

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MERCED COUNTY POSITION

Financial Operations of the City and County of Merced

The League of Women Voters of Merced County believes that the budget process should be a shared responsibility among citizens, elected officials and government staff with a formal procedure for actively soliciting community involvement at all stages of the process.

I. Capital Improvement

- A. Priority should be given to these projects which promote the community health, safety and welfare with particular emphasis on equalizing improvement, facilities and services in all sub-standard areas.
- B. A complete capital improvement program should include:
 - 1) A five year projection for setting up funding and priorities
 - 2) A yearly review
 - 3) A formal process for citizen input
- C. Special fund(s) should be created by ordinance for high priority capital outlay purposes in order to fulfill the goals of the General Plan at the earliest possible date. This ordinance should be explicit only as to the purpose of the fund and should not include details which might unnecessarily limit actions or plans.

II. Needs Assessment

- A. The budget process should be a shared responsibility among citizens, elected officials and government staff. The City and County should publish a formal calendar(s) with time at the beginning of each process for citizen input. This input should be prior to public hearings and early in the budget process. The City Manager and the County Administrator and staff(s) should establish formal outreach programs to actively solicit community involvement and to educate citizens about the budget process.
- B. Priorities should be set at the time of budget adoption in anticipation of possible funding cuts or increases during the upcoming fiscal year. Extensive publicity should always precede Council and Board of Supervisors' consideration of significant budget changes.