State and Local Government Budgeting Tasks

Mapping a Local Budgeting Process

PAD 642

In this module, you learned about a typical budgeting process, including executive preparation and proposal, legislative review and approval, execution and implementation, and audit and evaluation (Chapter 4 of the textbook, and my lecture video). In this assignment, you will focus on one local government to examine how budgeting works in practice for the current fiscal year.

Your task is to choose a local government that interests you (ideally a city or county in New York State), gather information about its budgeting process, budget information, and use those materials to answer the questions below.

For example, if you choose Albany County, you can start from the county website:

- Albany County home: https://www.albanycountyny.gov/home
- County budget page (adopted budgets and past budgets): https://www.albanycountyny.gov/departments/management-and-budget/county-budget
- 2026 Executive Budget (PDF): https://www.albanycountyny.gov/home/showdocument?id=55587

The budget document includes many details you will need. The county's policy priorities and a description of the budget process are typically discussed in the introduction section of the budget document.

Use of Generative AI

You may use generative AI tools to help you search for and locate information (and to help you navigate large budget documents), but you are expected to verify all the information and provide evidence to support your answers. Many questions require you to apply concepts from the readings and lecture video, so be sure to connect your responses to what you learned in this module.

Questions to Answer

1. Find the FY 2026 budget for the local government you chose. In your answer, provide the link.
2. What is the government's fiscal year?
3. Based on your understanding of the budgeting process, briefly describe your government's budgeting process. What is the current status of its budget as you are writing (e.g., proposed, under review, adopted, or in execution)?
4. Who is the chief executive? Where is the budget office (if any) that supports budget development, and who is the governing body that reviews and approves the budget? What are each of their responsibilities in the process?
5. Based on the budget document, what are the main revenue sources and spending categories in this government? Do they have surplus or deficit in this current year?
6. Is the budget document clear and user-friendly to you? What information do you wish were included, or how would you prefer the information to be presented?

What to Submit

Write a two-page memo responding to the questions above.

You may use generative AI to support information gathering, but you must independently verify the information you include. In your memo, explain how you verified key facts by citing page numbers and/or table numbers from the budget document.