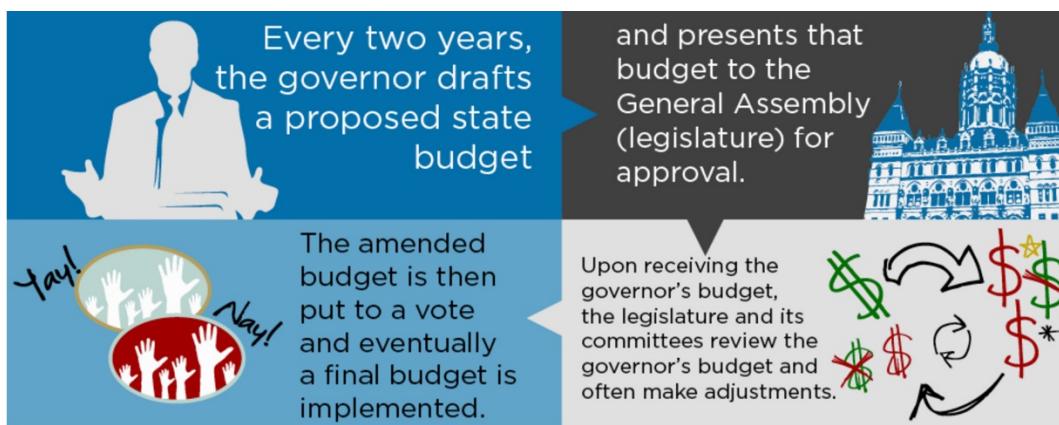


Connecticut Biennial Budget¹

The State of Connecticut has a biennial (two-year) budget process. In February of odd-numbered years,² the governor of Connecticut presents the General Assembly with a recommended budget for the next two years. In even-numbered years,³ the governor reports to the General Assembly on the status of the budget and makes recommendations for revisions and adjustments to the budget as they are needed. Connecticut's fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30. For example, the current fiscal year, FY 2021, began on July 1, 2020 and will end on June 30, 2021.⁴



Governor's Proposed Budget

The governor's two-year proposed budget is made public early in the month of February with an address to a joint session of the General Assembly. This year, the governor is scheduled to present his proposed budget on February 10.

Legislative Committee Process

The General Assembly, which is responsible under the state constitution for authorizing spending and raising revenue, then reviews the governor's proposed budget. This review begins with the Appropriations Committee and Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee holding public hearings on spending and revenues, respectively. Each

¹ This policy briefing pulls information from the following source: Connecticut General Assembly, Office of Fiscal Analysis. (2014). *The State Budget Process*. Retrieved from https://www.cga.ct.gov/ofa/Documents/year/OD/2014OD-20141015_The%20State%20Budget%20Process.pdf.

² For a diagram by the General Assembly's Office of Fiscal Analysis of the budget process in odd-numbered years, visit <http://ctstatefinance.org/assets/uploads/files/State-Budget-Cycle-Year-1.pdf>

³ For a diagram by the General Assembly's Office of Fiscal Analysis of the budget process in even-numbered years, visit <http://ctstatefinance.org/assets/uploads/files/State-Budget-Cycle-Year-2.pdf>

⁴ Image source: State of Connecticut, Office of the State Comptroller. (n.d.). State Budget. OpenConnecticut. Retrieved from <http://www.osc.ct.gov/openCT/statebudget.html>.

committee has multiple subcommittees assigned to analyze portions of the budget based on subject matter.

Over the course of the following two weeks, the Appropriations Committee provides state agencies the opportunity to present their portion of the budget to relevant subcommittees during morning and afternoon sessions, with an opportunity for the general public to testify each evening.

Next, the Appropriations subcommittees hold working group meetings with each state agency. These are opportunities for subcommittee members to review each agency's section of the budget in greater detail and to address questions posed to the agency during its budget presentation. Finally, each subcommittee reports to the full Appropriations Committee, which develops a revised budget to be voted on by the Committee members. For the 2021 regular legislative session, the Appropriations Committee has until April 23 to vote its revised budget out of the Committee.

During the same time period, the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee meets separately to determine any tax and revenue changes and hold public hearings on the bills it is considering. For the 2021 regular legislative session, the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee has until April 22 to vote its revenue package out of the Committee.

Budget Negotiations

After the Appropriations Committee approves a spending plan and the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee approves a tax package, leadership from the House of Representatives and the Senate — typically in consultation with the Office of the Governor and the Office of Policy and Management (the governor's budget office) — work to develop a final budget bill. During this time, any number of changes may be made to the budget through negotiations between the governor, the OPM, the president of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, and the co-chairs of the Appropriations Committee and the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee. Senate and House Majority and Minority leaders, as well as ranking members of the Appropriations Committee and the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee, may also be included in budget negotiations.

The negotiated budget bill then goes before the House and Senate. Budget bills are typically passed as "emergency certified bills." E-certs, as they are commonly known, are generally made public on the same day they are passed. According to the House and Senate rules, budget bills must be posted on the General Assembly's website for at least 12 hours prior to a chamber voting on it, providing the general public a very small window of opportunity to view the final version and contact their legislators before a vote on the bill takes place.

Final Budget

Each chamber of the General Assembly must pass the same exact version of the budget in order for the bill to move on to the next step in the process. In addition to the budget, which outlines the amount of spending and revenue, the General Assembly must pass enabling legislation called implementer bills that contain the policy provisions that put the budget into effect.

After being passed by both chambers, the legislature's final biennial budget must then be signed into law by the governor. However, the governor has the constitutional power to veto the budget in full if they do not agree with it, and may veto specific items in the budget through what are referred to as "line-item" vetoes. A passed budget may also go into effect without the governor's signature if the governor does not sign or veto the budget within five days of receiving the bill from the legislature. In odd-numbered years, if a biennial budget is not passed by June 30, the General Assembly can either pass a temporary budget, or the governor can issue executive orders based on the prior year's budget. If neither of those actions are taken, the government must shut down until a biennial budget is passed.