



# KANSAS BUDGET PROCESS TIMELINE: IMPORTANT DATES FOR ADVOCATES

**One of the most essential guidelines for budget advocacy is to start early.** The current 2026 fiscal year just started July 1; however, planning is already underway for the upcoming 2027 fiscal year, which will run from July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027.

The budget is a long and complicated process, but that doesn't mean advocates can't influence how it unfolds! **It's important to remember the budget is developed in two main phases: as state agencies prepare their budget requests and throughout the legislative session.**

## Phase 1 - July to December

**State agencies are required to submit budget requests to the Division of the Budget by September 15 each year.** Upon receiving these requests, the Governor begins preparing the *Governor's Budget Report*, which considers state agency requests, public and administrative priorities, and revenue forecasts. The Governor presents their budget to the Legislature at the start of the legislative session in January.

**Beginning with the 2025 session, the Legislature began their own budget process that ran concurrently to that of the Governor's.** It is expected to be repeated in the 2026 session. The Legislature established a special budget committee that met several times throughout the November and December prior to session and, using agency budget requests as a guide, wrote their own budget. This budget was introduced as a bill and used as the template from which the Legislature crafted its final budget proposal. Prior to the 2025 session, the Legislature had used the Governor's budget as the starting point for their final budget.

**In either of the above scenarios, the Legislature starts the session with a budget recommendation crafted using a combination of the base budget (appropriations approved for the prior fiscal year) and state agency budget requests.** This recommendation is introduced as a bill and amended throughout the session. If an item is included in the bill as introduced, it will remain in the bill unless it is actively removed. If an item is not included in the bill as introduced, it will need to be added through the recommendation of a legislator or committee before being voted out of the committee.

## Advocacy Opportunities

State agency outreach:

- ✓ **July and August provide targeted opportunities for advocates to collaborate with state agencies** on programmatic needs and submit funding proposals to be included in the agency's budget. In most cases, funding proposals included in state agency budget requests are more likely to be included in the Legislature's initial budget proposal.
- ✓ **Funding proposals made in collaboration with state agencies have the benefit of thorough analysis and vetting** by the agency and budget staff, and, if included in the agency's budget request, the agency becomes an additional advocate for the proposal.
- ✓ **The latter part of Phase 1 is a good time to begin building relationships** with lawmakers and legislative staff before their schedules become overwhelming. This is also a good time to educate them on priority issues, suggest topics that deserve a hearing in the year ahead, and identify legislative champions for your proposals.

Don't be surprised if you do not receive firm commitments from agency staff, the Governor's Office, or lawmakers about your budget items. Agency budget proposals are not made public until they are heard in a public meeting (such as the legislative budget meetings held just prior to session) and the Governor's budget is not public until January.

## Phase 2 - January to April

**Getting priorities included in the initial budget recommendation is just the first step in advocating for budget items.** During the second phase, advocates must work to ensure their items are kept in the budget and have new opportunities to add new items to the bill.

Phase 2 consists of more traditional advocacy and lobbying efforts, such as meeting with lawmakers and legislative staff, attending and testifying before budget committees, engaging with coalitions and campaigns, and mobilizing the public around your policy priorities.

**Important advocacy times during Phase 2 include budget committees, appropriation committees, and conference committees, which is where both legislative chambers negotiate their differences in similar bills.**

### Budget Hearings

In the early part of session, each state agency is subject to a budget hearing by both the House and the Senate. These hearings are held by budget committees (House) and budget subcommittees (Senate) and are organized based on function of government (social services, transportation, education, etc.).

**Each budget hearing consists of a budget summary provided by legislative staff, a budget presentation by the agency, and an opportunity for public testimony.**

Providing testimony is an effective way to either emphasize the importance of an item already in the bill or highlight the need for an additional budgetary item. Following the hearing, the committee will make recommendations for the agency's budget based on the information they have received.

Advocacy tips:

- ✓ **Committee testimony is most effective if at least one lawmaker on the committee is already familiar with your request.** If possible, schedule a meeting with the committee Chair or Vice Chair to discuss your testimony prior to the hearing.
- ✓ **There is strength in numbers.** Collaborate with like-minded partners to support each other's requests in your testimony. It's beneficial for a lawmaker to hear the same information from a number of conferees.
- ✓ **Have a specific request and highlight it in your testimony.** For example, "we are requesting \$XXX to provide \_\_\_\_\_ to XXX population of Kansans."

### Appropriation Committees

Once an agency budget hearing is complete, the Chair of the budget committee/subcommittee will present their recommendations to their respective

appropriations committee – the House Committee on Appropriations or Senate Committee on Ways and Means – in a process called "report outs." This process does not typically include an opportunity for public testimony or agency input.

**Once the recommendations have been presented, the committee will have an opportunity to discuss, amend, and vote them out of committee.** Most changes to agency budgets occur during the report out process. However, there continue to be opportunities to amend the bill when these committees "work the bill" before passing it out of committee and to their respective chamber, as well as on the chamber floor.

**Any member of the House or Senate appropriations committees can make a motion to amend a budget bill as it is being worked.** If you have a relationship with a legislator on an appropriations committee, they can be a valuable resource in getting your item added to the bill at this stage in the process.



### Conference Committee

**After each chamber passes its version of the budget bill, a conference committee is established to negotiate its differences.** In many cases, the budget request for which you are advocating may be in one chamber's bill but not the other, or it may be in both bills but have differing amounts of funding. The conference committee will only discuss items that are different between the two bills. If your item is in the bill and was not removed or adjusted by either the House or Senate, it will not show up on the conference committee materials, because it is something that the chambers have already established agreement on.

### Relationship Building

The most effective points of contact during the conference committee process will be the six conferees, as well as House and Senate leadership. If you are invested in the conferees taking a certain position on a conference item, these are the key individuals to assist you.



**Don't assume if your advocacy is working or not from July to December – keep sharing your budget priorities with key decision makers during this phase of budget preparation.** The more legislators who understand why your request is important, the better!

Below are key dates and advocacy opportunities to keep in mind during the budget process.

Date	Budget Process	Advocacy Opportunity
Phase 1 - July to December	<p>July-September</p> <p>Agencies receive instructions for developing budget requests.</p> <p>Agencies amend strategic plans, update performance measures, and develop budget requests.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Contact relevant state agencies with your budget proposals for consideration in the agency's request.</li> </ul>
	<p>September-November</p> <p>Agency strategic plans and budget requests are submitted to the Division of the Budget. (September 15)</p> <p>The Division of the Budget analyzes budget submissions in relation to strategic plans and available revenues and makes initial recommendations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Look for opportunities to engage with the Governor's Office, lawmakers, and key legislative staff to provide educational tours, presentations, and materials about your budget priorities.</li> </ul>
	<p>November-December</p> <p>The Division of the Budget provides its budget recommendations to agencies. (November 10)</p> <p>Agencies may appeal the Division of the Budget recommendations. The Governor makes final decisions and the Governor's Budget Report is prepared.</p> <p>The Special Legislative Budget Committee convenes to hear summaries of agency requests and begins to create its initial budget proposal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Meet with agency and Governor's Office staff to continue building support for your submitted budget proposals, providing additional information as needed.</li> </ul>
Phase 2 - January to April	<p>January</p> <p>The Governor presents recommendations regarding agency budgets to the Legislature and the Legislature introduces their budget bill.</p> <p>House and Senate appropriation committees divide the budget among subcommittees for review with legislative staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Determine if your priorities are included in either budget and to what extent. Contact House and Senate appropriation committee assistants to be added to mailing lists about hearings and notification of testimony requirements.</li> <li>➤ Contact lawmakers in House and Senate appropriation committees about your budget priorities and find a sponsor for a stand-alone bill or proviso, if needed.</li> </ul>
	<p>February-March</p> <p>Appropriation bills are reviewed in both the House and Senate. Agencies explain their missions and strategic plans and present their budget requests to the Legislature.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continue communication with Governor's Office staff for possible budget amendment opportunities. Note: The Governor's amendments do not change the Legislature's budget bill.</li> </ul>
	<p>February-April</p> <p>The Governor may choose to issue budget amendments to revise the Governor's budget bill recommendations that were made in January.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Continue communication with Governor's Office staff for possible budget amendment opportunities.</li> </ul>
	<p>March-April</p> <p>Final budget decisions are negotiated in conference committees.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Closely monitor appropriation committee calendars to track budget bill progress. While chances become less optimistic for new additions to the budget as the session continues, don't give up until the final budget is passed!</li> </ul>



Kansas Action for Children is nonprofit advocacy organization working to make Kansas a place where every child has the opportunity to grow up healthy and thrive. We work across the political spectrum to improve the lives of Kansas children through bipartisan advocacy, partnership, and information-sharing on key issues.