

Underage Democracy:

MONTANA STATE BUDGET

OVERVIEW:

This State Budget exercise was developed by Forward Montana Foundation and the Montana Budget & Policy Center and is intended to introduce students to the process of public budgeting - from taxpayers to funded programs.

This is a great activity to pair with a curriculum or extracurricular club or group. While we expect students to take ownership over the program, we encourage administration or educators to be available to support as needed.

OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of this exercise, students will:

- Begin to understand the state budget process
- Know where they can influence decisions on the state budget
- Reflect on the role taxes and programs play in their life

Time: Prep + 1-2 Class Periods
Grade level: 9th to 12th

Materials:

- POP Worksheet
- Moving Through the State Budget Printouts
- Department Worksheets
- Budget Flowchart
- Character Rules
- Budget Worksheets
- "Money" - Beans, Candy, Monopoly Money (*Not provided*)
- Evaluations (Online)

SCHEDULE:

5 Minutes	Introduction	Peer leaders introduce the purpose and outcomes of the State Budget exercise.
20 Minutes	Moving through the State Budget Exercise	Students participate in an activity to introduce how state budgets affect everyone.
30 - 60 Minutes	Budget Background	Students prepare for mock budget.
60 - 90 Minutes	Mock Budget	Students participate in mock budget exercise.
10 Minutes	Discussion	Students review and reflect their experience in the exercise and the effect state budgets have on their lives.
5 Minutes	Evaluation	Participants fill out evaluation cards.



Educator Guide

MONTANA STATE BUDGET

This exercise is intended to be student-led. Individual students or a group of students can be responsible for leading the exercise for credit, extra-credit, or extra-curricular interest.

Pair this exercise with a relevant section in your curriculum to increase the impact for your students!

Two weeks before:

- Assign the exercise to a student leader or group of student leaders and make a copy of the Student Facilitator Worksheet for them.
- Support student leader(s) in understanding the exercise + state budgeting process.

One week before:

- Review the Student Facilitator Worksheet with the student leader and ensure that they have an understanding of the exercise, confidence in leading the activities and discussion, and clarity around purpose and outcomes.

Day of:

- Support student leaders in leading the lesson plan.
- Provide clarification or additional resources as necessary.
 - ◆ For the Moving Through the State Budget guide, you may need to explain certain programs, including “Medicaid” to help students.
- Help with timing and moving students along the budgeting exercise.

Within one week after:

- Meet with student leaders to debrief their presentation and fill out the evaluation forms.



MONTANA STATE BUDGET

OVERVIEW:

The state budget exercise was created by young people for young people to help us understand how tax payers, government entities, program recipients, and YOU are connected. As a student leader in this process, you are gaining more than an understanding of the budget - by the end of leading this exercise, you'll develop skills that you can use forever - like public speaking, teamwork, and thoughtful evaluation. Plus, you'll have the great feeling of knowing you helped your peers participate in the democratic process!

Two weeks before:

- Read through this entire exercise and write down any questions you have for your teacher.
- Fill out the Student Facilitator Worksheet.
- Read the "How to Guide: Hosting Underage Democracy Online"

One week before:

- Review with your teacher the Student Facilitator Worksheet and your list of questions about the exercise
- Print copies of each worksheet for your classmates
 - ◆ Moving through the State Budget
 - ◆ Department Background
 - ◆ Budget Worksheets
 - ◆ Evaluations
- Run through the role play to make sure you understand the options and activity.

Day(s) of:

- Make sure you have all the supplies you need to be successful.
- Lead your peers through the exercise - you may need to act as a narrator/referee and not participate fully in the exercise - this can help move the class along and answer questions as needed.

Within one week after:

- Meet with your teacher to talk about what went well, what needs to be changed, and what you would do differently in the future.

If you have any questions throughout this process, don't hesitate to contact Forward Montana Foundation's Civic Education Organizer at devin@forwardmontana.org.



DAY 1:

5 Minutes: Introduction

This is your opportunity to set the tone and energy in the room. Start off by introducing yourself. Next, you'll explain the purpose and outcomes of the State Budgeting activity using the Student Facilitator Worksheet. Finally, you'll describe a basic outline of what the schedule will be.

DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY?

Sample script: "My name is [] and I'm stoked to be leading us in a State Budgeting exercise from Forward Montana Foundation's Underage Democracy program. This exercise was made by young people for young people. We get to explore the process of how taxes turn into program that impact your life and how WE can impact the state budgeting process. Let's get started!"

20 Minutes: Moving through the State Budget

1. Hand out the provided *Moving through the State Budget* worksheets. Give your peers 5 minutes to fill out the worksheet marking each statement that accurately describes their experience. Remind them that these worksheets will remain anonymous and they're encouraged to answer openly and honestly.
2. Collect all of the worksheets and ask students to move into a circle facing each other. There should be plenty of room for each person to move forward by about 2 feet.
3. Redistribute the worksheets randomly. *It's okay if someone gets their own worksheet, but they shouldn't announce that they got their own.*
4. Read the prompts. If on their worksheet that prompt is marked, they need to move forward. They should move forward enough that it is obvious to the other people in the classroom that they've moved.
5. After reading through all the prompts, take some time to talk about the activity. Remind the class that all of these activities are funded through the state budget and therefore state taxpayers. Move your peers through the following questions:
 - Was anyone surprised by anything on the list?
 - What is something that impacts your classmates the most on this list?
 - What is something most of your classmates are not impacted by?
 - What kind of value, if any, do these programs have for our community?
 - How else could these items be funded if not through the state budget?
 - Should these programs be funded through the state budget? Why or why not?



30-60 Minutes: Budget Background

1. Review the state budget process flowchart with the class - we will be engaging in a simplified version of this flowchart, but explain beforehand the additional steps where the budget is reviewed by committees and experts. The section of the state budget we will be exploring is the “General Fund” which includes all resources that aren’t otherwise accounted for - essentially, the negotiable parts of a state budget, which is about 40% of the entire state budget. It is funded through the collection of income taxes.
2. Divide your peers into 4 groups and assign each group one of the following departments:
 - Office of Public Instruction (OPI - K-12 Public Education)
 - Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE - Public Colleges + Universities)
 - Department of Public Health & Human Services (DPHHS - Assistance for low-income Montanans)
 - Department of Corrections (DoC - Prison system)
3. Each group will have 20 minutes to research the answers to complete the Department Background worksheet.
4. Each group reports out what they learned about the department to the class.
5. Keep the worksheets so you can post them for reference during the budget exercise.

RESEARCH TIP:

Students can find information online by googling each department and simply putting Montana ahead of it. They can also call the main line for the department. If they do call, they should introduce themselves and explain that they’re working on a class project about the state budget.



DAY 2:

60-90 Minutes

1. Take five minutes to review yesterday's information.
2. Distribute budget roles using the character cards and hand out budget worksheets according to which character card each student is assigned. Distribute cards however you choose. *They do not need to be in the same group as the department they researched yesterday, though they may be.*
3. Distribute taxpayer brackets (income levels) and income to every person in the room. To distribute income, you can use candy, monopoly money, or even just dried beans. For every eight students: one 100K earner, one 75K earner, one 50K earner, three 25K earners, and two 10K earners. Ask all students in the class to "pay taxes" according to what's listed on their taxpayer bracket card. The collected money can be placed in a jar or basket at the front of the room. Write the total number collected in front of the classroom.
4. For 15 minutes, students should do the following, keeping in mind what the total amount of taxes collected equaled:
 - **Departments:** Those students assigned to departments should work together on their individual budgets. (ie. If there are two people assigned DoC they should work together on the DoC budget).
 - **Representatives & Senators:** All representatives & senators create individual budget before meeting with their fellow legislators.
 - **Governor:** Complete the full worksheet on their own and then post it somewhere visible in the classroom.
5. For the next 15 minutes, students should do the following:
 - **Department Lobbies:** The Governor will post their budget and the department lobbies can determine whether it will fund their programs sufficiently or whether they may need to petition the governor or legislature to change it.
 - **Representatives:** The representatives merge their individual budgets & the governor's budget to create one final budget. To finalize their budget, the representatives will need to approve it with a simple majority of votes. They should then post the budget next to Governor's budget.
 - **Governor:** After publicly posting their budget, the governor can lobby or put pressure on representatives, to keep the Gov's budget proposal in tact.

LOBBY:

A "Lobby" is a group of people seeking to influence politicians or public officials on a particular issue

SIMPLE MAJORITY:

A simple majority is just like what it sounds -- one more than half of the representatives or senators simply need to vote in favor of the budget to finalize it.



- **Senators:** Talk in groups no larger than 2 about the Gov’s budget, the Representatives budget, & the Department budgets. *As the facilitator, be sure to enforce that senators are not talking in groups larger than 2.*
6. For the next 15 minutes, students should do the following:
 - **Senators:** As soon as the representatives post their budget, all the Senators come together to build their version of the budget.
 - **Governor, Representatives, & Department Lobbies:** Continue to lobby to ensure their interests are reflected in the Senate Budget.
 7. For the next 15 minutes, students should do the following:
 - **Senators:** Finalize their budget and approve it with a simple majority of senate votes. Post the budget next to the Representative and Governor budgets.
 - **Representatives:** Take into account any Senate changes they would like to include in their new budget, then send it to the Governor.
 - **Department Lobbies:** Continue to lobby to ensure their interests are reflected in the final Representative Budget.
 - **Governor:** Choose to sign the budget or send it back to the House to go through the process again. (This is time dependent)

20 Minutes: Discussion

1. Once the Governor signs the budget, review your final budget. How close is it to Montana’s 2016 allocations?
 - Office of Public Instruction : 34%
 - Commissioner of Higher Education : 10%
 - Department of Public Health and Human Services : 21%
 - Department of Corrections: 8%
 - Other: 27%
2. Do you think the way the class allocated the budget to each department was fair? What about the actual allocation of funding in 2016?
3. What parts of the Governor’s budget made it through the entire process?
4. What programs saw cuts throughout the process? Why?
5. What opportunities exist for regular Montanans to participate in the budgeting process?
6. How could you ensure your programs were funded?
7. Do you feel this is a fair system for allocating funding?
8. Are there things that you wish were funded that weren’t?
9. What tax bracket were you in? Do you feel like everyone paid their fair share?
10. Why do we pay taxes?

ALLOCATE:

To allocate is to distribute resources for a particular purpose. In this case, allocating refers to taxpayer money towards programs.



EVALUATION:

Step 1:




Meet with your teacher within one week of leading your class through the State Budget exercise to evaluate how the exercise went.

Revisit your Student Facilitator Worksheet and discuss the following questions:

- What outcomes did you accomplish? If you weren't able to accomplish an outcome, why?
- What went well?
- What would you have done differently?

Step 2:

Fill out the Forward Montana Foundation evaluation form(s) below:

Educator Evaluation	Student Leader Evaluation	Student Participant Evaluation
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfZlc8rfhPboc53ews0XBAd1kIYPcpKhrh2Ors56o0jA5dnOQ/viewform	https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeFjBaPoDBrflyMuFaKhJ6EbYVONQyDZp2OgzXoU3XoemoAzw/viewform	https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfbvuzjlo7mV6MPakra9muPfbp30Ou7cJTHlp6X6JwMIsX3A/viewform
		

Step 3:

Celebrate! It can be hard leading our peers and you've done a great job!



STUDENT FACILITATOR WORKSHEET

Purpose:

- Why should your peers care about the state budgeting process?

- Why are you interested in leading this exercise?

Outcomes:

- What three things do you hope your peers take away from this exercise?

- What two skills do you hope you develop by leading this exercise?

Process:

- What part of the exercise are you most excited to lead? Why?

- What part of the exercise are you most nervous to lead? Why?

- What do you need to make this exercise successful?

- If you're working in a group, what parts of the exercise will you lead?



MOVING THROUGH THE STATE BUDGET

Put a check mark next to each statement that describes your experience. Remember that your answers will remain anonymous so please respond openly and honestly.

<input type="checkbox"/>	I've visited a state park or forest.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I've attended a public elementary, middle, or high school.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I've called 911.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I've been to a public library.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have been incarcerated (in jail) or have a friend or family member who has been incarcerated.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I attended Head Start.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have attended a public college or university or have a friend or family member who does.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I plan to attend a public college or university.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have driven on the interstate or a highway.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have a state ID or a Montana Driver's license.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I hunt or fish on public lands.
<input type="checkbox"/>	My family has utilized SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, FKA Food Stamps).
<input type="checkbox"/>	A wildfire impacted my community, but wildland firefighters kept us safe.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have participated in 4H.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have driven through road construction.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have a friend or family member who has utilized unemployment insurance.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I use Medicaid as my health insurance.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I've driven on a public road, interstate, or highway during the winter that was cleared of snow.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I, or someone I know, has been in the foster care system.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I've voted in an election.
<input type="checkbox"/>	A friend or family member works for the state government. This includes teachers.



DEPARTMENT BACKGROUND WORKSHEET

Department: _____

- What's the purpose of this department?

- What types of programs and activities does this department fund?

- How does the department's programs & activities affect the people in your community?

- What is the most important service this department provides, in your opinion?

- Why do you think this department is funded by the state?



CHARACTER CARDS

GOVERNOR	REPRESENTATIVE
SENATOR	REPRESENTATIVE
SENATOR	REPRESENTATIVE
SENATOR	REPRESENTATIVE
SENATOR	REPRESENTATIVE
TAXPAYER (\$100k) Pay this much in state taxes: \$5,500	TAXPAYER (\$75k) Pay this much in state taxes: \$3,800
TAXPAYER (\$25k) Pay this much in state taxes: \$600	TAXPAYER (\$50k) Pay this much in state taxes: \$2,000
TAXPAYER (\$25k) Pay this much in state taxes: \$600	TAXPAYER (\$25k) Pay this much in state taxes: \$600
TAXPAYER (\$10k) Pay this much in state taxes: \$100	TAXPAYER (\$10k) Pay this much in state taxes: \$100
DPHHS	OPI
DPHHS	OPI
DoC	OCHE
DoC	OCHE



BUDGET WORKSHEET

Governor, Senator, Representative

ROLE: _____

TOTAL STATE BUDGET: \$_____

For this activity use the total collected in taxpayer dollars to distribute across these departments. Remember that a budget should reflect the state’s priorities.

Department of Public Health & Human Services	\$
Office of Public Instruction	\$
Department of Corrections	\$
Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education	\$
Total	\$

Just like when we’re planning our own personal budgets, it’s important for the state budget to have a “Rainy Day Fund” or money that can be used in case of an emergency (ie. a larger than normal wildfire season, an increase in healthcare costs for state employees, an uptick in people who are in Montana’s prisons & jails). Your budget needs to have a rainy day fund that’s at least 25% of your total budget.

Rebalance your budget to account for the “Rainy Day Fund.”

Department of Public Health & Human Services	\$
Office of Public Instruction	\$
Department of Corrections	\$
Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education	\$
Rainy Day Fund	\$
Total	\$



BUDGET WORKSHEET

Budget Tracker

Track the different budgets here.

TOTAL STATE BUDGET: \$_____

	Individual Budget	Governor's Budget	House Budget	Senate Budget	Final Budget
DPHHS	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
OPI	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
DoC	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
OCHE	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Rainy Day Fund	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$



BUDGET WORKSHEET

Department

ROLE: _____

TOTAL STATE BUDGET: \$_____

There are three key areas for a department budget:

Program costs: the supplies & resources you'll need to have a program run successfully.

Staffing costs: the people you'll need to have a program run successfully.

Operating costs: the costs of doing business like paying utilities or rent or buying furniture.

Program Budget: Create a program budget using the programs & activities your peers researched previously. Remember that you should allocate your money based on the purpose of your department. So, if you were doing the budget for OPI, your programs & activities should meet the purpose of educating Montana's students.

As you set values, remember what the total state budget equals- if you ask for a large percentage of that you may not be successful.

Program or Activity #1:	\$
Program or Activity #2:	\$
Program or Activity #3:	\$
Program or Activity #4:	\$
Program Budget Total	\$

Multiply your program budget by 2 to reflect your staffing budget.

Staffing Budget Total	\$
Program + Staffing Budget Total	\$



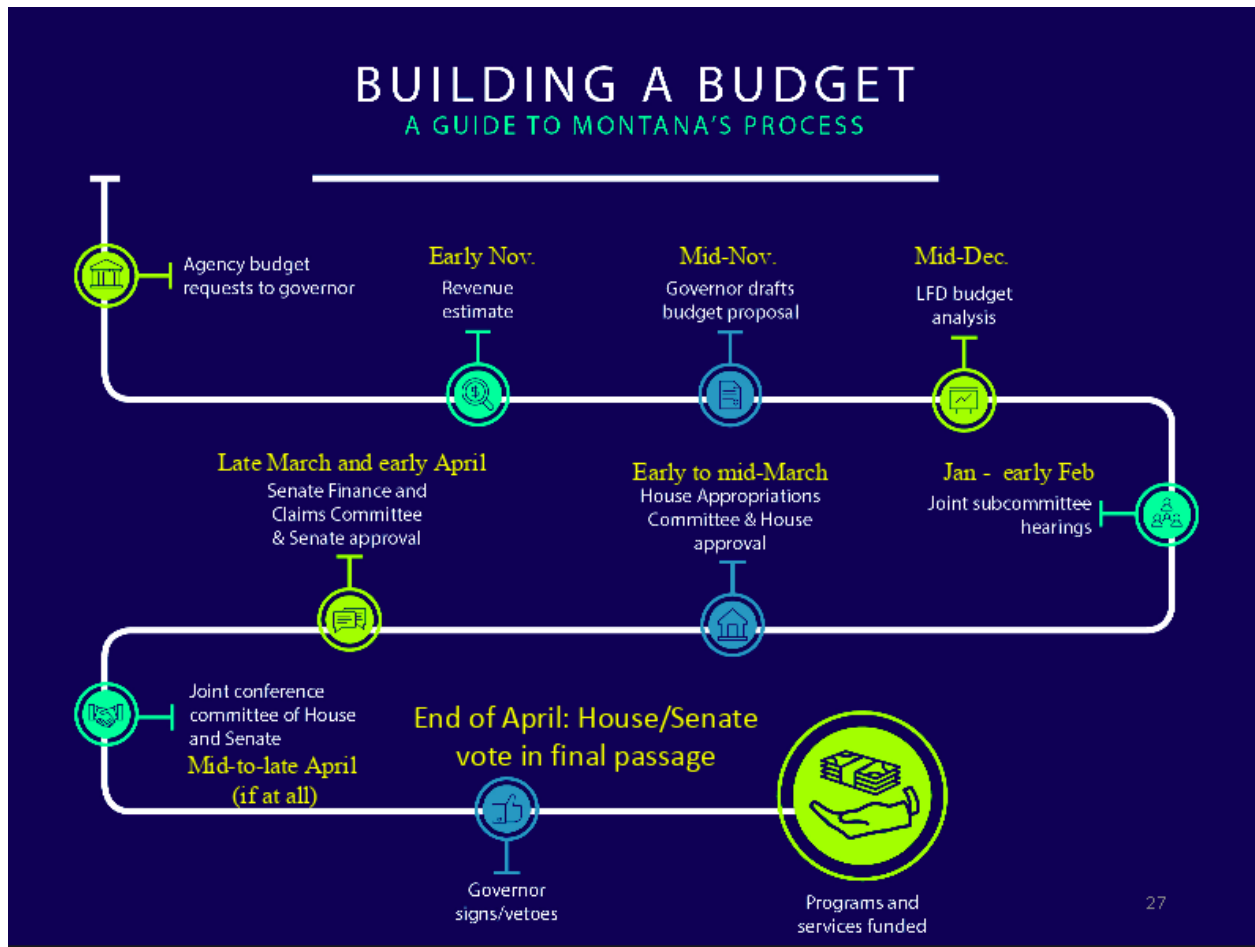
Take 7% of your Program & Staffing Budget Total and that's your Operating Total.

Operating Total	\$
TOTAL BUDGET (Program + Staff + Operating)	\$



STATE BUDGET FLOWCHART

Developed by Legislative Fiscal Division



RESOURCES

State Budget Overview:

https://leg.mt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/leg_reference/Brochures/understanding-state-finances.pdf

Office of Public Instruction:

<http://opi.mt.gov/>

Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education:

<https://mus.edu/che/>

Department of Health and Human Services:

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/>

Department of Corrections:

<https://cor.mt.gov/>

Montana Budget and Policy Center:

<http://www.montanabudget.org/>

