

EPIC EXPLAINER: Key Sources of Budget Data

Budget data is vital for oversight, accountability, and informed public debate.

Understanding where and how the government spends money is necessary for a functioning democracy, both for policymakers and the general public.

There are several key sources of budget data available from official government sources that help provide an understanding of the fiscal state of the nation. Data covering historical, ongoing, and future fiscal operations is available from both Executive and Legislative Branch sources.

Historical Budget Data

- The **Office of Budget and Management's (OMB) Historical Tables** include summary totals, as well as more detailed data on various budget categories, payments to individuals, and grants to state and local governments: www.whitehouse.gov/omb/information-resources/budget/historical-tables/
- Historical, account-level budget data is available in **OMB's Public Budget Database**, covering outlays, receipts, and budget authority. The most recent version was released in March 2024: www.govinfo.gov/app/details/BUDGET-2025-DB/context
- The **Congressional Budget Office (CBO)** publishes downloadable tables of **historical budget and economic data**, presented in summary totals and in major budget categories: www.cbo.gov/data/budget-economic-data

Current Budget Data

- The **Treasury Department's Financial Report of the United States Government** provides a long-term picture of the federal government's liabilities and assets, as well as the present value of unfunded obligations of entitlement programs: www.fiscal.treasury.gov/reports-statements/financial-report/current-report.html
- The **Treasury Department's Daily and Monthly Statements** are useful for tracking the budgetary situation throughout the fiscal year.
 - The **Monthly Treasury Statement** provides a summary of the budgetary picture through the most recent month, showing revenues and outlays basis for major budget accounts, agencies, and aggregate totals: fiscaldata.treasury.gov/datasets/monthly-treasury-statement/summary-of-receipts-outlays-and-the-deficit-surplus-of-the-u-s-government



- The **Daily Treasury Statement** provides a snapshot of fiscal activity from the previous day, *i.e.*, the government’s cash on hand, deposits and withdrawals: fiscaldata.treasury.gov/datasets/daily-treasury-statement/operating-cash-balance
- The **status of budgetary resources in appropriations accounts** is published by OMB provided in the Standard Form (SF) 133 Report on Budget Execution and Budgetary Resources, based on data submitted by individual agencies: [portal.max.gov/portal/document/SF133/Budget/FACTS II - SF 133 Report on Budget Execution and Budgetary Resources.html](https://portal.max.gov/portal/document/SF133/Budget/FACTS%20II%20-%20SF%20133%20Report%20on%20Budget%20Execution%20and%20Budgetary%20Resources.html)
- Data for **apportionment**, where the OMB regulates the funding provided to agencies in appropriations, can be found here: apportionment-public.max.gov/
 - This data is also republished in a more user-friendly format by a non-governmental organization: openomb.org/
- The Treasury Department’s **USAspending** has data down to the individual award, grant, and contract level, and aggregate up to the budget account and agency level. They also track showing awards by state, county, or Congressional district: USAspending.gov
- **OMB’s Federal Program Inventory** includes more than 2,600 federal programs and tax expenditures in the federal budget, but doesn’t include all of them despite being required to by law, and has methodological errors: fpi.omb.gov/
- **PaymentAccuracy.gov** reports on improper payments made by certain programs: PaymentAccuracy.gov

Future Budget Projections

- The **CBO baseline** is the most widely recognized source for budget and economic projections as part of the CBO’s *Budget and Economic Report*: www.cbo.gov/about/products/major-recurring-reports#1
- The OMB also publishes a “**current services**” baseline, which follows similar rules to the CBO’s baseline, but based on the economic assumptions that form the President’s budget request: www.govinfo.gov/app/details/BUDGET-2025-PER/context
- The **CBO** produces **cost estimates** that scores legislative proposals: <https://www.cbo.gov/cost-estimates>
 - The **Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT)** is the official scorekeeper for tax proposals: <https://www.jct.gov/publications/>

Policymakers should use these sources of data on the federal budget to make more informed fiscal policy decisions. They should also prioritize reforms that increase transparency and timeliness of budgetary data.