

BUDGET PROCESS

North Carolina counties budget and spend money under the Local Government Budget and Fiscal control Act (LGBFCA), as adopted by the North Carolina General Assembly. The major effects of the LGBFCA on the budgetary process are as follows:

1. All departments, other than the public schools, are required to submit to the County Manager their budget requests and revenue estimates for the next fiscal year by April 30.
2. The Cumberland County Schools and Fayetteville Technical Community College must submit their proposed budgets and requests for County appropriations no later than May 15.
3. The County Manager submits the recommended budget, including a budget message, to the Board of County Commissioners not later than June 1. G.S. 159-11 requires that the recommended budget be balanced unless the Board of County Commissioners insists that an unbalanced budget be submitted.
4. On the same day that the County Manager submits the budget to the Board of County Commissioners, a copy is also filed with the Clerk to the Board for public inspection. Additional copies are made available to the news media. The Clerk to the Board must publish a notice that the budget has been delivered and is available.
5. From the time the budget is received until its adoption, the Board may conduct its review during special budget review sessions or at regular meetings. These meetings are always open to the public. Before adopting the budget ordinance, the Board of Commissioners must hold at least one public hearing for citizen comments on the proposed budget.
6. Prior to July 1, but no earlier than 10 days after the recommended budget is submitted to the Board, the governing body shall adopt a budget ordinance. The budget ordinance must contain the appropriation, the estimated revenues, and the property tax rate.
7. Budget Amendment Process:

The Board of County Commissioners adopts the budget for each year at the organizational level. The Budget Ordinance gives the County Manager, in the new fiscal year, the authority to include all outstanding encumbrances from the prior fiscal year.

During the course of the year, organizations can amend their budget due to an increase/decrease in revenues (i.e., receipt of a new grant, change in State or Federal funding, etc.); a request for use of contingency funds; or the transfer of funds between appropriation units (i.e., personnel, operating or capital expenditures) or between other organizations and funds. An organization is required to submit a budget revision form which states why the revision is needed along with the appropriate revenue and/or expenditure account information. A budget revision that increases salaries, changes revenue or requires transfers between organizations and funds must be approved by the Commissioners. All other revisions are approved by the County Manager.