

Budget Advocate Education/Coaching - Opening

1. A two part question for everyone. Make your answer brief – just one sentence for each.
 - Why did you sign up to be a Budget Advocate? One sentence.
 - What skill or background will help you to be effective? One sentence, please.
2. B's experience: Career with County of Los Angeles – many similarities with City of Los Angeles
 - Several years with Budget Advocates - meeting with many Departments, preparing talking points, encouraging Budget Advocates to do the research and attend meetings, and preparing reports. It's a privilege to meet with top managers, a unique, an unprecedented opportunity to bring the concerns of our Neighborhoods to the attention of the Departments.
3. Goal for this training
 - Share experience - returning Budget Advocates - One sentence please.
 - Hit the ground running - have the tools to be effective out of the gate.
4. What is the Budget and why is it important?
 - The Budget attaches dollars to what the city will do with its revenues. How the government allocates its resources is the clearest explanation of what the government values. The City's priorities are reflected in its budget.
 - The Budget is more than where the money gets spent. The Budget also involves projected revenues, what the city charges for the services it provides, timing expenses to be sure the City does not get ahead of revenues, adjustments throughout the year, long range planning, where new revenue will come from (and the impact of those revenues on City residents/businesses), etc.
5. The role of Budget Advocates has evolved.
 - From "Neutral Observers"
 - To meeting with General Managers and their budget staffs
 - Then advocating for or against items in individual Department budgets
 - And for the last 6 years or more producing a White Paper which is published and distributed to the Mayor and to the City Council.
 - Also, BAs meet with the Mayor to deliver the White Paper
 - At a hearing of the Budget & Finance Committee Budget Advocates sit at the Council table in Council Chambers to discuss budget issues.
6. What can you do as a Budget Advocate?
 - Join a committee meeting with a Department you want to learn more about or you have a question about services the Department provides.
 - Attend committee meetings.
 - Look at all the resources available – **last year's budget, last year's Budget Advocate report, the Department's web page, the Department's roster, NEWS reports, etc.**
 - What do you think the Department's priorities should be? Do more of or less of?
 - Get involved with support activities – outreach, media, website, Regional Budget Day, white paper, etc.
7. Additional resources: CAO's Budget information, Controller's Dashboard, Written reports from individual Departments, Internet searches, ask Budget Advocates who have had experience with the Department.