



Westminster Financial Priorities and Service Needs Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the issue?

A: Because of years of State takeaways of millions of local tax dollars, the City of Westminster is facing a \$3.7 Million dollar budget deficit this year that is expected to double by Fiscal Year 2017-18, with an estimated \$12 million dollar structural budget deficit overall. Reserves will be depleted soon and without drastic changes, the City will soon be unable to present a balanced budget as required by state law.

Q: Does the City's current fiscal crisis affect public safety?

A: Yes. 77.5% of Westminster's budget is dedicated to public safety. In just the last year, the Westminster Police Department processed more than 135,000 calls, including 37,000 emergency 911 calls. Medical experts agree that after five minutes the brain starts to deteriorate following a serious trauma, like a heart attack. Additional local funds would help ensure that Firefighters and Paramedics have the resources they need to quickly respond to emergencies and save lives.

Additionally, there are over 100 active gang members in Westminster. To keep our community safe, we must prevent devastating cuts to gang and drug prevention programs and continue after school programs that keep children and youth off the streets and away from gangs and drugs.

Q: How can we support our local businesses in this difficult time?

A: We need to do more to stimulate economic growth and create more good-paying local jobs in Westminster. Doing so will protect local property values and help Westminster remain attractive to businesses, visitors and homebuyers by maintaining public safety services, fixing blight and improving programs to fill vacant storefronts with new businesses.

Q: What priorities for Westminster has the community identified to date?

A: Top service priorities that we've heard so far include:

- Protecting local drinking water supplies
- Providing fast emergency response times
- Fighting gangs and drugs
- Preventing the elimination of Police Narcotics, Domestic Violence, Sex Crimes, and Human Trafficking units
- Preventing cuts to 911 response, and the number of Paramedics and Firefighters
- Preserving Westminster's local Police Department
- Recruiting and retaining Vietnamese /Spanish speaking Police Officers and improving communications and outreach to those communities
- Preventing City bankruptcy
- Repairing streets and potholes
- Promoting programs that attract businesses and create jobs

Q: Have residents been engaged? How is the City responding to this crisis?

A: Yes. To date the City has enacted \$4.3 million dollars in cuts. Additionally, in late 2015, the City empanelled a Citizens Financial Task Force to study the issue and present recommendations to

the City Council. One of their recommendations, which was unanimously accepted, directs the City to engage the community regarding Westminster's fiscal issues.

Finally, due to the size of Westminster's structural deficit, and a desire by the City Council to preserve services that residents have indicated are important, in particular public safety, the City Council has placed a one cent Transaction and Use revenue measure on the November 2016 ballot for voter consideration. If enacted by voters, this measure would provide locally-controlled funds for six years.

Q: How can I get more information?

A: Contact the City Manager's office at feedback@westminster-ca.gov or visit the City's website at www.westminster-ca.gov for additional informational.