

City Council Budget Simulation

Local Government Decision-Making Activity

Course: Civics / Government / Economics

Grades: 9–12

Time: 50–75 Minutes

Topic: Budget Priorities and Public Policy

Essential Question:

How should local governments decide which community needs deserve funding when there is not enough money for everything?

Scenario

You are a member of the city council. Your city has received a \$1,000,000 federal grant. Your job is to decide which projects receive funding.

Rules

- You cannot spend more than \$1,000,000.
- Projects must be funded fully or not at all.
- Unused funds are returned.
- You must justify each decision.
- You will present your plan.

Project Requests

Project	Description	Cost
Senior Center Kitchen	Out of compliance; serves 100 seniors daily	\$250,000
After-School Tutoring	Serves disadvantaged students	\$400,000
Little League Field	Used by 1,500 children	\$200,000
Courthouse Roof Repair	Temporary fix	\$25,000
Courthouse Roof Replace	Protects records	\$250,000
New Fire Engine	Needed for response times	\$250,000
Shopping Complex	Could employ 300–600 people	\$600,000
Employee Bonus	One-time bonus	\$300,000

Total Requests: \$2,250,000 | Available Funds: \$1,000,000

Budget Selection Worksheet

Choose which projects you will fund.

Project Selected Cost

Total Spent: \$_____

Decision Justification

Why did you prioritize these projects?

Who benefits most?

Is each choice a need or a want?

What are the long-term impacts?

Rejected Projects Analysis

Choose at least two projects you did not fund. Explain why.

Presentation Preparation

- What was your top priority?
- What was your toughest decision?
- Which project do you wish you could fund?