

# BUDGET LETTER

	NUMBER: 14-12
SUBJECT: 2015-16 BUDGET POLICY	DATE ISSUED: July 15, 2014
REFERENCES: BL14-05, BL14-07	SUPERSEDES: 13-14

TO: Agency Secretaries  
Department Directors  
Department Chief Counsels  
Department Budget and Accounting Officers  
Department of Finance Budget and Accounting Staff

FROM: DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

This Budget Letter sets forth the Governor's policy direction for his proposed 2015-16 Budget. As a reminder, BL14-05, issued April 14, 2014, outlines the technical and procedural requirements for preparation of the 2015-16 Governor's Budget.

## Priorities

The Administration's primary budget focus continues to be maintaining a structurally balanced budget that preserves critical state services and pays down debt and obligations. Departments must continue to control costs, increase efficiency, and refrain from creating new—or expanding existing—programs. Also, this year we will be making a major transition from our legacy information technology systems to Financial Information System for California (FI\$Cal), which will require all departments to technically modify the format of budget submissions to adjust to the new requirements of FI\$Cal.

## Budget Change Proposals (BCPs) and Enrollment/Caseload/Population (ECP) Policy

To maintain a structurally balanced budget, departments' ability to submit BCPs or ECP policy changes for the 2015-16 Budget remains limited, regardless of the funding source.

Accordingly, departments (including those not under the Governor's direct authority) should submit BCPs or ECP policy changes for the 2015-16 Budget only in the following circumstances:

- a. Statutory changes necessary for departments to manage within their budgets.
- b. Expected changes in programs' ECPs.
- c. Paying down state debts and liabilities.
- d. Reducing deferred maintenance.
- e. Existing or ongoing Information Technology (IT) projects.
- f. Existing or ongoing Capital Outlay projects.
- g. New Capital Outlay projects, if critical, such as fire, life, safety, or court-ordered projects.
- h. Cost-cutting measures or authorizing efficiencies to offset unavoidable costs.
- i. Improved budgeting practices related to zero-base budgeting, performance measures, and other efforts as directed by Executive Order B-13-11.

In the event there is a critical need that does not meet the criteria outlined above and the agency secretary believes a new BCP is needed to prevent adverse consequences, or to address adverse problems a department is already encountering, contact your Finance Program Budget Manager before the due date.

All other BCP requests that do not fit into the categories listed above will be returned to departments without review.

Departments should assess whether statutory changes (including budget bill language) are necessary to effectuate any BCP that is submitted. If statutory changes are necessary, the department's BCP must include a copy of the proposed legislation. This requirement is necessary for Finance to comply with its obligations under Government Code §13308 to submit proposed statutory changes to the Legislature, through the Legislative Counsel. BCPs, including requests for Budget Bill language changes, must be submitted to Finance no later than **September 2, 2014**. (This is a change from the due date stated in BL14-05.)

FI\$Cal Wave 1 departments will enter information directly into the new FI\$Cal System for 2015-16 BCPs and all non-Wave 1 departments will use the BCP template to be provided separately.

### **BCP Confidentiality**

Information contained in BCPs is an integral part of the Governor's deliberation process. Accordingly, every BCP must be treated as privileged and confidential until and unless the BCP is released to the Legislature as part of the Governor's Budget, the April 1 Finance Letter process, or the May Revision. Disapproved, unapproved, and draft BCPs (i.e., BCPs not released to the Legislature) remain confidential indefinitely, and may not be released. Final BCPs are those that contain a Finance supervisor's signature/approval attesting that the BCP has been submitted to the Legislature.

Questions about Public Records Act or litigation discovery requests for budget documents should be directed to department legal staff and, if necessary, by department legal staff to Finance legal staff.

If you have any questions about this Budget Letter, please contact your Finance budget analyst.

/s/ Michael Cohen

MICHAEL COHEN  
Director