

State of Florida Financial Operations

Overview

Florida law requires that financial operations of the State be maintained through the General Revenue Fund, trust funds, and the Budget Stabilization Fund administered by the Chief Financial Officer. The majority of State tax revenues are deposited in the General Revenue Fund. Trust funds consist of monies which under law or trust agreement are segregated for a specified purpose. State monies are disbursed by the Chief Financial Officer upon warrants or other orders pursuant to appropriations acts. The Governor and Chief Financial Officer are responsible for insuring that sufficient revenues are collected to meet appropriations and that no deficits occur in State funds.

The State Constitution mandates the creation and maintenance of a Budget Stabilization Fund, in an amount not less than 5% nor more than 10% of the last complete fiscal year's net revenue collections for the General Revenue Fund. Monies in the Budget Stabilization Fund may be transferred to the General Revenue Fund to offset a deficit therein or to provide emergency funding, including payment of up to \$38 million with respect to certain uninsured losses to state property. Monies in this fund are constitutionally prohibited from being obligated or otherwise committed for any other purpose. Any withdrawals from the Budget Stabilization Fund must be restored from general revenues in five equal annual installments, commencing in the third fiscal year after the expenditure, unless the legislature establishes a different restoration schedule.

The State budget must be kept in balance from current revenues each State fiscal year (July 1-June 30), and the State may not borrow to fund governmental operations. (See "***Budget Shortfalls***" below.) Revenues in the General Revenue Fund which exceed amounts needed to fund appropriations or for transfers to the Budget Stabilization Fund are maintained as "unallocated general revenues."

Budgetary Process

The State's budgetary process is an integrated, continuous system of planning, evaluation and controls. Individual State agencies prepare and submit appropriation requests to the Office of Planning and Budgeting, Executive Office of the Governor, generally no later than October 15 of the year preceding legislative consideration. The Office of Planning and Budgeting conducts a detailed evaluation of all agency requests, after which it makes budget recommendations to the Governor.

From recommended appropriations and revenue estimates, the Governor submits a recommended budget to the legislature. After passage, the Governor may exercise line item vetoes or veto the entire bill.

Revenue Estimates

State law provides for consensus estimating conferences to develop a variety of official economic and demographic information for use in planning and budgeting. Each conference develops information within its area of expertise by unanimous consent of the conference principals. Once an estimating conference is convened, an official estimate does not exist until a new consensus

is reached.

Consensus revenue estimating conferences are generally held twice each year to estimate revenue collections for the next fiscal year based on current tax laws and administrative procedures. General State and national economic scenarios are agreed upon by the conference principals; the revenue estimates are then derived with the assistance of a custom-designed State econometric computer model. Consensus estimating conferences are held in late autumn to establish a forecast for the Governor's budget recommendations, and in the spring to determine the revenues available for appropriation during the legislative session. Conferences may reconvene at any time if it is felt that prior recommendations are no longer valid. Meetings are also held from time to time to determine fiscal impact of possible tax law changes, and after each legislative session to review changes in tax legislation and to amend official conference recommendations accordingly.

State Revenue Limitation

The rate of growth in State revenues in a given fiscal year is limited to no more than the average annual growth rate in personal income over the previous five years. Revenues have never exceeded the limitation. Revenues collected in excess of the limitation are to be deposited into the Budget Stabilization Fund unless two-thirds of the members of both houses of the legislature vote to raise the limit. The revenue limit is determined by multiplying the average annual growth rate in personal income over the previous five years by the maximum amount of revenue permitted under the cap for the previous year. State revenues include taxes, licenses, fees, and charges for services imposed by the legislature on individuals, businesses, or agencies outside of State government as well as proceeds from the sale of lottery tickets. State revenues subject to the limitation do not include lottery receipts returned as prizes; balances carried forward from prior years; proceeds from the sale of goods (e.g. land, buildings); funds pledged for debt service on State bonds; State funds used to match federal money for Medicaid (partially exempt); balances carried forward from the prior fiscal year; charges imposed on the local governmental level; receipts of the Hurricane Catastrophe Trust Fund; and revenues required to be imposed by amendment to the Constitution after July 1, 1994. The revenue limitation may be adjusted to reflect the transfer of responsibility for funding governmental functions between the State and other levels of government.

Financial Control

After the appropriations bill becomes law, ***the Office of Planning and Budgeting prepares monthly status reports comparing actual revenue receipts to the estimates on which appropriations were based.*** This constant cash flow monitoring system enables the Governor and the Chief Financial Officer to insure that revenues collected will be sufficient to meet appropriations.

All balances of General Revenue Fund appropriations for operations in each fiscal year (except appropriations for fixed capital outlay) expire on the last day of such fiscal year. Amounts identified by agencies as incurred obligations which have not been disbursed as of June 30 are carried forward, with unused amounts expiring on September 30. Because capital projects are often funded on a multi-year basis, with the full appropriation being made in the first year even though payments are actually made over multiple years, unused appropriations for fixed capital outlay revert

on February 1 of the second fiscal year (the third fiscal year if for an educational facility or a construction project of a State university).

Budget Shortfalls

Appropriations are maximum amounts available for expenditure in the current fiscal year and are contingent upon the collection of sufficient revenues. The Governor and the Chief Financial Officer are responsible for ensuring that revenues collected will be sufficient to meet appropriations and that no deficit occurs in any state fund. A determination that a deficit has occurred or will occur can be made by either the Governor or the Chief Financial Officer after consultation with the revenue estimating conference. If the Governor fails to certify a deficit, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and President of the Senate may do so after consultation with the revenue estimating conference. A determination made by the Chief Financial Officer is reported to the Governor, the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate, and subsequently to the Legislative Budget Commission for further action, if neither the Governor nor the House Speaker and Senate President certifies the existence of a deficit within 10 days after the report by the Chief Financial Officer. Within 30 days after determining that a budget shortfall will occur, the Governor is required to develop a plan of action to eliminate the budget shortfall for the executive branch and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court is required to develop a plan of action for the judicial branch.

Budget shortfalls of less than 1.5% of the money appropriated from the General Revenue Fund during a fiscal year are resolved by the Governor for the executive branch and by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court for the judicial branch, with the approval of the Legislative Budget Commission, subject to statutory guidelines and directives contained in the appropriations act. The statutory guidelines include a requirement that all branches of government are generally required to accept a proportional budget reduction. The Governor for the executive branch and the Chief Justice for the judicial branch may reduce appropriations by placing them in mandatory reserve, or withhold appropriations by placing them in budget reserve, in order to prevent deficits or implement legislative directives in the General Appropriations Act.

If the revenue estimating conference projects a shortfall in the General Revenue Fund in excess of 1.5% of the moneys appropriated from the General Revenue Fund during a fiscal year, the shortfall must be resolved by the legislature. Any available State funds may be used in eliminating shortfalls in the General Revenue Fund. Additionally, the legislature may eliminate a shortfall by reducing appropriations.

Evaluation, Accounting and Auditing Procedures

Florida has an integrated, computerized general ledger accounting system which provides on-line monitoring of budget commitments by individual agency units. This system prevents agencies from over-committing available funds. The State is in the process of updating its financial management systems.

Each State agency supported by any form of taxation, licenses, fees, imposts, or exactions must file with the Chief Financial Officer financial and other information necessary for preparation of the State's annual financial statements. In addition, each such agency must prepare financial statements showing the financial position and results of agency operations as of June 30 for internal

management purposes. The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for preparing the State's combined annual financial report, copies of which are available from the Chief Financial Officer, Division of Accounting and Auditing. The Auditor General conducts annual audits of all officers and agencies in the executive and judicial branches. Individual agency audits are made in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and governmental auditing standards as adopted by the State Board of Accountancy. In addition to the annual financial and compliance audits, performance audits are made to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of agency operations.

Systems and procedures are under development to enable the State and its component units to comply in a timely manner with Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statements No. 44, *Economic Condition Reporting: The Statistical Section* and No. 45, *Accounting and Financial Reporting by Employers for Postemployment Benefits Other Than Pensions*.

Constitutional Amendment

Voters in the 2006 general election have approved an amendment to the State Constitution which limits to 3% the amount of non-recurring general revenue which could be appropriated for recurring purposes without approval by 3/5 majority of the legislature. The amendment also establishes as a constitutional body the Legislative Budget Commission, which will establish long-range financial plans and a Government Efficiency Task Force to make recommendations for improving governmental operations and reduce costs. The amendment will become effective on January 2, 2007.

Florida Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer annually compiles and publishes the Florida Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). Anyone wishing to obtain a printed copy of the Florida Comprehensive Annual Financial Report may do so by sending a written request to the following address:

Department of Financial Services
Bureau of Accounting
Room 326S, The Fletcher Building
101 E. Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399--0350

The most recent CAFR and historical CAFR's are also available on the internet. The CAFR may be accessed through the Department of Financial Services' web page at internet address: <http://www.fldfs.com/>.

The foregoing web site address is provided for convenience of reference only. The information contained therein was not prepared by the Division of Bond Finance, and the Division of Bond Finance assumes no responsibility for the content of such web site.

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