

LONG-TERM FINANCIAL POLICIES

The primary fiscal agents for the County—the Board of Supervisors, County Manager, Controller, Assessor and Treasurer—have made public access to financial information a priority. The County's budget, budget information, Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) and Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR) are available on the County website, www.co.sanmateo.ca.us. Residents can look up the assessed value of their property or pay their property taxes online. Board meetings (including budget hearings) air on Peninsula TV, a local access cable channel operated by a consortium of public agencies.

COUNTY RESERVES POLICY

The Board of Supervisors approved the County Reserves Policy in April 1999. The creation of the policy was initiated by the County's Fiscal Officers to help reduce the negative impact on the County during times of economic uncertainty and potential losses of funding from other governmental agencies. The Board of Supervisors approved the revised policy on Tuesday, February 9, 2010 to align the policy with the current fiscal environment. Fund Balance and Reserves are viewed as one-time sources of funding which are only used for one-time purposes or as part of a multi-year financial plan to balance the budget. The County avoids operating deficits that are created through dependency on one-time funding for ongoing expenditures. The policy establishes minimum requirements for Departmental Reserves, General Fund Appropriation for Contingencies, Reserves for Countywide Capital Improvements and Reserves for Countywide Automation Projects, and provides guidelines for the use of these funds.

Departmental Reserve Requirements

1. Use of One-Time Funds - One-time funds will not be used to fund ongoing operations, unless in the context of a multi-year financial plan to balance expenditures and reserves.
2. Minimum Departmental Reserve Requirements - Departments shall maintain reserves at a minimum of two (2) percent of Net Appropriations. Departmental Reserves will only be used for the following:
 - a. one-time emergencies;
 - b. unanticipated mid-year losses of funding;
 - c. short-term coverage of costs associated with unanticipated caseload increases; and
 - d. short-term coverage of costs to minimize employee lay-offs provided there is a long-term financial plan
3. Reserves Replenishment Plan - Departments must obtain approval from the County Manager's Office prior to using Reserves which puts them in the position of falling below the two (2) percent Reserves requirement. Approval of funding Reserves below the two (2) percent requirement would be contingent upon review and approval of a multi-year financial plan that details how the department intends to replenish their Reserves to the two (2) percent level within three years or a mutually agreed upon timeframe by the department and County Manager's Office. Department plans must address the use of excess Fund Balance with the first priority being the replenishment of Reserves. This plan will be reviewed annually at the budget meeting with the County Manager's Office to determine if progress is being made to achieve the two (2) percent level. Departments that are unable to demonstrate progress towards achieving the two (2) percent requirement shall be subject to enhanced fiscal oversight, including quarterly budget updates to the County Manager's Office.
4. Calculation of the Two (2) Percent Reserves Requirement - Net Appropriations will be the base for calculating the minimum Reserve requirement. Any exceptions will be made on the basis of materiality of adjustment and impact on direct ongoing operations. Material / onetime grant funds that must be appropriated should be excluded from the two (2) percent Reserves calculation. Revenue derived from service contracts that do not represent core departmental services will also receive consideration for exclusion, with final approval resting with the County Manager's Office. With the exception of required grant matching funds, grants and service contracts will not be backfilled by the County's General Fund should funding be eliminated or reduced. The two (2) percent requirement for each department will be determined at the time that the final budget is formally adopted by the Board of Supervisors.
5. Guidelines for Fund Balance in Excess of Minimum Reserve Amount - Fund Balance generated in excess of the two (2) percent minimum Departmental Reserves Requirement can only be allocated to the following:
 - a. Appropriate in Departmental Reserves for future one-time purposes;
 - b. Purchase of fixed assets;
 - c. Sinking fund for future replacement of assets;
 - d. Deferred maintenance;
 - e. One-time departmental projects;

- f. Reserve for audit disallowances;
 - g. Local match for grants;
 - h. Seed money for new departmental programs provided there is a plan that includes identification of future ongoing funding sources and outcome measures; and
 - i. Short-term coverage of operational costs in order to maintain program integrity and prevent employee lay-offs in conjunction with sections 1 and 2 above.
6. Deferred or Incomplete Projects - Unexpended one-time funds from deferred or incomplete projects, including grant funds, can be carried over to the next fiscal year at 100% of the amount not spent. These will be exempt from the 75/25 split. (See Fund Balance Policy.)
7. Service Departments and Non-General Fund Departments - Fund Balance generated by service departments shall be evaluated by the Service Charges Committee, including representatives from the County Fiscal Operating Committee, following the end of each fiscal year to recommend how they should be applied the following year. Application of funds will be done in a way that maximizes cost reimbursement through claiming and fairly allocates any impacts on the A-87 cost plan.

Internal Service Funds can maintain Reserves balances for future purposes including, but not limited to, vehicle and equipment replacement costs and risk management claims.

As a goal, County Enterprise Funds, Special Revenue Funds and Special Districts should generate revenue sufficient to support the full direct and indirect costs of these funds above and beyond General Fund subsidy or contribution levels approved by the Board.

General Fund Non-Departmental Reserve Requirements

1. General Fund Reserves - Shall be maintained at a minimum of five (5) percent of total General Fund Net Appropriations for one-time purposes or as part of a multi-year financial plan to balance the County's budget. The five (5) percent requirement may include Excess ERAF (Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund) reserves. After Contingencies, the second priority for excess Fund Balance at the end of each fiscal year is to replenish this amount so that it is at or above the five (5) percent level.
2. Appropriation for Contingencies – Shall be maintained at three (3) percent of total General Fund Net Appropriations for one-time emergencies and economic uncertainties. In order to maintain the highest possible credit rating, the first priority for excess Fund Balance at the end of each fiscal year is to replenish this amount so that it is maintained at the three (3) percent level.
3. Reserve for Capital Improvements – In order to preserve the County's capital assets, a minimum reserve of \$2 million, which will include half of the Capital Facilities Surcharge, shall be maintained and appropriated annually for countywide capital improvements as specified in the County's Capital Improvement plan. The five-year plan will be updated annually during the budget process.
4. Reserve for Countywide Automation Projects – A minimum reserve of \$2 million shall be maintained and appropriated annually for countywide automation projects that will generate long-term ongoing savings and reductions to net county cost. Projects will be determined during the budget process.
5. Amounts in Excess of Above Requirements - Fund Balance generated in excess of the above requirements, including Excess ERAF, can only be allocated or maintained as Reserves for the following one-time or short-term purposes:
 - a. Capital and technology improvements;
 - b. Reduction of unfunded liabilities, including Retirement and Retiree Health obligations;
 - c. Debt retirement;
 - d. Productivity enhancements;
 - e. Cost avoidance projects;
 - f. Litigation
 - g. Local match for grants involving multiple departments;
 - h. Innovation and Entrepreneurial Fund - creates one-time and short term incentives for team efforts that generate ongoing savings or revenues in new and creative ways; including one-time investments in infrastructure and other areas, with established parameters regarding payback periods and returns on investment.
 - i. Seed money for new programs involving multiple departments provided there is a plan that includes identification of future ongoing funding sources and outcome measures; and

- j. Other purposes deemed to be fiscally prudent for the County as identified and recommended by the County Manager's Office to the Board of Supervisors.

FUND BALANCE POLICY

Fund Balance is a funding source that represents three components: (1) Carryover Fund Balance from the previous fiscal year, (2) additional revenue received in excess of Estimated Revenue or budgeted amounts in the current fiscal year and (3) unspent Appropriations and Reserves in the current fiscal year. Fund Balance can be set aside in Reserves or can also be appropriated for one-time or short-term purposes.

The Board-approved County Reserves Policy recognizes Fund Balance and Reserves as one-time sources of funding and provides specific guidelines on reserves requirements and appropriate uses of this funding. In calculating Fund Balance, the following guidelines should be used:

- General Fund Departments can retain 75% of their year-end fund balances and 100% of unspent Contingencies and Reserves. Non-General Fund Departments and zero Net County Cost General Fund departments can retain 100% of fund balances unless there is agreement to do otherwise.
- The remaining 25% of non-reserved departmental Fund Balance will go into General Fund Reserves and Contingencies, or appropriated for one-time items such as Countywide technology and capital improvement projects, or appropriated to help balance the budget on a short-term basis.
- Unspent appropriations for technology projects and other one-time special projects can be carried over by departments at 100%.
- Departments with negative Fund Balances are responsible for absorbing 100% of the shortfall.
- The County Reserves Policy requires General Fund departments to maintain a minimum reserves amount equivalent to 2% of Net Appropriations.

INVESTMENT POLICY

California Government Code statutes and the County Investment Policy govern the County's investment pool activity. Those statutes and policy authorize the County Treasurer to invest in securities issued by the U.S. Government Treasury and its Agencies, certain corporate bonds and notes, bankers' acceptances, certificates of deposit, commercial paper, repurchase agreements, and the State of California Local Agency Investment Fund (LAIF) and securities lending transactions.

The County Investment Policy is reviewed and approved annually by the Board. All amendments to the policy must be approved by the Board. The Board has established an eight member County Treasury Oversight Committee pursuant to State law. The Oversight Committee meets at least quarterly to evaluate general strategies, to monitor results and to evaluate the economic outlook, portfolio diversification, maturity structure and potential risks to the funds. It will also consider cash projections and needs of the various participating entities, control of disbursements and cost-effective banking relationships.

The County Investment Policy has the following objectives: safety, liquidity, yield and public trust. The Board last approved the County Investment Policy on January 10, 2008. The County pool attempts to match maturities with capital expenditures and other planned outlays. It is designed as an income fund to maximize the return on investible funds over various market cycles, consistent with limiting risk and prudent investment principles. Yield is considered only after safety and credit quality have been met. The purpose of the fund is to provide investors with a reasonably predictable level of income.

The Treasurer prepares a monthly report for the County pool participants, the Board of Supervisors and members of the Oversight Committee stating the type of investment, name of the issuer, maturity date, par and dollar amount of the investment. The report also lists average maturity and market value. In addition, the Treasurer prepares a cash flow report which sets forth projections for revenue inflows and interest earnings as compared to the projections for the operating and capital outflows of depositors. The projection will be for at least the succeeding twelve months. An annual audit of the portfolios, procedures, reports and operations related to the County pool will be conducted in compliance with California law. The maximum allowable maturity of instruments in the County pool at the time of investment is 15 years and the maximum dollar weighted average maturity of the fund is five years. Subject to California law, funds deposited in the County pool under the County Investment Policy may only be reclaimed at the rate of 20% of the principal balance per month, exclusive of apportionment, payrolls and day-to-day operations, unless specifically authorized by the Treasurer. Gains and losses in the County pool are proportionately allocated to each depositor quarterly, each being given credit for accrued interest earnings and capital gains based on their average daily pool balance. The minimum balance for an outside agency to maintain an account in the County pool is \$100,000.

The Treasurer honors all requests to withdraw funds for normal cash flow purposes. Any requests to withdraw funds for purposes other than cash flow are subject to the limit of 20% of the principal balance per month described above and to the consent of the Treasurer. Such requests

are subject to the Treasurer's consideration of the stability and predictability of the County pool or the adverse affect on the interests of the other depositors in the County pool.

The Treasurer may not leverage the County pool through any borrowing collateralized or otherwise secured by cash or securities held unless authorized by the County Investment Policy in accordance with California law. The Investment Officer is prohibited from doing personal business with brokers that do business with the County.

The fund also permits investments in repurchase agreements in an amount not exceeding 100% of the fund value. Collateralization on repurchase agreements is set at 102%. Reverse repurchase agreements are limited to 20% of the fund and must have a maximum maturity of 92 days or maturity date equal to, or shorter than, the stated final maturity of the security underlying the reverse repurchase agreement itself. Currently there are no reverse repurchase agreements in the County pool and the County does not generally invest in reverse repurchase agreements. The County has not been required to make any collateral calls with respect to reverse repurchase agreements previously maintained in the fund.

The County Investment Policy permits certain securities lending transactions up to a maximum of 20% of the County pool. The program is conducted under a Custody Agreement by and between the County and The Bank of New York, as custodian. Currently, voluntary participants account for 25% of the County pool's asset value; however, a contract with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District ("BAAQMD"), which accounts for 5.0% of the total portfolio, mitigates the risk of immediate withdrawal by the BAAQMD. The contract is currently pending renewal. The other voluntary investors, including the San Mateo County Transportation Authority, have monthly limitations on withdrawals of 20% of its asset value, as do all participants as described above. The pool does not have any reverse repurchase agreements.

Note: The Investment Pool sustained a loss of \$155 million during FY 2008-09 due to the Lehman Brothers' bankruptcy. As a result, the Board of Supervisor's Finance and Operations Committee, working in conjunction with the County Treasurer and the Investment Advisory Committee, initiated a comprehensive review of he County Investment Policy in order to minimize risks, create greater diversification and improve the safety and stability of pooled funds. A revised policy will be brought to the Board of Supervisors for approval in FY 2010-11.

DEBT LIMIT

In 1997, the County Board of Supervisors adopted an ordinance (the "Debt Limit Ordinance"), which provides that annually at the time of approving the County budget, the Board of Supervisors will establish the County debt limit for such fiscal year. Pursuant to the Debt Limit Ordinance, the debt limit is applicable to non-voter approved debt that is the obligation of the County, including lease revenue. It does not include any voter approved debt or any debts of agencies, whether governed by the Board of Supervisors or not, other than the County. It also excludes any debt which is budgeted to be totally repaid from the current fiscal year budget. The Debt Limit Ordinance provides that the annual debt limit shall not exceed the amount of debt which can be serviced by an amount not to exceed four percent (4%) of the average annual County budget for the current and the preceding four fiscal years. The annual debt limit once established may be exceeded only by a four-fifths (4/5) vote of the Board of Supervisors and upon a finding that such action is necessary and in the best interests of the County and its citizens.

DEVELOPMENT OF FEE POLICY

The County Manager's Office is drafting a policy to ensure statutory compliance and uniformity among departments in regards to fees charged for County services and products.

This policy will establish a formalized process for the development, review, approval, and enactment of fees charged by the various departments. It will acknowledge that there must be statutory authority for the County to charge a fee. It will further acknowledge that the charging of the fee and the amount of the fee to be charged must be approved by the Board of Supervisors. Fees excepted from this requirement are only those fees in which there is a statute that mandates the imposition of the fee and the amount of the fee.

The policy will ensure that the fee or charge reflects the average cost of providing the product or service or enforcement of regulation. It will further require that indirect costs that are reflected in the cost of providing any product or service or the cost of enforcing any regulation shall be limited to those items that are included in the Federal Office of Management and Budget Circular A-87 on January 1, 1984.

This policy will note that if the fee is a property-related fee, California Constitution Articles 13C and 13D limit the manner in which the County is permitted to impose property-related fees and assessments and the Constitution also sets forth specific procedures to be used in regards to imposing such fees.

The policy will address several areas, including, but not limited to: analysis of the proposed fee to be charged and the statutory authority to impose the fee; methodology to be used to determine the proposed fee amount; timelines to establish and adjust fees; statutory requirements for setting and publishing new or increased fees; and collection of fees and late fees and penalties.