
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Appropriation

The legal authorization granted by the City Council to the Administration to make expenditures and incur obligations for purposes specified in the Appropriation Ordinance.

Base Budget

Ongoing expense level necessary to maintain service levels previously authorized by the City Council.

Capital Budget

A financial plan of capital projects and the means of financing them for a given period of time.

Capital Funds

These funds account for resources designated to acquire, rehabilitate, or construct general fixed assets and major improvements.

Capital Improvement Program (Five-Year)

A plan, separate from the annual budget, which identifies all capital projects to be undertaken during a five-year period, along with cost estimates, method of financing, and a recommended schedule for completion.

Carryover

Unspent funds, either encumbered, reserved, or unobligated, brought forward from prior fiscal years.

Contingency Reserve

An appropriation of funds to cover unforeseen events that occur during the budget year, such as emergencies, newly-required programs, shortfalls in revenue, or other eventualities.

Contractual Services

Operating expenditures for services provided by outside organizations and businesses, including maintenance contracts, management services, etc.

Debt Service

The amount required to pay interest on and to retire the principal of outstanding debt.

Encumbrance

Financial obligations such as purchase orders, contracts, or commitments which are chargeable to an appropriation and for which a portion of the appropriation is reserved.

Fiscal Year

A 12-month accounting period to which the annual budget applies; for San José, it is the period from July 1 through June 30.

Fund

An independent fiscal and accounting entity used to account for all financial transactions related to the specific purpose for which the fund was created by ordinance.

Fund Balance

The difference between total revenue sources and total expenditures in a fund. The fund balance is calculated at the end of the fiscal year.

General Fund

The primary operating fund used to account for all the revenues and expenditures of the City that are not related to special or capital funds.

Non-Personal/Equipment Expenses

Operating costs that are not related to personnel, such as supplies, training, contractual services, utilities, and vehicles.

Operating Budget

A financial plan for the provision of direct services and support functions.

Personal Services

Salary and fringe benefit costs of City employees.

Rebudget

Unspent and unencumbered prior year funds reauthorized for the same purpose as previously approved, usually as a result of delayed program implementation.

Reserve

Funds budgeted for a particular purpose but not authorized for immediate obligation.

Special Funds

These funds account for revenues derived from specific taxes or other earmarked revenue sources and are usually required by statute, charter provision, local ordinance, or federal grant regulation to finance particular functions of the City.

Transfers

Transfers between funds to account for reimbursements for services, overhead expenses, or other payments.