



The Budget Process

The budget cycle begins on July 1st for each biennium (two-year period). There are a number of steps that must occur before the budget can be enacted. Let's go through these steps using the 2009-2011 biennium as an example.

Step 1: More than a year before the new budget is signed and put into effect, state agencies begin planning their budgets and "submitting budget proposals to the Governor."ⁱ For the 2009-2011 budget cycle, agencies submitted their proposals over the summer of 2008.

Step 2: The Office of Financial Management reviews the agency budget submissions "and prepares the Governor's budget recommendation."ⁱⁱ This occurred during the fall of 2008 for the 2009-2011 biennium.

Step 3: The Governor submits a recommended budget to the legislature.ⁱⁱⁱ In December 2008, the Governor gave her recommendations for the 2009-2011 cycle.

Step 4: The Washington State Legislature decides how much money each agency can spend. For the current budget, the Legislature began convening in January 2009.

Step 5: The Legislature passes the budget. This occurred during the spring of 2009, before the 2009-2011 budget took effect.

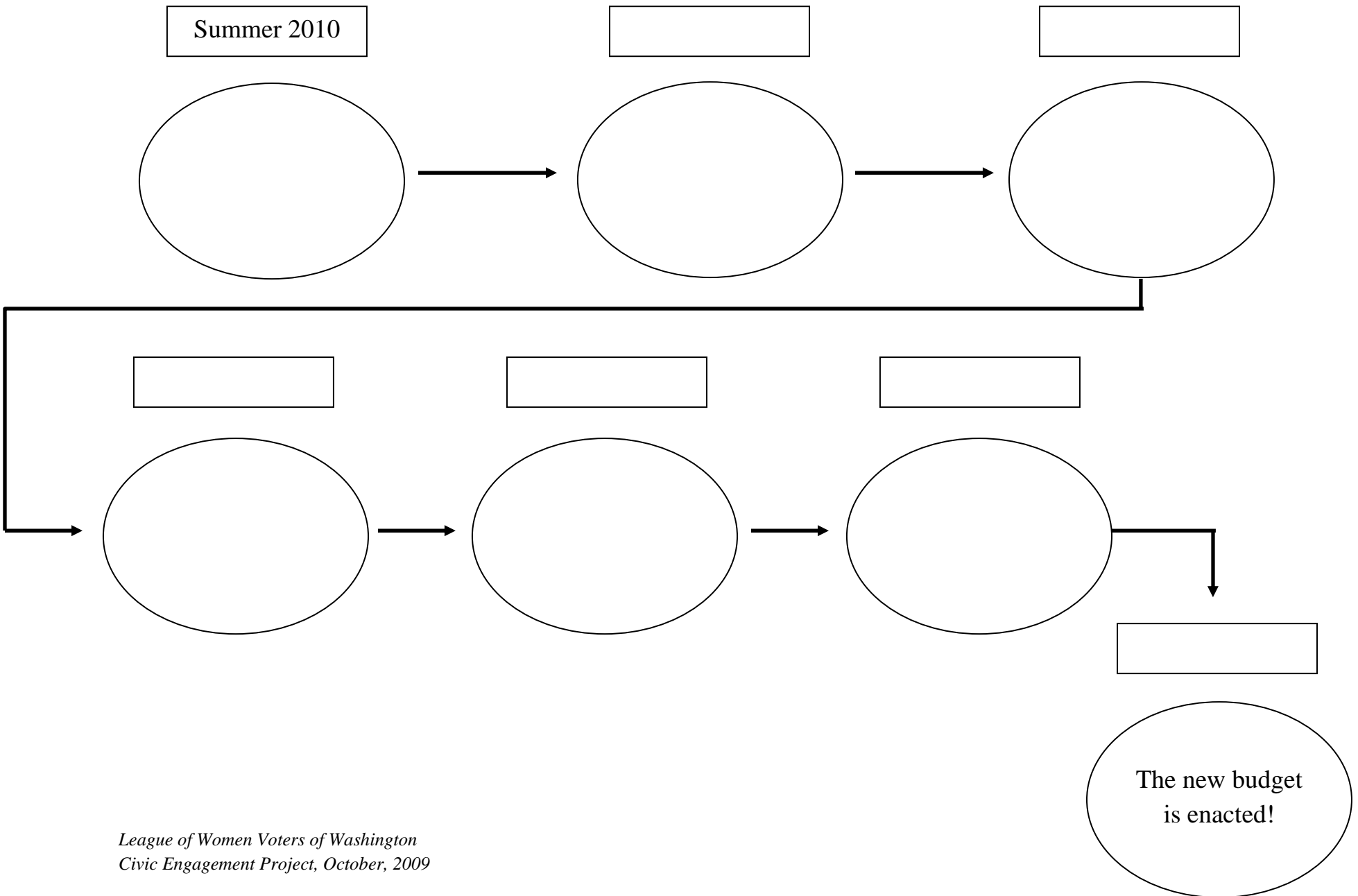
Step 6: The Governor reviews the budget and then signs it in May or June before the new cycle.^{iv} For the 2009-2011 biennium, the budget was signed by June 2009.

Step 7: The two-year budget is enacted. The 2009-2011 cycle began on July 1, 2009 and will remain in effect until June 30, 2011.^v

Now think about the process for the 2011-2013 biennium. What is happening right now in order for the next budget to be enacted? Use the steps above to fill in the chart for the next biennium.



“The Biennial Budget Cycle”^{vi}





The LWVWA Civic Engagement Project
is on Facebook and Twitter!

ⁱ State of Washington Office of Financial Management, Budget Division, *Washington State Budget Process*, July 2009, p. 1.

ⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

^{iv} *Ibid.*

^v *Ibid.*

^{vi} *Ibid.*