IDAHO ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

FALL COUNTY OFFICIALS INSTITUTE · 2026

The County Budget Process

An introduction to budget timelines, roles, and accountability for Idaho county officials

Idaho Association of Counties · Stronger Counties — Stronger Idaho

AGENDA · 45 MINUTES

What we will cover today

01	Roles and responsibilities	5 min
02	Budget timeline and calendars	8 min
03	Developing the budget	10 min
04	Managing the adopted budget	6 min
05	Claims review and approval	6 min
06	Financial reporting and oversight	5 min
07	Checks, balances, and transparency	5 min

Statutory citations on every slide — Sources: final slide

WHY THE BUDGET MATTERS

The budget is a policy document

> **“The county budget is an important policy document which establishes county priorities through the allocation of county funds.”**
>
> — IAC, *Introduction to County Budgeting* (2024), p. 2

Oct. 1 – Sept. 30
The county fiscal year begins October 1.
§31-1601

Budgeted by fund
Spending from each fund may not exceed its revenues and balances.
§31-1605

A legal spending limit
The adopted budget is the appropriation every office must stay within.
§31-1606

Idaho Code §§31-1601, 31-1605, 31-1606

01 · ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Who does what

Board of county commissioners
Appropriating and taxing authority. Adopts the budget, sets levies and salaries, approves claims.
§§31-1605, 31-3106, 31-1501

County clerk (auditor)
Chief budget officer. Prepares the suggested budget and sees that the adopted budget is followed.
§§31-1602, 31-1603, 31-1611

County treasurer
The county’s banker. Settles accounts with the auditor and co-signs and pays warrants.
§§31-2101, 31-2112, 31-1511

Elected officials and department heads
Submit and justify itemized requests; spend within their appropriations.
§§31-1602, 31-1606

Prosecuting attorney
Sues on the county’s behalf to recover spending made in excess of appropriations.
§31-1607

Independent auditor
Audits the county’s financial statements each year under a written contract.
§67-450B

IAC, Introduction to County Budgeting (2024), p. 2; IAC Budgeting Manual (2023), p. 4

02 · BUDGET TIMELINE

The annual budget cycle runs April to November

APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV

1 · Requests

- **2nd Mon. Apr.** actuals cutoff for request forms
- **1st Mon. May** clerk sends forms
- **3rd Mon. May** requests due to clerk

§31-1602

2 · Review

- **Jun.–Jul.** budget work sessions
- **1st Mon. Aug.** suggested budget due to board
- **3rd week Aug.** tentative budget set and published

§§31-1603, 31-1604

3 · Adoption

- **Tue. after 1st Mon. Sept.** hearing held by
- **2nd Mon. Sept.** hearing ends; budget adopted
- **3rd Mon. Sept.** levies certified

§§31-1605, 63-808

4 · Close-out

- **Sept. 30** appropriations lapse
- **Oct. 1** new fiscal year
- **1st Mon. Nov.** prior-year claims close

§§31-1601, 31-1609

IAC Budgeting Manual (2023), ch. 1; IAC, Introduction to County Budgeting (2024), Table 1

02 · BUDGET TIMELINE

Your first budget: FY2028 calendar

2027 date	Deadline	Responsible	Idaho Code
Mon., Apr. 12	Actuals cutoff for budget request forms	All offices	§31-1602(3)
Fri., Apr. 30	Hearing date and place set; clerk notified	BOCC	§63-802A
Mon., May 3	Budget request forms sent to all offices	Clerk	§31-1602(2)
Mon., May 17	Itemized requests due to the clerk	Officials, dept. heads	§31-1602(2)
Mon., Aug. 2	Suggested budget filed with the BOCC	Clerk	§31-1604(1)
Aug. 15–21	Tentative budget set; notice published	BOCC; clerk	§31-1604
Tue., Sept. 7	Budget hearing begins (on or before)	BOCC	§31-1605
Thu., Sept. 9	Taxing districts certify budgets to the BOCC	Taxing districts	§63-803(3)
Mon., Sept. 13	Hearing concluded; budget adopted	BOCC	§31-1605
Mon., Sept. 20	Levy record certified to assessor, collector, STC	BOCC; clerk	§63-808
Sept. 30 / Oct. 1	FY2027 ends; FY2028 begins	All offices	§31-1601
Mon., Nov. 1	FY2027 claims close; tax rolls to collector	BOCC; clerk	§§31-1609, 63-811

Dates computed from statutory rules; confirm locally. “Third week in August” shown as Aug. 15–21.

02 · BUDGET TIMELINE

Financial oversight is year-round

JAN Quarterly statement by Jan. 31	**FEB** Review budget vs. actual	**MAR** State registry opens Mar. 1	**APR** Quarterly statement; hearing date to clerk	**MAY** Budget requests out and due	**JUN** Audit report filed by Jun. 30
JUL Quarterly statement; work sessions	**AUG** Suggested and tentative budget	**SEP** Hearing, adoption, levies	**OCT** New FY; quarterly statement; annual settlement	**NOV** Prior-year claims close	**DEC** Registry report due Dec. 1

EVERY MONTH Treasurer settles with the auditor (1st Monday) · board publishes proceedings with spending by fund · board allows claims at its regular meetings

Shaded = quarterly statement (§31-1611) · §§31-2112, 31-819, 67-450B, 67-1076 · SCO UARM (2025)

03 · DEVELOPING THE BUDGET

From requests to certified levies

STEP 1 · CLERK
Request forms sent
1st Mon. May · §31-1602(2)

→

STEP 2 · OFFICES
Itemized requests filed
3rd Mon. May · §31-1602(2)

→

STEP 3 · CLERK
Suggested budget, balanced by fund
1st Mon. Aug. · §§31-1603, 31-1604

→

STEP 4 · BOCC
Work sessions; tentative budget
Jun.–Aug. · §31-1604(1)

STEP 5 · CLERK
Tentative budget published
3rd week Aug. · §31-1604(2)

→

STEP 6 · BOCC
Public hearing
Tue. after 1st Mon. Sept. · §31-1605

→

STEP 7 · BOCC
Final budget adopted by resolution
2nd Mon. Sept. · §31-1605

→

STEP 8 · BOCC
Levies certified to the STC
3rd Mon. Sept. · §§63-805, 63-808

BOCC = board of county commissioners · STC = State Tax Commission · IAC Budgeting Manual (2023), ch. 2

What every budget request must show

On forms furnished by the clerk

- Probable revenue from sources other than taxation, plus all expenditures, with a brief explanatory statement
- Actual revenue and spending for the two preceding fiscal years
- Actuals to the second Monday of April and estimates for the full current year
- Estimated year-end balances available to the office
- Spending classified, at a minimum, as salaries, benefits, and detail of other expenses

§31-1602(2)–(5)

Late or missing?

The board may impose a $10–$50 penalty, deducted from the official's next salary warrant.

§31-1602(6)

Clerk prepares it

If not filed in time, the clerk's estimate, once approved by the board, becomes that office's budget.

§31-1602(7)

Tentative budget to final budget

Tentative budget

- Published with property tax and other revenue, and amounts by office
- Shows two prior years of spending by class
- Once published, it can be reduced; an increase needs new notice

§31-1604(2)

Public hearing

- Any taxpayer may be heard on any part
- Officials may be called and examined on their budgets
- May continue day to day; must end by the 2nd Monday of September

§31-1605

Final budget

- No greater than the tentative budget
- Property tax no greater than advertised
- Each fund's spending within its revenue and balances
- Adopted by resolution in the minutes

§31-1605

Property tax budgets have legal limits

3% growth
On the highest property tax budget of the prior three years

+ New construction
Preliminary levy rate × 90% of new construction roll value

8% cap on the total increase
Expiring urban renewal value is excluded from the cap

Forgone increases
Reserve by resolution; recover up to 1% a year for operations or 3% one-time for capital, after notice and hearing

§63-802(1)(a), (e), (f) · levy rate caps: §63-805

WORKED EXAMPLE · "ALTURAS COUNTY"

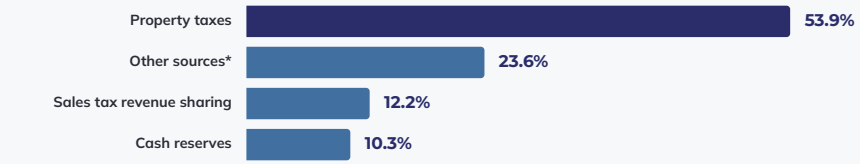
Highest of prior 3 years	$10,300,000
+ 3% growth	$309,000
+ New construction	$486,000
Property tax budget	**$11,095,000**

7.7% increase — under the 8% cap

IAC's 2024 method applies 90% to new construction; verify against current §63-802(1)(a)(i).

Example: IAC, Introduction to County Budgeting (2024), pp. 9–11 (hypothetical county) · Idaho Code §63-802

Where county budget revenue comes from



*PILT, state and federal highway funds, liquor funds, user fees

General revenue
Any county purpose: current expense levy, sales tax revenue sharing, PILT

Dedicated revenue
Only its legal purpose: highway user revenue, 911 fees, many special levies

Statewide · IAC analysis of L2 data, Introduction to County Budgeting (2024), p. 8

“Expenditures made, liabilities incurred or warrants issued in excess of any of the budget appropriations … shall not be a liability of the county, but the official … shall be liable therefor personally and upon his official bond.”

— Idaho Code §31-1607

Appropriations for salaries, benefits, and other expenses are each office’s legal spending limit.

The clerk may issue no warrant, and the board approve no claim, above the appropriation.

Lawful ways to change the budget mid-year

Tool	What it allows	Requirement	Idaho Code
Budget adjustment	Spend unscheduled grants or donations	Same procedure; no new property tax	§31-1605
General reserve	Up to 5% of current expense, contingencies	Unanimous vote; no special-levy funds	§31-1605
Justice reserve	Up to 5% of the justice fund budget	Within levy limits	§63-805(2)
Emergency	Fire, flood, epidemic, capital crime	Unanimous resolution of facts	§31-1608
Fund transfer	Move money out of an inoperative fund	Resolution to auditor and treasurer	§31-1508
Road and bridge	Transfers other than salaries, benefits	Resolution entered in minutes	§31-1606
Salary increase	Raise after the final budget is adopted	Resolution entered in minutes	§31-1606
Fund balance	Carry balances into the next year	Resolution of the board	§31-1605A

05 · CLAIMS REVIEW AND APPROVAL

How a bill becomes a payment

1	**Goods or services received** Bill documented with a receipt or itemized invoice	**Department**	§31-1501
2	**Official certifies** Amount is justly due or services were rendered	**Elected official or department head**	§31-1501
3	**Clerk audits and lists** Checks the appropriation; lists payee, amount, and fund	**Clerk (auditor)**	§§31-1502, 31-1607
4	**Board examines and decides** Allows, rejects, or partially allows; certifies the list	**Board of commissioners**	§§31-1502, 31-1505
5	**Warrant issued** Demand warrants signed jointly by auditor and treasurer	**Clerk and treasurer**	§31-1511
6	**Treasurer pays** Only warrants matching the certified list, in order	**Treasurer**	§§31-1502, 31-1511

05 · CLAIMS REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Rules every claim must meet

One-year limit
No claim is paid if not presented within a year of the bill date.

§31-1501

Documentation required
No claim is considered without a receipt or itemized documentation certified by the official.

§31-1501

Within the appropriation
No claim approved above the appropriation, except by court order or emergency.

§31-1607

Salaries and expenses
Fixed salaries need no claim; expenses are certified by receipt and charged to the office.

§31-3101

Insufficient funds
Warrants on an empty fund are registered and paid in order of registration.

§§31-1510, 31-1511

Prior-year claims
Paid by the 1st Monday in November; later claims go in the next budget.

§31-1609

Reports required by Idaho Code

Report	From → to	When	Idaho Code
Quarterly statement	Clerk → board	Last day of Jan., Apr., Jul., Oct.	§31-1611
Settlement of accounts	Treasurer ↔ clerk	1st Monday monthly; annual in October	§31-2112
Financial summary	Board → public	Monthly; balance sheet annually	§31-819
Fee statements	Officers → clerk of board	At least quarterly, sworn	§31-3101
Levy record	Clerk → assessor, collector, STC	3rd Monday in September	§63-808
Independent audit	County → LSO via SCO portal	Within 9 months of year-end	§§67-450B, 67-1076
Central Registry	County → State Controller	December 1	§67-1076

The quarterly statement is your early warning. The clerk must flag any possible deficit or excessive spending so the board can act.

LSO = Legislative Services Office · SCO = State Controller's Office · IAC Budgeting Manual (2023), p. 37

The annual independent audit

MINIMUM AUDIT BY ANNUAL EXPENDITURES

> $300,000	Full audit every fiscal year
$200–300K	Annual audit, or biennial by election
≤ $200,000	No minimum requirement

Federal audit rules (Single Audit) supersede these minimums.

Requirements

- Independent auditor, government auditing standards
- Written contract with the auditor
- Audit cost included in the annual budget
- Filed within 9 months: June 30 for a Sept. 30 year-end
- Submitted through the State Controller's portal
- Jail commissary fund audited annually (§20-618)

Idaho Code §§67-450B, 67-1076(6) · IAC, Introduction to County Budgeting (2024), p. 7

07 · CHECKS AND BALANCES

No one office controls the money alone

Authorize

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

- Adopts budget and levies
- Examines and allows claims
- Approves transfers by resolution

§§31-1605, 31-1502

Record

CLERK (AUDITOR)

- Keeps the books and the claims list
- Issues no warrant over appropriation
- Reports to the board quarterly

§§31-1602, 31-1607, 31-1611

Hold and pay

TREASURER

- Holds county cash as its banker
- Co-signs warrants with the auditor
- Pays only warrants on the certified list

§§31-1502, 31-1511, 31-2112

ALSO CHECKING Officials certify claims · independent auditor reviews · prosecutor enforces · taxpayers are heard

07 · CHECKS AND BALANCES

Internal controls and personal accountability

> **"In order to safeguard public funds, it is critical for each county to develop, implement, and regularly update financial policies related to internal control structures."**
>
> — IAC, *Introduction to County Budgeting* (2024), p. 7

POLICIES TO ADOPT BY RESOLUTION

- Internal controls
- Procurement
- Credit cards
- Travel
- Petty cash and cash handling
- Fund balance
- Financial reporting

Officers are accountable

- Fees go to the treasury on the board's schedule **(§31-3101)**
- Failing to pay fees in within 10 days of quarterly settlement is embezzlement **(§31-3102)**
- Overspending is a personal liability on the official's bond **(§31-1607)**
- Accounting follows GAAP and GASB standards **(§31-1509)**

07 · TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

State Central Registry: Due December 1

Administrative
Board terms, contact information, fiscal year

Financial
Adopted budget, unaudited budget-to-actual, last audit date

Debt
Total bonds and debt, average term and interest rate

Also due
Audit, annual financial template, salary report

IF THE COUNTY DOES NOT COMPLY

- Late fee up to **$500 a day** after a 30-day notice
- No 3%, new construction, or forgone **tax increases**
- **Sales tax revenue sharing** withheld
- **Public notice** of noncompliance

The clerk's added role: notify local districts of the requirements and submit the county's list of taxing districts.

Idaho Code §§67-1075, 67-1076 · SCO, Uniform Accounting & Reporting Manual (March 2025), pp. 10–14

07 · TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Where the public sees the county's finances

> **"Financial reporting should assist in fulfilling government's duty to be publicly accountable and should enable users to access that accountability."**
> — GASB financial reporting objective, as quoted in IAC, *Introduction to County Budgeting* (2024), p. 6

Published budget
Tentative budget and hearing notice
§31-1604

Public hearing
Any taxpayer may be heard
§31-1605

Monthly summary
Proceedings with spending by fund
§31-819

Annual audit
Independent opinion on the books
§67-450B

State website
Searchable data across Idaho
§67-1075(2)

Idaho Code §§31-819, 31-1604, 31-1605, 67-450B, 67-1075 · IAC (2024), p. 6

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Five things to remember

1. **The calendar is law.** Statutory deadlines from April to November drive the budget.
2. **Appropriations are hard limits.** Overspending is a personal liability.
3. **Every claim needs documentation,** certification, and board approval.
4. **Use the reports.** Quarterly statements, monthly reviews, and the audit.
5. **Transparency is required.** Publish, hear the public, and report by Dec. 1.

Idaho Code §§31-1601–31-1611, 31-1501–31-1511, 67-450B, 67-1076

REFERENCES

Sources and resources

IDAHO ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

Idaho Code

- Title 31, Ch. 15: County Finances and Claims
- Title 31, Ch. 16: County Budget Law
- Title 31, Ch. 31: Salaries of Officers
- Title 63, Ch. 8: Levy and Apportionment of Taxes
- Title 67, Ch. 10: §§67-1075, 67-1076
- §67-450B: Independent Financial Audits

Publications

- IAC, *Introduction to County Budgeting: A Guide for County Officials* (2024)
- IAC, *Idaho Counties Uniform Accounting and Budgeting Manual* (2023)
- Idaho State Controller's Office, *Uniform Accounting & Reporting Manual* (approved March 6, 2025)