



# The People's Budget Budget FAQs

## What is a budget?

A budget is a moral document. It represents who we are and our shared values.

A People's Budget is one that values our communities and prioritizes investment in the people of our communities and not the privileged few.

How does the budget process work?

The City's fiscal year runs from January 1 through December 31. The budget process begins in July, and is compiled by the Office of Budget & Analysis. Projections for things like staffing, salaries, costs of providing City services, are made by department directors using the last three years of line-item costs.

The Office of Budget & Analysis reviews these projection reports in September to determine accuracy, and sends them to the Mayor, who then evaluates the gap between projected revenues and expense requests. By November, all department heads are required to appear before the Mayor and Business Administrator to explain and justify their expense requests.

At the last legislative meeting in November, the Mayor's Proposed Budget is made public and presented to City Council. The City Council then sets budget hearings in December.

## When is the budget decided on?

The budget is adopted no later than December 31, by City Council. However, in the case of a January following a municipal election, City Council may amend the budget with notice for public inspection. Any amendment must be adopted prior to February 16.

Is the Harrisburg School District included in the budget?

No. School districts are funded largely by local property taxes.



# The People's Budget Budget FAQs



## Is the Harrisburg School District included in the budget?

No. School districts are funded largely by local property taxes.

## What do all the different funds do?

### General Fund



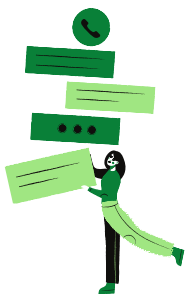
The General Fund is used to account for resources traditionally associated with the government which are not required legally or by sound financial management to be accounted for in another fund. In 2021 the General Fund accounted for approximately 58.2% of the total City budget.

### General Government



General Government fund includes costs associated with the salaries of elected officials and their support staff, expenses and maintaining the offices of the seven City Council members, the Mayor, The City Controller, the City Treasurer, and the Law Bureau (City Solicitor's Office).

### Administration



The Department of Administration is responsible for the management and supervision of all City departments. It oversees the Business Development, Communication, Community Development, Information Technology, Human Resources and Licensing, Taxation and Central Support bureaus of the City. The Business Administrator engages in labor management meetings with each of the unions, attempts to resolve grievances and contract negotiations. This fund was allotted \$4,089,076 in the 2021 budget.



# The People's Budget Budget FAQs

## Department of Finance



The Accounting Office manages the cash flows and accounts payable functions of the City. It is also responsible for preparing the annual audit and for the development of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

The Office of Budget and Analysis is responsible for the preparation, development, distribution, and monitoring of the City's annual budget. It also prepares the Mid-Year Fiscal Report.

The Purchasing Office is responsible for overseeing the procurement of most City materials, supplies, and services.

## Parks and Facilities



Parks and Facilities is a line item in the General Fund for the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Facilities. Right below \$3.5 million, the budget item accounts for the supplies, services, and salaries of 35 permanent positions. The Department manages and maintains 25 parks and the Greenbelt, various municipal buildings, and a calendar of special events and recreational programs. A recent local partnership led to the renovation of 5 existing parks.

## Public Safety



The Department of Public Safety consists of the Bureaus of Codes, Police and Fire. Public Safety accounts for 41.4% of the General Fund and 24.1% of the total City Budget. The majority of the Department of Public Safety budget is spent on personnel costs for the Bureau of Police.



# The People's Budget Budget FAQs

## 911

The Bureau of Police is responsible for responding to 911 calls, making arrests, and enforcing existing laws in the City of Harrisburg. The Bureau of Fire is responsible for providing services in fire safety education, fire codes enforcement, emergency management, and all-hazards emergency response. The Bureau of Codes is responsible for the enforcement of building construction, electrical standards, plumbing, health and sanitation, and property maintenance codes for residential and commercial structures.

## Department of Engineering & Development



The Bureau of Planning promotes development and investment in the City, reviews proposed development in light of the City's Comprehensive Plan and any relevant Codes, and gives staff support to three citizen boards: the Harrisburg Planning Commission, the Zoning Hearing Board, and the Harrisburg Architectural Review Board (HARB).

The Bureau of Traffic and Engineering provides engineering services needed by the City for maintenance of streets, street-lights, and utility systems, as well as maintaining traffic control signs and signals. This Bureau also manages capital improvement projects for the City.

## Public Works



The public works department manages many aspects of basic functioning of the city, including: management of the vehicle fleet, street maintenance, demolition of blighted properties, sanitation, and recycling. Sanitation is the best-funded of these initiatives. Public works also includes an office of sustainability, which houses one full time coordinator, and a part time solid waste and recycling manager. The 2021 budget request for public works is \$2.5 million, which is on par with budget requests in 2020 and 2019.



# The People's Budget Budget FAQs

## What are the top spending funds?

### Neighborhood Services Fund

The fund is used for refuse collection and garbage disposal for residential, commercial, and industrial establishments, and also for road repair and Parks and Recreation maintenance services.

At nearly 18 million dollars, the NSF accounts for over 13% of the 2021 Budget. It pays out the salaries of 78 employees. The fund has faced controversy with state scrutiny over unsustainable deficits. The city projects that the garbage collection fees, which supplement the fund, are only collected at 85%. To increase revenue, the city is increasing the rate of fee collection and is contracting out collection services with the Boroughs of Penbrook, Steelton, and Paxtang. Investments are being made in improving services for public health to remedy significant blight and trash issues.

### Capital Projects Fund

The Capital Projects Fund is used to account for financial resources to be used for the acquisition, construction, or improvement of major capital facilities (other than those financed by proprietary funds). This fund is receiving a massive influx of grant funding in 2021, and as a result is tackling a number of transportation-related projects, including 7th street, 2nd street, Mulder Square, East West Connector, State Street, the Capitol Gateway Project, Vision Zero, and the Courthouse Connection.



# The People's Budget Budget FAQs

## Debt Service Fund

Money flows into this city fund almost entirely from the General Fund, and is used to make payments on the City's long-term debt. The debt is the result of bonds the City sold to finance the 2003 retrofit of the incinerator as well as other projects financed by issuing bonds. Debt was then refinanced in 2013 after the City defaulted on payments, and Harrisburg has been digging out of this financial hole ever since.

## State Liquid Fuels Tax Fund

This fund exists to receive money from the state government for maintaining, lighting, building, and improving City roads and bridges. Funding is designated to Harrisburg, like all Pennsylvania municipalities, based on local road miles and local population. In addition to this state funding, Harrisburg City has transferred additional cash into this fund in 2020, and proposes to do so again in 2021. This infusion of funds brings the total projected size of this fund to \$3.8 million, an increase of 270% over 2018's budget of \$1.4 million. These funds are intended to support 5 major paving projects in Uptown (2nd Street), in Allison Hill (S. 15th St. and Bellevue), and Uptown, and to pay down a loan from the "South Paving Project".

## Senators Fund

The Senators Fund exists to manage the debt associated with Harrisburg City's ownership of the baseball stadium on City Island (now "FNB Field", but originally named "Riverside Stadium"). The stadium was constructed in 1987, and underwent a \$45 million renovation in 2009. The City has said that the current lease agreement doesn't adequately cover expenses and maintenance needs, and cancellation of the Senators' 2020 season resulted in the City being liable for an additional \$446,000 to cover the debt payment. The City's proposed 2021 budget includes \$5.75 million for the Senators Fund, an increase of 752% over what was requested in 2020.



# The People's Budget Budget FAQs

## Host Municipality Fees Fund

Under Pennsylvania Act 101 of 1998, municipalities are required to submit plans for waste and recycling management systems, and to maintain access, safe processing, billing, and environmental impact. Municipalities such as Harrisburg that host a waste disposal facility collect fees on waste that is generated outside of the municipality. According to City budget documents, the funds are to be used "for critical environmental projects and related administrative costs." In the 2021 budget, about half of the fund was to be spent on Personnel and Services (including the City's Sustainability Manager and Arborist) and contracted services. And the other half was to be spent on "grants to local units" (\$134,000), motor vehicle/equipment (\$71,209), and community cleanup reimbursements (\$40,000).

## Sanitation Fund

The Sanitation Utility Fund is a small intergovernmental fund to support the Bureau of Neighborhood Services in the Department of Public Works.

## Neighborhood Mitigation Fund

The Neighborhood Mitigation Fund is a small utility fund used to limit urban blight. The fund goes toward salvage, enforcing housing and health ordinances, and registering foreclosed properties.

## Special Events & Project Reimbursement Fund

The Special Events and Projects Reimbursement Fund accounts for fee, service provision chargeback and contribution revenue, along with related expenses, to support City events including Kipona, July 4th celebrations, New Years Eve, and the Holiday Parade. Significant City events, their set up, and their clean up are accounted for through this fund.



# The People's Budget Budget FAQs

## Parks & Recreation Fund

The Parks and Recreation Fund is one of 7 Special Revenue Funds to allocate resources outside the General Fund. In 2021, the fund was used for renovations of Reservoir Park, maintenance and upkeep of City Island, and administering after school programs funded by Highmark Blue Shield.

The Park & Recreation fund accounts for fee, contribution and grant revenue, along with related expenses, for use in the maintenance and betterment of the City's Parks & Recreation bureau, activities, and programming.

## Interested in Participating the Budget Process?

> **Visit PeoplesBudgetHBG.com for more information**

> **Take the People's Budget Survey:**

TinyURL.com/HBGPeoplesBudgetSurvey or Scan QR Code

> **Follow HAT and YPOC on social media**



Young Professionals of Color: [facebook.com/ypochbg/](https://facebook.com/ypochbg/)

Harrisburg Abolition Table: [facebook.com/harrisburg.abolition.table/](https://facebook.com/harrisburg.abolition.table/)  
[@Harrisburg.Abolition.Table](https://twitter.com/Harrisburg.Abolition.Table)

