipts, and other funds, by contrast, are dedicated to specific purposes. For example, the Legislature may not appropriate monies from the Unemployment Insurance Fund to build new prisons. Other funds include the University and College Funds, the Transportation Fund, the Unemployment Insurance Fund, the Temporary Disability Insurance Fund, and the Rhode Island Capital Plan Fund.

Within the budget documents, schedules contain expenditure data for two actual fiscal years, the current fiscal year and the budget year. The schedules display agency data by fund source for All Funds, General Revenue, Federal Funds, Restricted Receipts, and Other Funds.

**Rhode Island Capital Plan Funds.** On November 7, 2006, Rhode Island voters approved a constitutional amendment limiting state expenditures commencing in FY 2008 such that appropriations do not result in general fund expenditures exceeding 98.0 percent of general fund revenues in FY 2008, and 97.0 percent in FY 2013 and thereafter. This amendment to the Rhode Island Constitution has also restricted, as of July 1, 2007, the use of excess funds in the Rhode Island Capital Fund solely for capital projects. Previously, the fund could be used for debt reduction, payment of debt service, and capital projects. Also, the constitutional amendment increased the budget reserve account by limiting annual appropriations to ninety-seven (97%) percent of estimated revenues and increasing the cap on the budget reserve account to five (5%) percent of estimated revenues. During the 2007 Session of the General Assembly, a statutory schedule was enacted to provide for incremental decreases of 0.2 percent to gradually move spending from 98 percent of revenues to 97 percent of revenues. Additionally, the budget reserve account maximum balance would be gradually increased by increments of 0.4 percent to gradually move from 3.0 percent to 5.0 percent of resources. In FY 2015, the spending is limited to 97.0 percent of revenues and the budget reserve fund is capped at 5.0 percent of resources.

Additionally, during the 2007 Session of the General Assembly, a law was enacted which requires that

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revenues received in excess of the amount estimated in the enacted budget, net of reserve fund contributions, would be transferred to the State Retirement Fund upon completion of the post audit.

**Budget Basis.** *The Budget* is prepared on the same basis that the state's year end financial statements, which is a modified accrual basis. Briefly, this means that obligations of the state are budgeted as expenditures if the goods or services are expected to be received during the fiscal year, regardless of whether a cash payment is expected to be made by the state by June 30<sup>th</sup> of that year. Revenues are estimated on the basis of when they are "earned" by the state. For example, the estimate of gas tax revenues reflects twelve months of revenues. However, due to a one month difference in the time the liability is incurred and the actual cash payment is made by the taxpayer, the revenue estimate reflects cash received from August through July.

The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) shows the status of the state's finances on the basis of "generally accepted accounting principles" (GAAP). Every attempt is made in preparing the budget to ensure that it is consistent with the auditing standards upon which the state's financial position will be determined.

**Program Performance Measures.** The current administration continues in its effort to develop and track measures of the performance of state agencies and departments. The performance measures included in the FY 2014 budget are derived from the on-going process to identify and refine measures for state decision-makers to evaluate on an annual basis. With few exceptions, all executive branch agencies, and most other government offices, have developed a mature set of program performance measures. These measures are included on the agency and program financing pages in *The Budget*. In some cases where no measures are identified, the process of developing measures continues. Performance measures for general officers and agency central management units are not required, indicated by NA (not applicable).

**The Budget Process.** Production of a budget is a continuous process. It does, however, have certain discrete phases. In the Executive Branch, the budget process begins as soon as the legislative session ends. At that time the budget staff prepares the *Budget as Enacted* which reflects the budget enacted by the Legislature.

In the spring and early summer, budget instructions and allocations are distributed by the Budget Office to state agencies. At those times, agencies are instructed by the Budget Office to prepare a capital and operating budget. The capital budget contains a five-year capital improvement plan.

Agencies are requested to prepare operating budgets at specified target levels for submission on or before September 15 or as specified by the Budget Officer. Agencies may also be allowed the opportunity to request additional funding through special white papers, separate from the agency's budget request.

The individual budgets submitted by the state agencies show program expenditures, with appropriate funding sources for each program within the agency. These data are shown for the actual year, the current year, and the target for the budget year.

In the fall and early winter, analysts in the Budget Office review agency budget requests. The Budget Office staff prepares recommendations for the Governor. An analysis of items added or reduced from the target request is presented to the Governor. The analysis includes the basis for the agency's request and the Budget Office recommendation and the basis for it. The Governor then makes a budget determination. This process is repeated for all issues in all agencies. These decisions form the Governor's recommendations. The Budget Office compiles the individual recommendations, aggregates them, and prepares *The Budget*. *The Budget*



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reflects the revised current year funding plan submitted to the Legislature on the third Thursday in January, as well as the budget year funding plan.

During this same period between September and the start of the legislative session, House and Senate fiscal staffs also have the agency budget requests for analysis. Following receipt of the Governor's recommendations, the legislative fiscal analysts begin their analysis of the recommendations of the Governor.

The Governor's budget recommendations traditionally are incorporated in one omnibus appropriations bill, which normally includes articles containing any statutory changes which would be required to implement the Governor's budget.

The following table summarizes the **budget calendar** during the budget cycle:

Mid-July	Capital Budget Requests due to Budget Office.
Late July	Budget Instructions and Funding Targets distributed to Agencies.
Mid September	Budget requests of Agencies with enacted all funds budget of \$10.0 million or less due to Budget Office.
Late Sept./ Early Oct.	Budget requests of Agencies with enacted all funds budget of over \$10.0 million due to Budget Office.
Oct./Nov.	Agency Meetings to review Budget Recommendations.
Late Dec./ Early Jan.	Gubernatorial Decisions on current year supplement and budget year recommendations.
3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday in January	Statutory date for current-year Governor's Supplemental Appropriation bill submitted to Legislature.
3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday in January	Statutory date for budget-year Governor's Budget Recommendation bill submitted to Legislature.

**Consideration by House of Representatives and Senate.** Appropriation bills are introduced into the House and are first considered by the House Finance Committee. The Senate Finance Committee also begins hearings on the budget bill, as introduced by the Governor. The chairpersons of the committees appoint subcommittees to consider appropriations for various agencies. Subcommittees vary in size, usually between two and five persons. After reviewing the budget requests and the Governor's budget, the subcommittees recommend adjustments to the full committee for consideration. A committee may adjust the recommendations of its subcommittee. Appropriation bills are reprinted to reflect the recommendations of the full committee. The bill is then presented to the full House, and upon passage is transmitted to the Senate. The process for review of an appropriation bill in the Senate mirrors the steps followed in the House of Representatives. Usually, however, consideration by the Senate occurs in a much shorter span of time. Once the bill is presented and approved by the full Senate, the Governor has three options: 1) sign the bill into law, 2) veto the bill, or 3) allow the bill to become law without signature (after six days, Sundays excepted, the bill automatically becomes law without the Governor's signature). The General Assembly may overturn the Governor's veto with a three-fifths vote in each house.

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Board of Elections  
Secretary of State  
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Rhode Island Council on the Arts  
Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission  
Rhode Island Atomic Energy Commission  
Department of Elementary and Secondary  
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**Abby McQuade**  
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Department of Labor and Training  
Executive Office of Commerce  
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Rhode Island Industrial Facilities Corporation  
Rhode Island Industrial Recreational Building  
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Office of the Attorney General  
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Department of Behavioral Healthcare,  
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**Thomas Mullaney**  
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Capital Development, Planning and  
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OPEB Board (Chair)  
Tobacco Settlement Financing Corp (Chair)  
State Investment Commission  
State Employee Retirement Board  
Information Statement

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Student Loan Authority  
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Department of Revenue  
Lieutenant Governor  
Convention Center Authority  
Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance  
Corporation  
Housing Resources Commission  
Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank  
Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation  
Narragansett Bay Water Quality Commission  
NASBO Surveys

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