



New York State Government 101

Legislative Branch

- Elected by voters in each part of the state
- **Senate** (63 Members)
- **Assembly** (150 Members)
- *Length of term:* 2 years

Executive Branch

- Elected by voters throughout the state
- **Governor** (1)
- *Length of term:* 4 years

Judicial Branch

- Appointed by the Governor
- **State Court of Appeals**
(1 Chief Judge & 6 Associate Judges)
- *Length of term:* 14 years

Executive Branch: The governor is the head of the Executive branch of New York's state government and the commander-in-chief of the state's military and naval forces. The Governor is afforded the courtesy title of *His Excellency* while in office. Andrew Cuomo, (Democrat) is the current Governor of New York State. He is wrapping up his first term in office. He plans to run for reelection in November 2014.

***Fun Fact:** Gov. Andrew Cuomo is the son of former NYS Governor Mario Cuomo. Making the father/ son duo the 52nd & 56th Governors of NY.

Legislative Branch: *There are two houses in the legislature: NYS Assembly & NYS Senate*

New York State Assembly

Each person has 1 representative in the Assembly
Nov. 2014 is an election year for all Assembly members

New York State Senate

Each Person has 1 representative in the Senate
Nov. 2014 is an election year for all Senators

NYS Assembly- In the Assembly the Democrats have the majority and therefore control which bills get voted on. The Assembly is headed by the Speaker Sheldon Silver, (D).

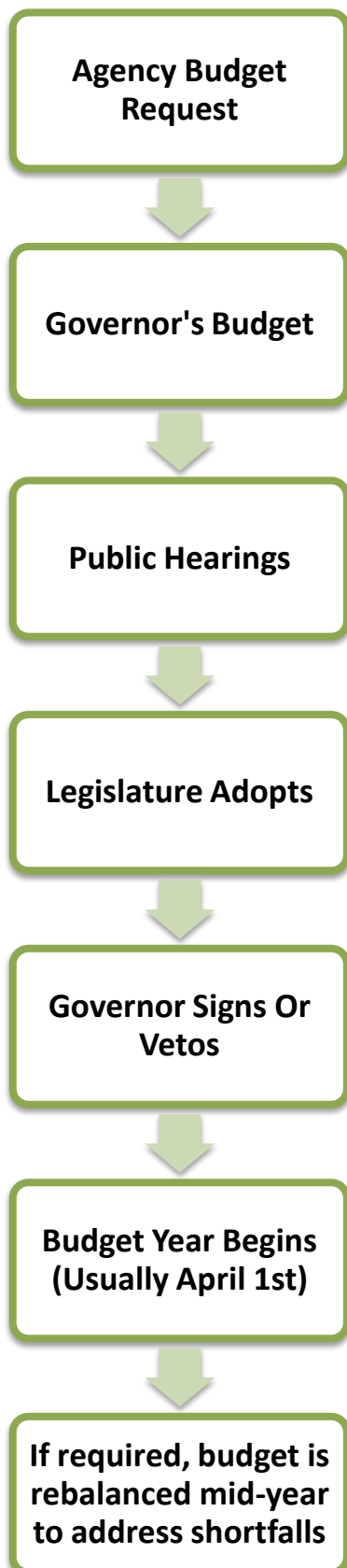
NYS Senate- In the Senate, Democrats should have a narrow majority, but in a unique circumstance, a few Democrats have decided to make their own third conference called the Independent Democratic Conference (IDC). The IDC has made a deal with the Republicans giving them the majority. Therefore, the Republicans and the IDC in the senate control which bills get voted on.

- During the legislative sessions (January – June) Legislators spend half of the week in Albany and half of the week in the local district. From June until December you can find your Legislators at their local offices.
- Both houses vote on bills that become law. In order for a bill to become a law it must be passed in both houses.
- Both houses work in committees. There's an Education Committee in both the Senate & Assembly. A bill is first voted on in the committee. Once it passes by a majority vote in the committee then the entire house can vote on it.

The New York State Legislature currently has split party control with a Democratic majority in the Assembly and a coalition majority in the Senate. The *Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, (D), Senate Co-Majority Leader Dean Skelos, (R) and Senate Co-Majority Leader Jeffrey Klein, (IDC)* control the assignment of committees and leadership positions, along with control of the agenda in their chambers. The three are considered powerful statewide leaders and along with the Governor of New York control most of the agenda of state business in New York.

Judicial Branch: The judicial branch comprises a range of courts (from Trial to Appellate) with various jurisdictions (from village and town courts to the State's highest court — the Court of Appeals). The courts reinforce our governmental system of checks and balances. When the Governor and/ or Legislator break the law we can file a law suit against the state. *(An example of this is the Campaign for Fiscal Equity case [CFE vs. the State]. The state was charged with not providing all students with their constitutional right of a sound basic education. The courts ruled against the state, and ordered the state to fund schools adequately and equitably over a 5 year period).*

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The Budget Cycle

1st - The Call (August – October)

(State agencies, such as: State Ed Dept., Thruway Authority, etc.) submit budget request)

The formal budget cycle begins when the Budget Director issues a policy memorandum - the “call letter” - to agency heads. The call letter signals the official start of the budget process. By early-mid fall, a final program package is assembled by each agency and delivered to the Division of the Budget. By early December, the Division of the Budget will normally have completed its preliminary recommendations on both revenues and expenditures, and presents them to the Governor and the Governor’s staff.

2nd – The Executive Budget (November – January)

Based on the preliminary recommendations and the most current reading of the economic climate the Governor and his staff prepare an Executive Budget (aka the Governor’s Budget). By the end of January the Governor releases his Executive Budget.

3rd – Public Hearings (February)

The Legislature holds public hearings on the Governor’s proposed budget. The Legislature, primarily through its fiscal committees – Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means – analyzes the Governor’s spending proposals and revenue estimates and hold public hearings on major programs. ***This is an opportunity for people to voice their opinions and concerns to Legislators (Protest, Rallies & Lobby Visits).*** Legislators also participate in budget forums in their home districts.

4th – Legislature Make Changes (March)

Following the public hearings, the Legislature issues a summary of the proposed changes to the budget. Based on their separate and joint deliberations, the two houses reach an agreement on spending and revenue recommendations, which are reflected in amended versions of the Governor’s proposed budget. Legislative leaders and the Governor begin budget negotiations.

5th – Back to the Governor

If the Governor and Legislators are able to come to an agreement on the amended budget then the Governor signs the amended budget into law. Once the Governor completes his review of the Legislature’s actions, the Division of Budget then issues a comprehensive Enacted Budget Report that contains the State’s official Financial Plan projections for the current and successive fiscal years. The Enacted Budget is the final version of the budget!

6th – The Budget Year Begins (April)

Enacted Budget goes into effect from April 1st – March 31st. In addition, the Division of the Budget keeps a close watch throughout the year on the flow of revenue and the pattern of expenditures against its projections. This information is reflected in quarterly updates to the Legislature. These updates serve as the basis of financial management during the fiscal year, and may alert both the Governor and the Legislature to potential problems in maintaining budget balance as the State fiscal year unfolds.

**Once the state has finalized the budget, then each area begins planning its local budget based on expected state aid.*