

# **Glossary of Budget Terms**



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## Glossary of Budget Terms

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**Actual Expenditures:** Amounts certified by the Division of Accounts and Control that have been spent in past fiscal periods. Actual expenditures are distinguished from budgeted amounts for incomplete fiscal periods which are planned or projected expenditures. Actual expenditures for the prior fiscal year are based upon the State Controller's preliminary closing and do not reflect any post-audit adjustments.

**Appropriation:** An act of the General Assembly authorizing expenditures of designated amounts of public funds for specific state budget programs within a state fiscal year. In recent appropriation acts, appropriations are equated with line items within the act.

**Federal Funds:** Amounts collected and made available to the state usually in the form of categorical or block grants and entitlements.

**Fiscal Note:** An estimate of the fiscal impact of legislative bills either drafted, introduced, or at a later stage of consideration.

**Fiscal Year (FY):** A twelve-month state accounting period, which varies from a calendar year and federal fiscal year. The fiscal year for Rhode Island State government begins on July 1 and ends on June 30. The federal fiscal year begins on October 1 and ends on September 30.

**Five-Year Forecast:** Financial projections of anticipated revenues and expenditures, including detail of principal revenue sources and expenditures by major program areas over five fiscal years. Such projections are required by state law to be included in the Governor's annual budget submitted to the General Assembly.

**FTE Authorization:** The number of full-time equivalent positions allowed to each agency and department as set forth in the Appropriation Act or the Supplemental Appropriation Act passed by the General Assembly. Departments and agencies are expected to keep within these FTE caps. Should an adjustment to the full time equivalent positions authorized for a department or agency be required for an urgent reason, a change in the FTE cap may be authorized with the approval of the Governor, the Speaker of the House and Senate Majority Leader.

**Full-Time Equivalent Positions (FTE):** A numerical measurement of the workforce, which constitutes a common denominator between full and part-time employment. To illustrate, an employee working full-time is counted as 1.0 full time equivalent position while an employee working half-time would be counted as a 0.5 full time equivalent position. If a state agency hired these two employees only, the total number of full-time equivalent positions for that agency would be 1.5. For a technical description of the part-time positions included in the full-time equivalent position count, see the glossary in the Personnel Supplement.

**Fund Balance:** See general fund free surplus.

**General Fund:** The operating fund of the State, to which all revenues not specifically directed by statute to another fund, are deposited. This includes state general revenue, federal, restricted, and other funds, which support state operations.

**General Fund Free Surplus:** The undesignated fund balance, which is available for appropriation and expenditures in subsequent fiscal years.

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**General Revenues:** State tax and departmental receipts which are credited for discretionary appropriation as distinguished from receipts collected for restricted purposes and federal grants.

**Internal Service Program:** A program that aggregates certain services needed by state operated programs and activities, which are provided on a centralized basis. The costs of these services are borne by the user agencies through a charge system, which allocates the cost of delivery of the goods or services. The operations of this program are shown in the state budget for display purposes only, since the costs are reflected in the budgets of the user agencies both on an actual and budget basis.

**Medical Assistance and Public Assistance Caseload Estimating Conference:** Similar to the Revenue Estimating Conference, it adopts consensus welfare and medical assistance caseload estimates. It consists of the Budget Officer, the House Fiscal Advisor and the Senate Fiscal Advisor who meet in May and November of each year.

**Modified Accrual:** The basis upon which the Rhode Island state budget is prepared wherein the obligations of the state are classified as expenditures if the goods and/or services are expected to be received during the fiscal year, regardless of whether a cash payment is expected to be made by the state by June 30<sup>th</sup> of that year. Revenues are estimated by the members of the Revenue Estimating Conference on the same basis as the fund financial statements are prepared, which is also a modified accrual basis.

**Operating Deficit:** The amount by which the state's current revenues from general revenue sources are less than its expenditures for a fiscal year. The operating deficit calculation excludes any beginning year surplus.

**Operating Surplus:** The amount by which the state's current revenues from general revenue sources exceed its expenditures for a fiscal year. The operating surplus calculation excludes any beginning year surplus which may be available to fund expenditures.

**Other Funds:** Resources that are expended in the budget, which are not considered general revenues, restricted receipts, or federal grants are identified as "Other Funds". This includes, for example, tuition and fees at the University and Colleges and the dedicated gas tax in the ISTEAA fund.

**Program Measure:** A management tool that measures empirically the outcome of a budget program's efforts to achieve an objective. The outcome is measured against a standard established by each agency and department and should indicate not merely what a program does but how well it does it.

**Purchased Services:** Contracts with non-state entities providing services for state agencies consistent with their objectives. The contract could be established between a state agency and a private person, firm or non-profit agency or it could be established with another governmental entity such as a federal agency.

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**Reappropriation:** The authority of the Governor, in accordance with Section 35-3-15 of the General Laws, to reappropriate funds for the same purpose which are unexpended at the close of the fiscal year. All changes are reflected in the supplemental appropriations act.

**Restricted Receipts:** State receipts which are collected to be expended for purposes confined to those specified in the General Laws of the State.

**Revenue Estimating Conference:** A three-person forecasting committee whose objective is to reach consensus on state revenue projections that are used as a basis for the state budget. The Committee consists of the State Budget Officer, the House Fiscal Advisor and the Senate Fiscal Advisor. This Committee is required, by law, to meet in November and May of each year.

**Quasi-Public Agency:** An agency, the legal basis for which is established in state law but which nevertheless, enjoys a degree of independence from state government in its governance and policy making.

**Subprogram:** Two or more integral components of a budget program that can be separately analyzed for a better understanding of the program.

**Supplemental Appropriation:** An act of the General Assembly appropriating additional funds beyond the amounts allocated in the original appropriation act to state agencies that are expected to incur a deficiency. In practice, supplemental requests are expected to identify any proposed decreases to the original amounts appropriated as well as proposed increases. (See 35-3-8. of the Rhode General Laws). Supplemental appropriations provide additional budget authority beyond the original estimates for budget programs (including new programs authorized after the date of the original appropriation act) where the need for funds is too urgent to be postponed until enactment of the appropriation bill for the next fiscal year.

**Technical Appendix:** A budget document that provides detailed information in support of the data reflected in *The Budget* and the *Executive Summary*. The allocations for each appropriation account are listed for a convenient reference. Detailed descriptions of the program measures used by the various agencies and departments are also provided.