

# State Budget Process & HFF Advocacy Calendar

The state budget establishes how much money will be available to run the state in the coming year, and how the money is divided up between programs. The budget goes through many steps before it is approved for the upcoming fiscal year (the *fiscal* year runs from July 1 – June 30<sup>th</sup>).

A summary of the steps the budget goes through – and at what points HFF can be involved! – is presented below:

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<b>September</b>		State agencies (i.e. Department of Transitional Assistance) submit individual agency budgets to their Secretariat (i.e. Executive Office of Health and Human Services) and Secretariats Submit their budgets to the Governor by December
<b>October</b>		
<b>November</b>		
<b>December</b>		
		<b>* testimony:</b> to state agencies (EOHHS, DHCD)
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<b>January</b>	House 1 House 1	The Governor recommends a budget known as (usually in January).
<b>February</b>		<b>* testimony:</b> to joint committee on Ways and Means (both House and Senate Ways and Means members)
		<b>* alert:</b> House budget
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<b>February</b>	HWM	The <b>House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee</b> (HWM) develops a budget through April). HWM budget is released in April.
<b>March</b>	budget	
(January		
<b>April</b>		
		<b>* legislative breakfasts:</b> Shelter providers hold legislative breakfasts across the state to educate their legislators and promote budget initiatives.
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**April** House  
**May** budget  
budget

The HWM committee's budget and amendments **go before the full House**. Representatives offer amendments that are debated and voted on, the is finalized and passed on to the Senate (May).

**May** **\*alert:** House amendments  
**\*alert:** Senate budget

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**May** SWM  
**June** budget  
some time

The **Senate Ways and Means Committee (SWM)** recommends a budget, which is released in May or June.

**June** Senate  
amendments  
Budget  
modification,

The SWM committee budget and **go before the full Senate** (for discussion, and vote (May or June)).

**\*alert:** Senate amendments

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**June** Conference  
number of  
Committee  
budget  
compromise

A **Conference Committee** made up of a small representatives and senators discuss the House and the Senate budget and come up with a version or "Conference Report" (June/July).

**\*alert:** Conference Committee amendments – calls to Representatives and Senators

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who  
can

Governor's  
veto

The Conference Report **goes before the Governor** can sign it or veto all or parts of it. The Governor subtract from the budget but not add to the budget.

of Veto The **House and Senate** can **override vetoed sections**  
overrides the budget or let them stand. Overrides need to be  
supported by 2/3 of the House and Senate and to be  
completed prior to July 31, the end of the formal  
legislative sessions. In some years, the schedule  
has been extended into the fall.  
**\*alert:** veto overrides – calls to Representatives and  
Senators

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**July** Final Once overrides are complete, the legislature  
presents budget the **final budget** (“General Appropriations  
Act”) to the Governor so that state agencies can begin spending  
it.  
**\*alert:** thank Representatives and Senators for  
their budget and efforts  
**\*alert:** calls to state agencies about implementing  
budget initiatives

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**July** And everyone gets a two-month break before it  
starts all over again!  
**August**

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# STATE BUDGET PROCESS

(adapted from [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov))

Massachusetts government is funded on a fiscal year basis. The 2010 fiscal year runs from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.

## Fiscal year 2010 budget documents

Governor's Budget  
January, 2009



House Ways & Means Budget

## Budget-writing steps

The budget begins as a bill that the Governor submits in January to the House of Representatives.

The House Ways and Means Committee reviews this budget and then develops its own



recommendation.



House Budget

Once debated, amended and voted on by the full House, it becomes the House budget bill.



\*phone calls and/or visits!



Senate Ways & Means Budget

At this point, the House passes its bill to the Senate. The Senate Ways & Means Committee reviews that bill and develops its own recommendation.



Senate Budget

Once debated, amended and voted on, it becomes the Senate's budget bill.



\*phone calls and/or visits!



Conference Committee Budget

House and Senate leadership then assign members to a joint "conference committee" to negotiate the differences between the House and Senate bills. Once that work is completed, the conference committee returns its bill to the House for a vote. If the House makes any changes to the bill, it must return the bill to the conference committee to be renegotiated. Once approved by the House, the budget passes to the Senate, which then votes its approval.



\*phone calls!

Veto

From there, the Senate passes the bill to the Governor who has ten days to review and approve it, or make vetoes or reductions. The Governor may approve or veto the entire budget, or may veto or reduce certain line items or sections, but may not add anything.



Override

The House and Senate may vote to override the Governor's vetoes. Overrides require a two-thirds majority in each chamber.



Final Budget

\*phone calls!

The final budget is also known as the General Appropriations Act or "Chapter [#] of the Acts of [Year]."