

**Public Financial Administration
PADP 6930**

**Budget Practices Investigation
Project and Report**

Due Date: December 5

This is a major project that constitutes 30 percent of your final grade. It is designed to familiarize you with the real world practices of budgeting and financial management in federal/state/local government or non-profit organizations. It requires you to devote adequate time to a literature review, interviews of a public official, analysis of public documents, and writing a final report. The final report should be no more than 20 double space pages (times new roman, 12 point font, 1 inch margins) and include a detailed bibliography (not counted in the page limit). Be sure to properly cite all referenced materials.

Suggested steps for conducting the project are described below:

1. Identify a level/type of government (federal, state or local government, school district, public authority) or non-profit organization that you are most interested in and may strive to have a career with in the future.
2. Find ONE partner for yourself who shares a similar interest and will divide up the work with you. You may do this project on your own if you prefer. If you do choose to work in pairs, everything you do should be divided equally and done with consensus. The grade earned on the final report will be the same for both of you.
3. Conduct a thorough literature review of budgeting, accounting, and/or financial management practices for the type of entity you have selected to investigate.
4. Contact the major budget/accounting/finance officer for that entity and schedule a minimum of two interviews.
5. Examine at least two or three past budgets and annual financial reports for your chosen entity to get a sense of its finances and budgeting/financial management practices. Note: the notes to the financial statements are a good place to look for this information.
6. Go to the first interview with questions about their budgeting/financial management practices and take detailed notes.
7. Analyze your notes to identify unusual practices, deviations from normal patterns, and innovations. Your identification of these practices/patterns/innovations will be based on information gathered from your literature review. Choose some particular topics that are worthy of more attention. For example, the condition of the economy might have affected funding levels and/or budgeting practices for particular programs and services provided by the entity.
8. Schedule and conduct a second interview to further discuss the topics you have identified.
9. Draft the final report.

Mechanics of the Project Report

The final report should be no more than 20 double spaced pages (times new roman, 12 point font, 1 inch margins) and include a detailed bibliography (not counted in the page limit). Be sure to properly cite all referenced materials. The final report should include all of the following and be structured as follows:

- a. Table of contents
- b. Executive summary
- c. Literature review
- d. Introduction and background information for the chosen entity
- e. Findings: innovations, abnormalities (bulk of the report)
- f. Conclusion
- g. Bibliography (not included in page limit)
- h. Appendix (not included in page limit)
 - Budget officer contacted and interviewed (name, title, dates, times)
 - Notes from your interviews
 - Any necessary supporting documents from the actual budget(s) that you have examined