

Glossary of Budget Terms

Account – A record of additions, deletions, and balances of individual assets, liabilities, equity, revenues, and expenses.

Accrual Basis – A method of accounting in which revenue is recorded in the period in which it is earned (whether or not it is collected in that period), and expenses are reported in the period when they are incurred (not matter when the disbursements are made). This method differs from the cash basis of accounting, in which income is considered earned when received and expenses are recorded when paid. All funds except the governmental funds are accounted on the accrual basis, and the governmental funds are accounted on a modified accrual basis.

Administrative Services

Departments – Refers to organizational units or departments that primarily provide services to other departments or divisions. These include:

- **Legislative** – city council and its functions;
- **Financial Services** – the accounting, financial reporting, customer service, and treasury functions;
- **Personnel Services** – provides centralized personnel services to all city operations;
- **Administrative Services** – provides supervision of financial services and personnel services as well as budget, fiscal planning, tax and license, data processing, risk management, and other general administrative services;
- **Civil Service** – the independent panel that works with personnel/ hiring issues for the Public safety departments.

Agency Fund – A governmental accounting classification used to describe those situations where one jurisdiction is acting on behalf of another.

Appropriation – The legal spending level authorized by an ordinance of the city council. Spending should not exceed this level without prior approval of the council.

Assessed Valuation – The value assigned to properties within the city that is used in computing the property taxes to be paid by property owners.

BARS – The Budgeting, Accounting, and Reporting System for accounting systems prescribed by the Washington State Auditor’s Office.

Benefits – City-provided employee benefits, such as social security insurance, retirement, worker’ s compensation, life insurance, medical insurance, vision insurance. and dental insurance.

Budget – A financial plan of operations for the city. It is a plan, not a list of accounts and amounts.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) – The element of the budget that deals with the expenditure of funds on durable capital facilities and equipment, typically with a value of more than \$5,000.

Capital Outlay – A budget category that may be a part of a capital improvement program, or in the case of expending less than \$5,000 but more than \$500, is a part of the operating budget.

Capital Project – A single project within the Capital Improvements Program.

Costs Allocation – The assignment of applicable costs incurred by a central services department (like “administrative services”) to a fund based on the benefit to the fund being assessed.

Councilmanic Bonds – Bonds that can be authorized by the city council without a vote of the public in an amount up to .75 percent of the assessed valuation of the city.

Current Expense Fund – See “General Fund”

Debt Service – Interest and principle payments on debt.

Debt Service Funds – The type of fund that accounts for the payment of debt service on general obligations of the city.

Designated Fund Balance – A portion of fund balance that has been designated by past council action for a specific purpose.

Enterprise Fund – A type of proprietary fund in which the direct beneficiaries pay for all costs of the fund through fees, or where a periodic determination of revenues and expenses is desired by management.

Fund – A self-balancing group of accounts that includes revenues and expenditures.

GAAP – “Generally Accepted Accounting Principles,” which are mostly determined by the GASB for governments.

GASB – “Governmental Accounting Standards Board,” which determines the underlying principles to be used in accounting for governmental activities.

General Fund – The fund of the city that accounts for all activity not specifically accounted for in other funds. Includes such operations as police, fire, engineering, planning, parks, museums and administration.

General Obligations – Bonds or other indebtedness of the city for which the pledge made for repayment is the full faith and credit of the city.

Governmental Fund Types – Funds that provide general government services. These include the general fund, special revenue funds, capital projects funds, and debt service funds.

Intergovernmental Revenues – Interfund charges to pay for quasi-external transactions of the fund.

Internal Controls – A system of controls established by the city that are designed to safeguard the assets of the city and provide reasonable assurances as to the accuracy of financial data.

Internal Service Funds – A type of proprietary fund that accounts for the goods and services provided to other units of the city. Payment by the benefiting unit is intended to fund the costs of providing such services.

LEOFF – The “Law Enforcement Officers and Fire Fighters” retirement system of the state that provides coverage for city public safety employees.

Levy Rate – The property tax percentage rate used in computing the property tax amount to be paid.

Licenses and Permits – A revenue category of the city derived from business licenses and building or development permits.

LID – “Local Improvement Districts.” A financing mechanism that permits the building of public infrastructure improvements which benefit a confined area and where the costs for those improvements are to be paid by the benefiting area land owners.

Operating Budget – The annual appropriation to maintain the provision of city services to the public.

PERS – “Public Employee Retirement System.” The state system for public employment retirement applicable in most cities for employees, except where LEOFF is applicable.

Preliminary Budget – That budget which is proposed by staff to the council and has not yet been adopted by the council.

Proprietary Funds – A group of funds that account for the activities of the city that are of a proprietary or “business” character. See “Enterprise Fund.”

Public Safety – A term used to define the combined budget of the police and fire departments.

Revenue Bonds – Bonds sold by the city that are secured only by the revenues of a particular system, usually the water/sewer fund and the regional water fund.

Special Revenue Funds – General government funds for which the source of monies is dedicated to a specific purpose.

Standard Work Year – 2,080 hours a year, 260 days (except leap year).

Working Capital – The year-end balance of current assets less current liabilities.