

THE BUDGET PROCESS

The overall budget for Miami-Dade County is made up of several specific budgets that relate to distinct services, that include regional services provided countywide, local services in the unincorporated area, referred to as the Unincorporated Municipal Service Area (UMSA), library services provided by the Miami-Dade County Public Library System and fire rescue services provided within the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Service District, as well as numerous proprietary operations and special assessment district functions all aggregated. Each budget is separated to ensure that public revenues are used only for their authorized purposes and that residents pay only for those services available to them. Various types of revenues support Miami-Dade County's operations: taxes on property, sales, motor fuel and utility bills; fees and service charges; federal and state grants; and others. Many of these revenues are restricted in their use, which complicates the process of balancing the budget. Summary information describing major revenue sources and operating expenditure by strategic area, as well as information for each department showing the activities by supporting revenue source and the categories of expenditures are included as Appendices C and D in this volume. Capital program revenue and expenditure summaries are included as Appendices G and H.

The Multi-Year Capital Plan (also known as the Capital Improvement Plan) is prepared following state growth management legislation and the Miami-Dade County Code and is prepared along with the operating budget. It is used as the basis for updating the Capital Improvement Element of the Comprehensive Development Master Plan, the Five-Year Transportation Improvement Plan and the other major County capital planning documents. The operating budget and capital budget details are combined in each departmental narrative so that the entire story of each department is contained within a single section of the budget document.

The budget process is a year-round activity. A budget is a very dynamic plan; while typically major revenue sources, priorities and activities remain static, things change frequently as a source of funding may drop unexpectedly or a program develops an issue that must be addressed. Over the past year, we have seen unprecedented changes that have impacted revenues and expenditures. For those reasons, budget monitoring is as important as budget development so that changes can be addressed as quickly as possible.

At the beginning of the fiscal year, departmental staff updates the current year's business plans. In December and January, staff completes initial projections and estimates of revenues for the current fiscal year and the next. In February, County departments submit new business plans along with their budget requests to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). To ensure the funding of priorities, a department's budget requests are linked to the priorities identified in its business plan. Departmental and OMB staff meet to discuss service priorities and begin the process to match them with available resources. The work requires numerous meetings among County staff to discuss and evaluate proposed service levels and funding. In March, the Mayor delivers a budget address to set funding priorities. Throughout the budget development process, administrative staff interacts with Commission staff, the staff of the Office of Policy and Budgetary Affairs, and the Commission Auditor to share revenue and expenditure information. Pursuant to the County Code, the Proposed Budget must be submitted to the BCC by July 15.

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There are certain budget-related deadlines that are established by state statute. By July 1, the Office of the Property Appraiser certifies the Preliminary Property Tax Rolls. In July, the BCC considers the recommended millage rates to be used to calculate the estimated taxes published in the "Notice of Proposed Property Taxes" (also referred to as "Truth in Millage" or "TRIM" notices) sent to each property owner in August. That determination is a significant point in the budget development schedule since the millage rates included on the TRIM notices, in practice, represent a ceiling for property taxes for the ensuing fiscal year. If the BCC chooses to increase the millage rate beyond that which was advertised, all taxpayers must be re-noticed, which is expensive and would be difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish within the prescribed time frames.

In accordance with [Section 1800A of the Code](#), public meetings are required to be held throughout the County in August to discuss proposed new or increased rates for fees and taxes. Two public budget hearings are held in September prior to the adoption of the budget, set by a very specific calendar outlined in state law. At the conclusion of the second public hearing, the BCC makes final budget decisions, establishes tax rates and adopts the budget ordinances for the fiscal year which begins on October 1. During the course of the fiscal year these budgets may be amended through supplemental budget appropriations approved by the BCC, which usually take place during mid-year and at year-end.

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December - January
Budget forecasting for coming year



July 16
Maximum tax rates adopted by County Commission



January - April
Departmental budget preparation and meetings



August
Notices of Property Taxes mailed; Commission workshops held



March
Mayor's budget address



September 4
First public budget hearing

September 18
Second public budget hearing



May 1
Constitutional Budget Submission



October 1
New budget becomes effective



July 1
Tax Roll Released



July
Proposed Budget presented