

How Budget Season Works

City departments typically begin working on budget requests in the summer, and the Budget Season formally begins with the issuance of a forecast document and the Mayor's Budget Address. Important 2024 dates include:

- October 4, 2023: expected Budget Address
- October 16, 2023: Committee on Budget and Government Operations hearings begin. These hearings are an excellent opportunity for Alders to raise specific issues with line items, advocate for service changes, and receive direct oversight opportunities with department leadership

Once preliminary budget documents are introduced to City Council, the Committee on Budget and Government Operations and Committee on Finance follow numerous weeks of hearings with ordinance amendments made to the budget.

The formal budget is comprised of several ordinances, which historically includes:

- A revenue ordinance, amending various sections of the Municipal Code to raise or cut revenue
- An appropriations ordinance, outlining the specific budget lines for the year
- A "management ordinance," amending various sections of the Municipal Code to implement efficiencies or services related to the budget
- A "code corrections ordinance," amending various sections of the Municipal Code
- A property tax levy, which sets the revenue collected by the City through Cook County property taxes

Once the Committees on Finance and Budget and Government Operations recommend passage on some variations of these ordinance packages, the ordinances are typically referred back to City Council, where the Mayoral administration will purposefully "defer and publish" their own budget. A "defer and publish" is a parliamentary maneuver allowed by State of Illinois law, which typically delays ordinances from being passed at City Council. A Mayoral administration will have allies in City Council defer and publish their own budget so that rivals cannot delay those ordinances; then, the final ordinances will be passed at a future City Council date (usually set 48 hours following the defer and publish motion).