

Budget Process Changes and Bureau BACs

Guidelines for BAC Staff

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BAC Founding Principles and Documents

In 2010, Council adopted [public involvement principles, indicators, and outcomes](#). In 2012, Council passed [Resolution 36960](#) providing guidelines for public involvement in City of Portland Bureau Budget Advisory Committees (BACs). This resolution included the following seven required guidelines:

1. Community and labor representation on the BAC
2. Creation of bureau BAC budget process websites
3. Maintenance of contact information lists
4. ADA and Limited English Proficiency accessibility provided
5. Handouts and presentation materials made available to the public
6. Public comment will be allowed at all meetings
7. Minority budget reports

The goal of these guidelines was to foster a culture within City bureaus to produce well-designed public involvement strategies in their budget advisory committees that allow for:

- Accessible and meaningful engagement opportunities, especially for those communities which have historically been underrepresented
- Early community education and engagement
- Recruitment of diverse membership and orientation of new BAC members
- Adequate time and opportunities for deliberation and community feedback
- Community involvement in the evaluation of BAC processes
- Development of budgets that better reflect community priorities

Summary of Changes

There are some notable changes to the FY 2019-20 budget development process that will impact BACs. These changes may change the structure of BAC discussions. It's important to note that the above goals and guidelines do not change with the proposed changes to the budget process. BAC support staff should reinforce these goals and remind BAC members that the BAC role is to advise the bureau on its budget and associated operations to meet community priorities.

Given that this is the first year of implementation of these changes, and acknowledging that many bureaus are well into the beginning of budget season, it is understandable that bureaus and BACs will need some time to adapt to these new requirements. Below is a list of key

changes and suggestions for how staff supporting BACs may be able to adjust to changes this year and in the future.

Key Change 1: Program Offers

The Mayor has indicated that he would like bureaus to present their base budgets in a ‘program offer’ format. This means the budget will be communicated through the bureau’s 6-digit functional area, or “subprogram” code. This lens should empower community members and City Council to better understand key operational programs and activities of a bureau, and focus discussion on **desired service levels** and **performance outcomes of bureau activities**, rather than focusing on the merits of marginal dollar value changes. Taking focus away from the margins should also empower bureau managers to make operational decisions to meet the priorities and desired service levels expressed by leadership and stakeholders.

BAC Staff Expectations for FY 2019-20. Bureau staff should provide:

- An appropriate level of budgetary and programmatic information to ensure BAC members understand core bureau operations, revenues and expenses, strategic plans and goals, and programmatic activities;
- Facilitate discussion to solicit BAC members’ communication of community priorities around bureau programming; and
- Clarity on how BAC feedback may be incorporated into the bureau’s requested budget.

BAC Staff Long-term Expectations. Once the budget process changes are fully implemented (over the next few budget cycles), bureau staff should provide:

- Information and budget data by program area;
- Information on current service levels including relevant performance measure targets and data;
- Information on key cost drivers and other factors influencing performance and service-level outputs;
- Opportunities to have collaborative discussions with other BACs where appropriate; and
- Clear guidelines on short- and longer-term opportunities for BAC feedback to influence bureau budgets and priorities, among other information.

BACs should be seen as trusted advisors in providing strategies to increase the transparency and accountability of bureau actions, and to better understand and meet community priorities – especially the needs and priorities of historically underrepresented communities.

Key Change 2: Constraint Budgeting and Council-Directed Changes

Bureaus will receive one budget allocation level target, and will have the flexibility to make desired changes within that allocation level without creating ‘decision-packages’ for Council approval. Notable changes to services or activities should be highlighted in program offer narratives. Any requested changes to a bureau’s resource level (enhancements or additional savings packages) should be formally directed to be developed by a Council member. While bureaus are encouraged to discuss bureau needs and priorities with their Commissioner-in-

Charge, bureaus – and BAC members – cannot individually submit packages that represent changes to the bureau’s budget. As advisors to the bureau, BAC members should inform and advise on how the bureau prioritizes all of its resources to achieve desired community outcomes.

BAC Staff Expectation for FY 2019-20. Bureau staff should focus BAC discussions on:

- Service level priorities of community members, especially historically underrepresented communities;
- Strategic plans and initiatives of the bureau;
- Service levels that the bureau can accomplish within existing resources;
- How the bureau may allocate its resources and structure its activities to better meet community priorities; and
- Input on the development of Council member-directed enhancement or savings packages, as appropriate.

BAC Staff Long-Term Expectations. Once the budget process changes are fully implemented (over the next few budget cycles), bureau staff should provide:

- Clarity on how community priorities can or will inform bureau policies and strategic plans
- Opportunities for BAC members to request information at a greater level of detail in priority service areas
- Opportunities to engage BAC members in joint problem solving on strategic issues, leading to re-allocation of resources or operational reorganizations where deemed appropriate by the bureau

Key Change 3: Other Updates to Advisory Bodies and Commissions

In addition to budget process changes, Council has directed the Office of Civic Life to review and recommend updates to citywide policies and guidelines around advisory bodies and commissions. Information and resources related to this work is available on the City of Portland intranet at: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/civic/37423>. Sign in using your City employee information to see all available materials.