

TAKING A SEAT AT THE TABLE:

State Budget Handbook

for Indian Country

Conference Edition



INTRODUCTION:

Why the State Budget Matters

Through the state budget, we as Montanans identify, prioritize, and fund the public services we all rely on for our safety, prosperity, and stability. Our state budget can be used to promote future economic prosperity through investments that create opportunities for American Indians and all Montana's residents, but this is only possible with substantial input and advocacy from Indian Country.

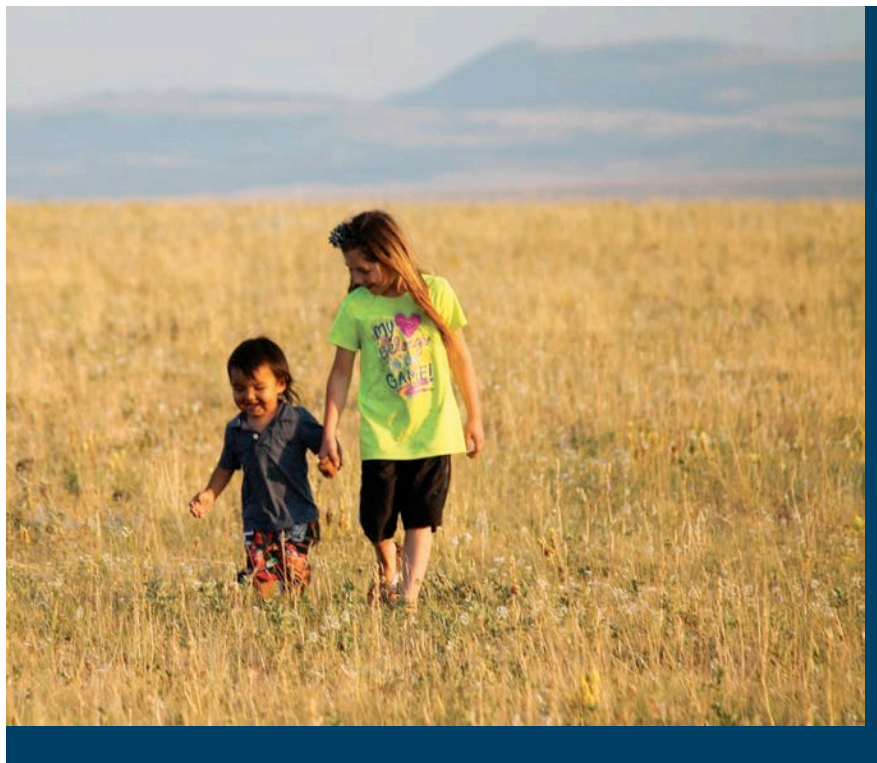
While the federal budget plays a significant role in relieving poverty and building economic opportunity, the state budget also has a substantial impact on the lives of American Indians living on and off reservations in Montana.

There are at least three ways the state budget can help Indian Country:

- **Federal and state investments in services that help all Montanans:** The federal and state budgets fund public services and infrastructure that are available to all residents of the state, including American Indians. These investments include schools, safe roads and highways, and clean drinking water.
- **Allocation of federal investments by the state:** Increasingly, some federal dollars have been turned over to state government, in the form of block grants and pass-through appropriations. State-level policymakers then determine how to best to distribute the funding, making decisions that can either help or hurt Montanans, including American Indians. Some examples that fall under this category are social service programs (TANF), justice systems, and disaster and emergency services. Some of these federal dollars that are allocated to the state are then invested in tribes.
- **Direct state investments in Indian Country:** There are also a number of programs the State of Montana established to improve the lives of American Indians, through direct funding to tribes, tribal institutions, and tribal infrastructure. This includes funding to tribal colleges, Native American tuition waivers, small business development, and tribal language preservation.

To ensure the state is making wise investments, Indian Country must be involved in the state budget process and advocate for their communities' needs. When American Indians voice their opinions in debates on how to invest state funds, legislators can better understand their needs. Because many lawmakers are unfamiliar with Indian Country, it is necessary to provide the perspective of how the state budget affects American Indians.

This State-Tribal Budget Toolkit serves as an overview of how the state budget process works and how American Indians can get involved. Section 1 summarizes the history of state and tribal government relationships surrounding the state budget and explores why relationships leave significant room for growth. Section 2 provides a summary of how the state budget impacts tribes, including a list of critical services funded through state investment. Section 3 provides a detailed timeline of the budgeting process. Section 4 outlines strategies for tribal leaders and engaged citizens to influence the process. Finally, Section 5 provides a directory of related contacts within and outside state government.



SECTION 1:

State-Tribal Fiscal Relationship

History of State-Tribal Budgeting Relationship

In order to fully appreciate the importance of getting involved in the state budget process, it is important to understand the history of state-tribal relations in Montana. In the past, tribal governments had little reason to be involved in state legislation. Historically, the federal government directly handled administration and oversight of tribal funding, law enforcement, and educational systems located on reservations. This left little need for interaction between states and tribes. The 1975 Indian Self-Determination and Educational Assistance Act (PL-638) gave tribes additional control over tribal affairs, and as a result, many tribes assumed the administration of programs previously run by the federal government.¹

Unfortunately, conflict about land, natural resources and law enforcement jurisdiction created resistance between tribes and states and hindered their ability to work together cooperatively.²

In 1996, welfare reform changed how the federal government, states, and tribes worked together. The new law allowed tribes to administer some social service programs.³ The intent of this action was to give state governments greater freedom to determine how best to meet the needs of their citizens with the funds that are provided by the federal government.⁴ This process, called devolution, created a new relationship between tribes and states. Tribes were now contracting with the state to administer certain programs on reservations that had typically been administered by the state (i.e., Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or TANF and Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program or LIHEAP).

Today, it is essential that the two sides work together. This is a complex task, particularly because tribes, as sovereign nations, have a unique government-to-government relationship with the state. Due to cultural and historical differences, the needs of tribal communities may be very different than non-reservation communities. States and tribes must work collaboratively and coordinate administration of resources to maximize their benefit.⁵

2014-15 State Funded Tribal Programs: State General Funds



Tribal College Assistance Program
\$2 million



Native Language Preservation
\$2 million



Indian Country Economic Development
\$1.6 million



Tribal Foster Care
\$400,000



Office of Indian Affairs
\$347,000

\$6.4 million

1.8% of total General Fund

2015 Biennium General Fund Total = \$356 million

State-Tribal Relations Today

In recent years, the relationship between the State of Montana and tribes has improved significantly. Montana uniquely recognized that Indian people are not only citizens of their respective sovereign tribal nation, but they are also Montana citizens who contribute to the well-being of our state. In 2003, the state legislature strengthened the relationship between the state and tribes with House Bill 608 (sponsored by Rep. Jonathan Windy Boy), asserting that “in formulating or implementing policies or administrative rules that have direct implications, a state agency should consider the following principals:

- (1) A commitment to cooperation and collaboration;
- (2) Mutual respect and understanding;
- (3) Regular and early communication;
- (4) A process of accountability for addressing issues; and
- (5) Preservation of the tribal-state relationship.”⁶

Montana is improving efforts to include American Indians in all aspects of state governance. In 2005, former Governor Brian Schweitzer formed the Governor’s American Indian Nations Council (GAIN) through his first executive order, which provides a channel for tribal leaders and the Governor to discuss policies and negotiate agreements that are in the best interest of Native American people. Governor Steve Bullock has maintained the atmosphere of inclusion.⁷

Despite tremendous progress toward meaningful collaboration in the last decade, tribal leaders have often felt as if they are not equal players when partnering with the state.⁸ An informed and engaged electorate strengthens the relationships established and maintained by Indian leaders.

Every Montanan has a constitutional right of participation, demanding that “governmental agencies afford such reasonable opportunity for citizen participation in the operation of the agencies prior to the final decision as may be provided by law.”⁹ American Indians are active participants in state and local government. In 2012, 61% of voters turned out in Native-American dense precincts, compared to 57.5% turnout of all eligible voters nationally and during a year that Montana saw a record low turnout of voters state-wide.^{10, 11} In the 63rd Legislature (2013 regular session), American Indians held eight of one-hundred-fifty state legislative seats in Montana, comprising 5.3% of the total legislative body, as compared to 7% of the general state population.¹²

Native Americans are Montanans, and therefore should be afforded the same rights, responsibilities, services, and considerations as any other citizen in Montana. Participation in the state budgeting process does not diminish American Indians' rights provided as members of a tribal nation, nor does it diminish a tribe's sovereign status. In fact, it provides a unique opportunity to participate in both governments. Increasing the tribal voice in the State Legislature will influence policies that impact Indian Country, as well as influence the way state legislators view tribes. Participating in the budget process can be an act of exercising tribal sovereignty and raising awareness that tribal governments are active and advocating for their own constituents.¹³ When American Indians engage in the budget process, they help ensure that tribal interests are taken into consideration. These efforts will help create and maintain investments that support economic opportunity and meaningful safety nets in Indian Country.

State-Tribal Government-to-Government Relationship in Law

"An act relating to the government-to-government relationship between the Montana Indian Tribes and the State of Montana" including:

- **Tribal consultation in the development of state agency policies that directly affect Indian tribes;**
- **Training for state employees about ways to foster positive state-tribal relationships;**
- **Annual meetings between state and tribal officials; and**
- **An annual report on state agencies about impact of state policies on tribal communities.**

SECTION 2:

State Budget Impact on American Indians in Montana

Although the state budget process may appear complicated, the process is the same each biennium. Effective advocates engage early, understand how decisions are made and by whom, and demonstrate how the budget impacts their communities. Early and regular communication in the budget process helps give tribes the time they need to investigate the effects of proposed changes and to suggest revisions.¹⁴

Virtually every area of the state budget impacts American Indian children, elders, families, and communities. The state budget is a concrete way for the government to prioritize services – from child care assistance to public education, state parks to road repair. Leaders from Indian Country who engage in the budget process improve recognition of tribal interests in state fiscal policy debates. These leaders inspire other Native leaders and allies to encourage responsible investments in schools, health care, critical safety net programs, and clean water.

Three main areas of the state budget impacts American Indians:

- (1) The state budget invests in public programs, like our K-12 schools, that impact American Indian children, families, and communities.
- (2) The state plays a role in allocating federal funds to Montana's tribes.
- (3) The state provides tribes opportunities for economic development and infrastructure investments in Indian Country.

State Investment in Essential Public Programs

Montana's state budget is a combination of revenue from taxes, fees, and federal funding. The state determines funding by estimating the cost to provide services such as education or transportation. For example, the state funds K-12 schools that serve reservation communities. American Indians in Montana are eligible for all state public services, many of which are funded largely or in part by federal funds calculated using population demographics that include numbers from reservation populations.¹⁵

State Role Distributing Federal Block Grants to Tribes

The federal government provides funds to states with the expectation that it will be passed-through to local governments, including tribal governments. This funding is typically referred to as “block grants.” Some of this federal funding comes with explicit requirements regarding how much should go to tribes. Other sources of funding will indicate a minimum that must go to tribes, and occasionally it is up to the state to decide how the money is distributed.

Ways Federal Block Grants Reach Indian Country

- Grant requires state to provide specific amount to tribes;
- Grant specifies a minimum (no maximum) to go to tribes; or
- Tribes are eligible to request apply for grant funding, but there is no minimum amount guaranteed.

Block grants to states and local government are intended to be divided and dispersed to sub-recipients, such as counties, cities, nonprofits, or tribes. This method allows state and tribal governments greater flexibility to meet the needs of the people.

Federal block grants do not all work the same way. The funding is dispersed based on either a competitive application process (i.e., Schools of Promise) or a formula model (i.e., Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). Some block grants require a minimum tribal pass-through amount (ex. Juvenile Justice

Funding). Other funds are only available to recipients that exclude tribes from being a direct grantee but will require tribes to apply for a portion of funding from a city or county.

Federal dollars sometimes go unclaimed by tribes in Montana. Oftentimes, tribes are not even aware that the funding is available. When this happens the federal dollars are either sent back to the Federal reserves or they are redirected to other programs in the state. There is also funding that tribes can request that is above a minimum amount set by the federal government. An example would be the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act funding, which requires states to share their total funding with tribes based on a set formula. However, tribes can ask for funding above the federally required minimum.

Tribes have the best opportunity to secure federal investments in Montana’s communities when they actively engage in the process.

Direct State Investments to Indian Country

The state of Montana also provides direct investments in Indian Country through programs funded by the state general fund. Montana generates revenue in the general fund from individual and corporate income taxes, property taxes, and natural resource extraction and development taxes. The state solely funds some programs and services in Indian Country, such as the Tribal College Assistance Program, Native Language Preservation, and the Indian Country Economic Development program.

SECTION 3:

Understanding the Montana Budget Process

In order to effectively participate in the state budget process, it is important to understand how the budget is developed and ultimately becomes law.

The primary goal of the budget process is to assess the needs of Montanans and then determine the amount of funding needed to provide the services that Montana's communities rely on each day. Montana's budget pays for the public services that protect us, help ensure community well being, and allow for economic security for families.¹⁶

Our state budget is not simply a balance sheet full of dollar figures – it enables our communities to plan for our future quality of life.¹⁷

Who is responsible for determining the Montana Budget?

The Governor and state legislators must develop fair and fiscally responsible budgets, balancing revenue generation, or taxation, with community needs. The Governor proposes a budget to the Legislature, who may offer proposed changes, sometimes changes are quite significant. After the legislature passes a budget, it travels back to the Governor's desk. From there, the Governor may then sign it (and it becomes law), leave it unsigned (it still becomes law), offer amendments (must be approved by a majority of the Legislature), or reject it by vetoing.

Montana's citizen Legislature includes teachers, farmers, ranchers, business people, attorneys, stay-at-home parents and more. The Legislature works part-time governing and most elected leaders return home to their regular jobs following Montana's every-other-year legislative session. Our elected leaders come from many walks-of-life; however, they might not be familiar with unique challenges faced by tribal communities.

When is the Montana budget determined?

The budget process starts about a year before the Legislative session begins. The Montana Legislature convenes every other year, making it one of the country's "biennium" states. This means, every odd year, the Legislature meets and decides a state budget that will be used for the following two years. This budget is known as House Bill 2 (HB 2).¹⁸ The state's budget appropriations bill will determine how much revenue will be directed to the various state agencies, like the Department of Public Health and Human Services or the Department of Commerce, that provide services to Montana's citizens.

Is the budget process complicated?

The budget process is complex, and for good reason. Expenditures for fiscal year 2013 alone total more than \$6 billion, including nearly \$2 billion in Montana's general fund, more than \$2.1 billion in federal funds, and around \$1.9 billion in other funds.¹⁹ Each step of the process is meant to provide the time and attention necessary for fair and reasonable outcomes for our state. This process also guarantees all Montanans their right to provide comment and input, as well as time to educate legislators on how the budget impacts the various demographic groups that make up our state.

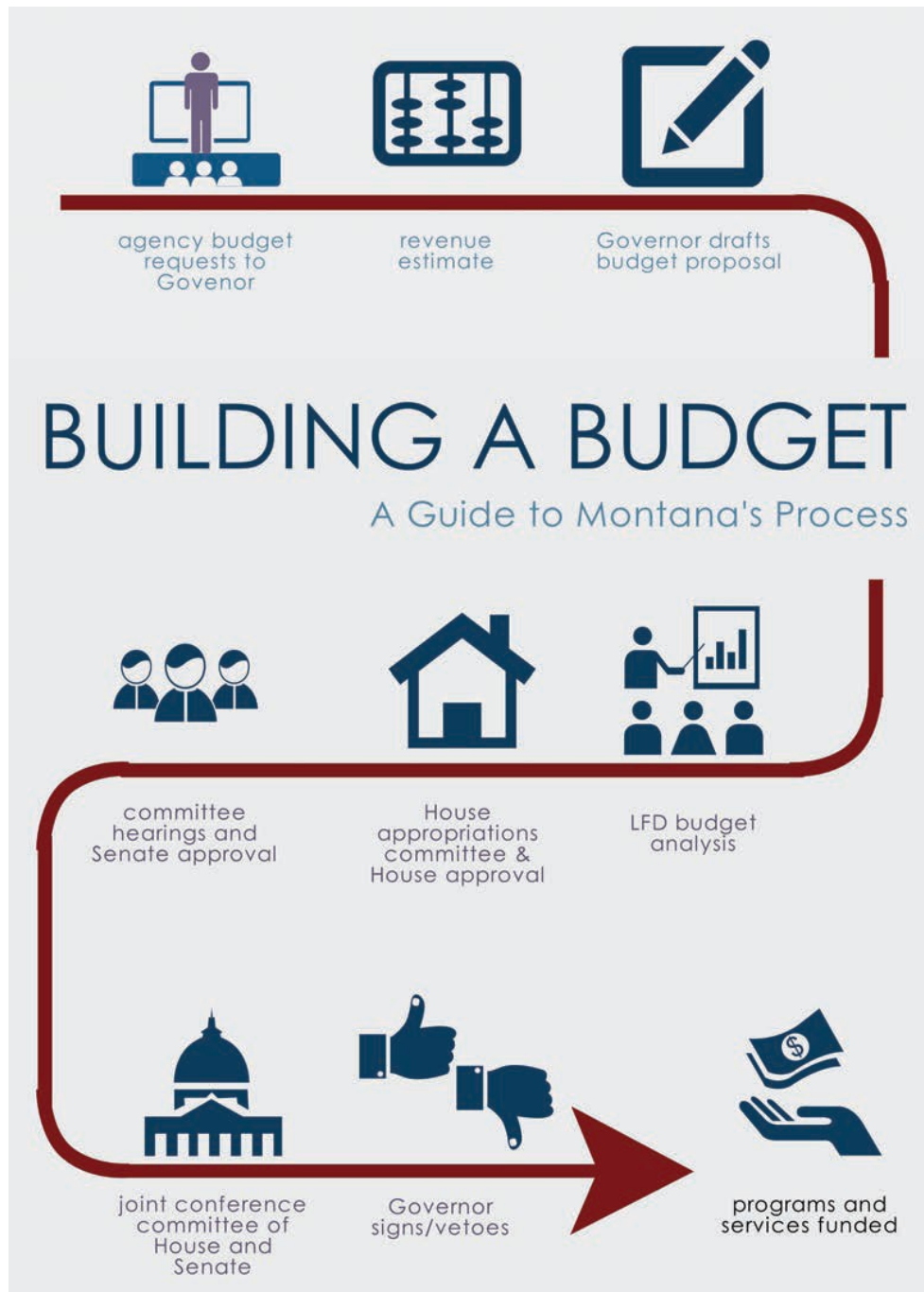
Although it is a complicated process, it is not essential to understand every element of the budget in order to participate. See section 4 for more information on how to participate in the process.

Does participating in the budget development really make a difference?

Every Montana citizen has the right to share their thoughts, opinions, ideas, and concerns with legislators about ANY public issue considered, including how the state's funds are spent. Without American Indian participation, legislators may not understand the needs and circumstances of Indian Country and therefore unable to make informed decisions.

The Montana Budget Process and Timeline

The Montana Legislature meets in regular session for only 90 working days in every odd numbered year. Participation time is limited. In order to exercise our right to participate, the public must understand how and when to be most effective. Citizens should pay careful attention to the deadlines and expected dates of important meetings, hearings and votes.²⁰





AGENCY BUDGET REQUESTS TO GOVERNOR

January to late August, even-numbered years

Several months prior to the start of the legislative session, the various agencies, such as the Department of Public Health and Human Services, that are funded through Montana's budget submit their budgets to the Governor, indicating any proposed spending increases or decreases. This is a good time to contact the agency directors to suggest changes that should be made to their departmental budgets that will best meet the needs of Indian Country. This might include requesting changes to the amount of funding available for programs that serve American Indians or request increases above the required minimum from federal funding.



GOVERNOR DRAFTS BUDGET PROPOSAL

November

In the fall, once agencies submit their budgets to the Office of Budget and Program Planning (OBPP), the Governor and his staff review requests from agencies. The OBPP then drafts a budget proposal and submits it to the Legislative Fiscal Division (LFD) by November 15th before the start of the legislative session. At that point, the Governor's proposed budget becomes available online to the public. The first version of the Governor's proposed budget is only a draft; his or her final version is due by December 15th. The Governor may offer changes until December 15th.

Citizens may propose changes to the Governor's draft budget by contacting his or her staff. The Governor's staff includes policy advisors, each assigned certain issue areas. Please see Appendix for the list of the Governor's current staff.

On December 15th, the Governor provides a final draft of the proposed budget to the LFD. At this time, the budget proposal officially becomes the first draft of HB2, the major appropriations bill.

NOTE: In the case of a newly elected Governor, this deadline for the final budget proposal is postponed until January 7th to allow the newly elected Governor time to prepare a budget proposal.



LEGISLATIVE FISCAL DIVISION PRESENTS BUDGET ANALYSIS

January

By the first day of the legislative session, the LFD provides a detailed analysis of the Governor's budget proposal, including highlights of new spending priorities or cuts. This report, known as the Legislative Budget Analysis, provides a very specific examination of the Governor's proposed budget. This analysis reviews agency submissions, as well as any

important information that should be considered by the legislature before determining agency's budget. The Legislative Budget Analysis presents information for each of the agencies in three sections, which is required by Montana law.

The three sections of LFD analysis include:

Base Budget: The amount of funding the previous legislature approved for the agency.

Present Law Base: The amount of funding the agency needs, according to current law, to maintain the basic operations and services approved by the previous legislature.

New Proposals: Any funding changes requested in the Governor's proposed budget that require approval by the current legislature. This includes any new services that are not required by Montana law, any changes to the programs and services provided by the agency, any request to cancel a service that an agency provides, or any change to the source of any funding that an agency receives.

SUBCOMMITTEE HEARINGS

January – February, must complete by 45th Legislative Day

In order to provide adequate discussion to the various sections of the budget, the Legislature forms joint subcommittees, comprised of members of the House Appropriations committee and the Senate Finance committee to review every state agency budget. Subcommittees include Section A, General Government; Section B, Health and Human Services; Section C, Natural Resources and Transportation; Section D, Judicial Branch and Law Enforcement; Section E, Education; and Section F, Long-Range Planning. These committees hear from agency personnel and committee staff, and hold meetings or hearings where the public can provide recommendations for or against each of the budget items. These committees then make recommendations about how to revise the Governor's Budget to the House Appropriations Committee for the next round of review. Subcommittees must complete their work by the 45th day of the 90-day session.



HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

February – March, finishes by the 64th Legislative Day

The full House Appropriations Committee reviews the recommendations made by each of the subcommittees and pulls together a comprehensive appropriations bill. Agencies and the public offer input regarding subcommittee action. The full committee considers how much revenue there is to spend, compared to the expenditures recommended by the subcommittees. The Appropriations Committee finishes this stage of its work around the 64th day of the Legislature.



FULL HOUSE DEBATES HOUSE BILL 2 IN SECOND READING, FINAL ACTION IN THIRD READING

March, 65th Legislative Day

After HB 2 passes the House Appropriations Committee, it heads to the House floor for 2nd Reading. This is the first opportunity for the entire House of Representatives to debate the state budget. The House members may propose amendments to the bill, which must pass by majority vote. At the conclusion of the debate and amendment process, House members vote for or against the bill. If the bill receives a majority vote, it passes Second Reading. Second Reading occurs on the 64th and 65th days of the session.

Members of the public may listen to the proceedings from the balcony of the House chambers, and may lobby legislators in individual meetings, through phone and email contact, or as they move on or off the floor. Members of the public may not enter the House chambers or speak to the full House during these proceedings.

The next day, the full House votes again for or against House Bill 2 in its third reading. This reading is only a vote. Members may change their votes, but do not further debate and discuss the bill, and cannot offer any amendments. Members of the public may try to contact their legislators between the second and third reading to say thank you for a favorable vote, or to encourage the legislator to change their vote.

It's important to note, Legislative bills containing an appropriations must be transmitted from the House to the Senate by the 67th day of the legislature. This is called the **transmittal deadline**. If an appropriation bill does not make this deadline, it is considered dead and will not be discussed further.



SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

late March, early April

The Senate Finance Committee reviews and debates HB2 as passed by the full House by section (as outlined above). The Senate Finance Committee also holds public hearings, and may change the budget bill. When the committee concludes debate, a majority vote passes the bill out of Senate Finance Committee with or without amendments. The committee reviews and debates HB 2 for about ten days, from around day 66 until day 76.



FULL SENATE DEBATES HOUSE BILL 2 IN SECOND READING, FINAL ACTION IN THIRD READING

House Bill 2 heads to the Senate floor for debate and amendments by section, just like in the House. The Senate votes for or against HB 2 in the second reading after discussion. The next legislative day, the full Senate votes again for or against the bill in third reading without debate. If the Senate passes the bill without any amendments, the bill passes the Legislature and heads next to the Governor for approval. However, the Senate typically makes amendments to HB 2.

A. SENATE AMENDS

If the Senate makes any changes to HB 2 from the House version, HB 2 journeys back to the House. The House may accept the Senate's version of the bill by a majority vote. In that case, the bill has passed the Legislature, and heads next to the Governor's desk for approval.

B. HOUSE VOTES ON SENATE AMENDMENTS

If the House rejects the Senate amendments, the bill goes to a Joint Conference Committee. This committee is a joint body that includes members from the House and Senate. The committee works to iron out differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill.



HOUSE AND SENATE VOTE ON JOINT CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Both chambers have already given ample consideration to HB 2 at this stage, but must approve the version of the bill passed by the Conference Committee by a majority vote. Again, each chamber votes in a second and third reading of the bill.



GOVERNOR APPROVAL

Finally, by the 90th day of the Legislature, the body passes the state budget through House Bill 2 and sends it to the Governor, "who can sign it, reject it, remove specific line items, or propose amendments. The Legislature must vote on any proposed amendments."²¹

SECTION 4:

Indian Country's Voice at the Capitol

Voters elect legislators to represent their community's best interests. Individual legislators sponsor, amend, and vote on bills that determine the funds available to provide countless goods and services to the entire state. Community members are sometimes the best experts, identifying both community needs and effective solutions. Community member participation is vital.

There are many ways tribal communities best represent their interests at the State Capitol. Elected officials welcome their constituents' input and opinions because this is one of the many ways a legislator can become more knowledgeable about a particular topic in order to make an informed decision. Montana's legislative process allows various opportunities for the public to participate.

The public may speak for or against proposed legislation, or may work directly with lawmakers and suggest bills. Only a legislator can sponsor legislation, but anyone can approach a legislator and suggest that he or she consider submitting a proposal to address a specific issue.

Personal relationships with legislators make way for more effective citizen advocacy. Voters elect state legislators on the first Tuesday of every November in even-numbered years. Constituents may meet with their legislators directly following their elections simply to make an introduction or to talk about the upcoming Legislative Session. Montana's part-time legislators do not have in district offices, but their home contact information should be available on the Legislature's website (www.leg.mt.gov). The goal for early legislator meetings is to establish a basic relationship prior to the start of the hectic Legislative Session. Early conversations may include questions to help establish the lawmaker's motivations, legislative agenda, contact preference, and general demeanor.

Meeting with Legislators with a Specific Request

Ideally, advocates meet with legislators with a specific ask after establishing a relationship. Either way, legislators generally respond to requests to meet from their constituents.

- **Make an appointment in advance when possible.** Write or call the legislator to request a meeting.
- **Connect with advocacy organizations ahead of time if possible.** In some instances, professional staff working on state policy may be available to provide valuable information and materials related to the legislative question at hand.
- **Prepare an agenda for the meeting.** Limit your agenda to two or three items, understanding the meeting may be brief (15 minutes or less).
- **Bring information that may be useful for the legislator.** This information may include relevant articles in the local newspaper, statistics about your community and its families, and fact sheets about legislation you are asking the legislator to support or oppose. Provide personal examples during conversation when possible.
- **During the meeting:**
 - Identify yourself and introduce anyone else with you.
 - Inform the legislator that you are a registered voter in his or her district.
 - Explain why you requested the meeting, and discuss the matters on your agenda.
 - Be honest.
 - Be prepared to answer questions; if you do not know the answer, say you will find out and report back to him or her.
 - Thank legislators who you know to be on your side. Ask for tips on how to reach other legislators.
 - Don't argue or name call.
 - Thank the legislator for his or her time.
- **Follow up.** Write a thank you letter. Enclose any information promised to or provide additional arguments to support your position.

Steps to Effective Legislative Advocacy

- Identify a specific problem you want to see changed (e.g., an underfunded school).
- Identify the policy decision and legislation at hand (e.g., funding for Indian Economic Development, increased funding for schools).
- Identify what to accomplish or change (e.g., maintain Governor's proposed funding for the program or expand a program's budget).
- Find where the legislation is in process via [LAWS on the Montana Legislative website](#) (e.g., the Governor proposed adequate funding for the Indian Country Economic Development Program, and now the bill is under consideration by House Appropriations).
- Find out who represents you; go to www.leg.mt.gov and click on "Find a Legislator" to find your Representative and Senator.
- Understand which legislators are key decision-makers or leaders on the policy. Look beyond those who represent your district, and find legislators who may have expressed interest in your issue, or serve on a committee relevant to your issue.
- Understand the issue through conversations with a trusted organization and personal research.
- Find out about the work of other groups in your community or state that are working on this issue and tap into their efforts. Tribal governments may employ a lobbyist and take a position on a particular bill. Advocacy organizations like Western Native Voice seek to represent American Indian interests, and employ staff.
- Determine which course of action to pursue. Advocates may write a letter or email, call legislators, meet local legislators in Helena, or testify at a public hearing.

Tactics to Influence Legislation

1. WRITE A LETTER

Letters from constituents have a significant impact on legislators. Letters may be effective with the sponsor of a bill, certain members of a committee, or your own legislator. When writing, keep in mind the following tips:

- **Be concise.** Keep your letter short and to the point. Use bullets and bold type-face to emphasize main points.

- **Make it personal.** Your own experience is the best evidence. Explain how the issue affects you, your family, or tribe. Personalized letters are always more effective than form letters or petitions.
- **Describe what you want the legislator to do.** For example, support, co-sponsor, or oppose a particular bill or increase funding for a program.
- **Include your name, address, a little about yourself** (i.e., your role in your community), and your tribal affiliation.

2. TESTIFY AT A HEARING

Anyone may testify during a public hearing in legislative committee. Committee hearings allow constituents to address concerns with proposed legislation before the committee takes action, and before the bill makes way to the full House and Senate for debate and a final vote. Citizens may testify in person or submit written testimony.⁷

- **Find out when the hearing is.** Keep track of the dates, times, and locations of the committee meetings and hearings that pertain to your community. Hearing dates can pop up quickly and meeting rooms can change at the last minute, so make sure to check frequently for details. Information on committee hearings and other events for the current legislative session can be found on the Legislative website, located at www.leg.mt.gov.
- **Arrive to the hearing early.** Participants should be courteous and respectful entering the hearing room. Turn off cell phone before entering and do not bring food or drink except for water.
- **Prepare before attending the hearing.** Take note of key talking points and practice in front of others. Be concise and speak clearly. State your most important arguments first, in case you run out of time. Sometimes, you may be asked to keep your testimony short. Be prepared to have a two-minute version of your testimony in case time is limited. It's best to assume that your time will be very limited.
- **Dress appropriately.** Most legislators wear business clothing. If possible, show respect by dressing well by personal standards.
- **Sign in.** Every hearing includes an entry way table with a sign in sheet. Speakers identify themselves as proponents (those for the bill), opponents (those against) or informational witnesses (generally used by other government personnel).
- **Use proper legislative hearing protocol.** Effective public testimony is short, generally less than two minutes long. At the beginning of testimony, open with "Mr./Madam Chair, my name is _____, spelled _____. I am from _____ and represent (myself or an organization). I am speaking to (support or oppose) (bill number)."

- **Submit a copy of written testimony.** Come to the hearing with a short written summary of your position and provide a copy to the committee secretary for the official record. Advocates may also provide copies to individual legislators. Include contact information on any written materials.
- **Be prepared to answer questions from legislators.** In some instances, legislators call witnesses to the podium to answer questions about testimony. Again, when answering questions, first address the Chair of the committee (Madam or Mr. Chair). Then, address the legislator asking the question. For example, in a response to questions about support for the Education Subcommittee’s recommendations on House Bill 2, an advocate might say “Madam Chair, Representative Smith....”

3. ORGANIZE A “CALL-IN” TO LEGISLATORS

Helping to organize an event to encourage constituents to call their legislators is an effective way to change a legislators’ position on proposed legislation. In Montana, calls to legislators made during legislative session are made to a general hotline at the Legislative Information Desk, (406) 444-4800. These calls become part of the official public record, and a staffer will deliver summaries of each call to legislators. A lot of calls to a legislator during the same period of time help bring a particular issue to the attention of the elected official. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Designate a phone (or a few phones) for the “call-in.” Sometimes, local businesses or nonprofit organizations will provide their space for call-in events. Some advocates host call-in parties with friends using cell phones.
- Each caller receives a piece of paper containing:
 - The name and telephone number of the Legislator
 - A short, clear script for the caller
- If possible, coordinate multiple sites to organize “call-ins” on the same day.
- Recruit volunteers from friends, families and colleagues that may care about the issue at hand. Build a volunteer recruitment list from personal phone and email contact lists.

4. WRITE A LETTER TO EDITOR TO A LOCAL NEWSPAPER

Local legislators stay abreast of community public opinion via their local newspapers, and in particular, the opinion page. Submit a brief (250 words or less) letter to the editor, expressing support or opposition to a particular bill. Be sure to include personal experiences and an appeal to other community members to join in opposition or support.

5. Become Active on Social Media

Social media can be an effective way to encourage other people to get engaged, and to reach your legislator. Here are some ways to use the most popular social media channels

- Facebook Advertise for important events, such as committee hearings or call-ins. You can create “events” and invite people to attend them.
- Share news articles about issues you care about.
- If your legislator has a page, “like” it so you can follow their updates.

Twitter

- If your legislator has Twitter, follow them for updates.
- Organize Twitter campaigns. Like a call-in, encourage constituents to tweet at the legislator. Send an e-mail to interested constituents with suggested tweets For example, “@MyLegislator: Vote for more school funding!” or “@MyLegislator: Thank you for voting yes and supporting Indian Country.”
- Use hashtags so people can easily find tweets on the topic. People active in the political process often use #MTPOL (Montana politics) or #MTLEG (Montana legislature) at the end of their tweets.
- Tweet links to news stories about your issues.

When using social media, it is important to act as if you are talking directly to a legislator. Use polite, clear language and avoid inflammatory statements. This will help your voice be heard.



SECTION 5:

Directory of Policy Contacts for American Indians

Governor Steve Bullock

www.governor.mt.gov
Office of the Governor
PO Box 200801, Helena, MT59620
(406) 444-3111
Office located at the State Capitol, 2nd floor, Room 204.

Governor's Policy Staff

Senior Policy Advisor, Jim Malloy, 444-5503
Policy Advisor for Education, Shannon O'Brien, 444-7802
Policy Advisor for Natural Resources, Tim Baker, 444-7857
Policy Advisor for Health and Families, Tara Veazey, 444-3862
Policy Advisor for Communities and Safety, Siri Smillie, 444-3188

Office of Indian Affairs

Director Jason Smith
Governor's Office of Indian Affairs
PO Box 200801, Helena, MT59620
(406) 444-3702
Email: ويا@mt.gov
tribalnations@mt.gov

Budget and Program Planning Office

Director Dan Villa, (406) 444-3616
PO Box 200802, Helena, MT59620
(406) 444-3616 / Email: dvilla@mt.gov / www.budget.mt.gov

Legislative Fiscal Division

Legislative Fiscal Analyst, Amy Carlson
PO Box 201711, Helena, MT 59620-1711
(406) 444-2986
Email: acarlson@mt.gov / www.leg.mt.gov/css/fiscal/

Legislative Services Division

Director Susan Byorth Fox
PO Box 201706, Helena, MT 59620-1706
(406) 444-3064, Email: sfox@mt.gov
<http://leg.mt.gov/css/Services%20Division/default.asp>

2015 House of Representatives Standing Committee Assignments

Committee	Chair	American Indian Caucus Members
Agriculture	Redfield	Pease-Lopez
Appropriations	Ballance	Peppers
Appropriations/Finance & Claims Joint Subcommittee	Hollandsworth	None
General Government	Osmundson	None
Health & Human Services	Ehli	None
Judicial Branch, Law Enforcement & Justice	Brodehl	None
Long Range Planning	Cuffe	Peppers & Windy Boy
Natural Resources & Transportation	Glimm	None
Business & Labor	Berry	Kipp
Education	Laszloffy	Meyers & Webber
Ethics	Harris	Pease-Lopez
Federal Relations, Energy, and Telecommunications	Lang	None
Fish, Wildlife and Parks	Flynn	Meyers & Smith
Human Services	Wittich	Pease-Lopez
Judiciary	Bennett	Meyers & Pease-Lopez
Legislative Administration	Welborn	Webber
Local Government	Greef	None
Natural Resources	White	None
Rules	Essmann	None
State Administration	Essmann	Webber
Taxation	Miller	Smith
Transportation	Lavin	Kipp & Smith

2015 Senate Standing Committee Assignments

Committee	Chair	American Indian Caucus Members
Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation	Brown	Stewart-Peregoy
Business, Labor, & Economic Affairs	Buttrey	Stewart-Peregoy & Whitford
Committee on Committees	Brenden	None
Education & Cultural Resources	Brown	Stewart-Peregoy
Energy & Telecommunications	Webb	Windy Boy
Ethics	Arntzen	None
Finance & Claims	Jones	Windy Boy
Appropriations/Finance & Claims Joint Subcommittees		
Education	Jones	None
General Government	Taylor	None
Health & Human Services	Webb	None
Judicial Branch, Law Enforcement, & Justice	Hansen	None
Long Range Planning	Ripley	Windy Boy
Natural Resources	Brenden	None
Fish & Game	Brenden	None
Highways & Transportation	Arntzen	Whitford
Judiciary	Sales	None
Legislative Administration	Felder	None
Local Government	Taylor	None
Natural Resources	Vincent	None
Public Health, Welfare, & Safety	Thomas	Windy Boy
Rules	Rosendale	None
State Administration	Brown	Whitford
Taxation	Tutvedt	None

State Agencies

Full agency listing found at www.mt.gov/govt/agencylisting.

Selected agency contacts:

- **Department of Environmental Quality** (DEQ), Director Tracy Stone-Manning, (406) 444-2544, www.deq.mt.gov, email via the web form located at svc.mt.gov/deq/mail/ContactUsForm.asp
- **Fish, Wildlife & Parks** (FWP), Director's Office, (406) 444-3186, www.fwp.mt.gov, email fwpgen@mt.gov
- **Department of Public Health and Human Services**(DPHHS), Director Richard Oppen, (406) 444-5622, www.dphhs.mt.gov
- **Office of Public Instruction** (OPI), Superintendent Denise Juneau, 1-888-231-9393, www.opi.mt.gov, opisupt@mt.gov
- **Department of Revenue** (DOR), Director Mike Kadas, (406) 444- 1900, www.revenue.mt.gov

American Indian Advocacy Organizations (Montana)

Indian People's Action	www.facebook.com/indianpeoplesaction
Montana Indian Business Alliance	www.mibaonline.org
Montana Native Women's Coalition	www.montanativenativewomenscoalition.com
Montana United Indian Association	montanaunitedindianassociation.org
Montana –Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council	www.mtwytlc.org
Native American Development Corporation	www.nadc-nabn.org
Western Native Voice	www.westernnativevoice.org

National American Indian Policy Organizations

American Indian Alaska Native Employee Association	www.aianea.com
American Indian Business Leaders	www.aibl.org
American Indian Higher Education Consortium	www.aihec.org
American Indian Science and Engineering Society	www.aises.org
American Indian Society	www.aisdc.org
Americans for Indian Opportunity	www.aio.org
Association on American Indian Affairs	www.indian-affairs.org
Center for Native American Youth	www.cnay.org
Council for Tribal Employment Rights	www.ctertero.org
Council of Energy Resource Tribes	www.certreearth.com
First Nations Development Institute	www.firstnations.org
First Nations Oweesta Corporation	www.oweesta.org
First Peoples Fund	www.firstpeoplesfund.org
Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development	www.hks.harvard.edu/hpaied
Indian Law Resource Center	www.indianlaw.org
Intertribal Agriculture Council	www.indianaglink.com
InterTribal Buffalo Council	www.itbcbison.com
Intertribal Council on Utility Policy	www.intertribalcoup.org
Intertribal Tax Alliance	www.indiantax.org
Intertribal Trust Fund Monitoring Association	www.itmatrustfunds.org
National American Indian Court Judges Association	www.naicja.org
National American Indian Housing Council	www.naihc.net
National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers	www.nathpo.org
National Caucus of Native American Legislators	www.nativeamericanlegislators.org
National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development	www.ncaied.org
National Congress of American Indians	www.ncai.org
National Congress of American Indians Policy Research Center	www.naciprc.org
National Council of Urban Indian Health	www.ncuih.org
National Indian Business Association	www.nibanetwork.org
National Indian Child Welfare Association	www.nicwa.org

National Indian Council on Aging
 National Indian Education Association
 National Indian Gaming Association
 National Indian Health Board
 National Indian Health Outreach and Education Initiative
 National Indian Housing Council
 National Indian Justice Center
 National Native American AIDS Prevention Center
 National Native American Bar Association
 National Native American EMS Association
 National Tribal Air Association
 Native American Boys and Girls Club of America
 Native American Contractors Association
 Native American Finance Officers Association
 Native American Journalists Association
 Native American Public Telecommunications
 Native American Rights Fund
 Native Americans in Philanthropy
 Native Nations Institute
 Native Public Media
 Native Workplace
 Self-Governance Communication and Outreach Consortium
 Seventh Generation Fund for Indian Development, Inc.
 Society of American Indian Government Employees
 Institute for Tribal Government-
 The Hatfield School of Government
 Tribal Child Care Technical Assistance Center
 Tribal Law and Policy Institute
 United National Indian Tribal Youth, Inc. (Unity)
 Women Empowering Women for Indian Nations - WEWIN

www.nicoa.org
www.niea.org
www.niga.org
www.nihb.org
www.tribalhealthcare.org
www.naihc.net
www.nijc.org
www.nnaapc.org
www.nativeamericanbar.org
www.nnaemsa.org
www.ntaatribalair.org
www.naclubs.org
www.nativecontractors.org
www.nafoa.org
www.naja.com
www.nativetelecom.org
www.narf.org
www.nativephilanthropy.org
www.nni.arizona.edu
www.nativepublicmedia.org
www.nativeworkplace.com
www.tribalselfgov.org
www.7genfund.org
www.saige.org

www.tribalgov.pdx.edu
www.nccic.org/tribal
www.tlpi.org
www.unityinc.org
www.wewin04.org



Montana Research and Issue Advocacy Organizations

AARP Montana
AAUW-Montana
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network Montana
Association of the Area Agencies on Aging
Area I Agency on Aging- Glendive
Area IX Agency on Aging- Kalispell
Building Economic Strength Together Coalition
Center for Rural Affairs
Child Care Resources
Children's Defense Fund of Montana
Clark Fork Coalition
Disability Rights Montana
Haven
MEA-MFT
Missoula Area Central Labor Council
Montana AFL-CIO
Montana Association of Nutrition and Dietetics
Montana Associated Students
Montana Business and Professional Women
Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Montana Conservation Voters (MCV)
Montana Environmental Information Center (MEIC)
Montana Food Bank Network
Montana Human Rights Network
Montana Indian Education Association
Montana Organizing Project
Montana Small Business Alliance
Montana Women For
Montana Women's Lobby
Montana Women Vote
Montanans For Corporate Accountability
NARAL Pro-Choice Montana
National Association of Social Workers, Montana Chapter
NeighborWorks Montana
NeighborWorks Great Falls
Planned Parenthood
Planned Parenthood Leaders and Advocates at the University of Montana
Policy Institute
Rural Dynamics, Inc.
Service Employees International Union 775NW, Montana
Students for Choice- Flathead Valley Community College
Students for Choice- MSU-Billings
Students for Choice- MSU-Bozeman
Students for Choice-University of Montana
Summit Independent Living Center
University Faculty Association (UFA) at the University of Montana
Women's Opportunity and Resource Development (WORD)
Women's Voices for the Earth

References

1. The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, *The State of the Native Nations: Conditions Under U.S. Policies of Self-Determination*, January 2007, http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic177572.files/SONN_Final_01_09_07.pdf.
2. Sarah L. Hicks, "Intergovernmental Relationships: Expressions of Tribal Sovereignty", *Rebuilding Native Nations: Strategies for Governance and Development*, (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2007),
3. "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996", P.L. 104-193, Aug. 22, 1996, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-104publ193/html/PLAW-104publ193.htm>.
4. Oregon Joint Legislative Audit Committee Report No. 98-9, *Study of the Effects of Federal Devolution on State*, December 1998.
5. Susan Johnson, Jeanne Kaufmann, John Dossett, and Sarah Hicks, *Government to Government: Understanding State and Tribal Governments*, April 2009, <http://www.ncsl.org/documents/statetribe/item019417.pdf>.
6. Montana Legislature, House Bill 608, "State-tribal government-to-government relations," May 5, 2003, <http://data.opi.mt.gov/bills/2003/billhtml/HB0608.htm>.
7. State of Montana, "Partners in Building a Stronger Montana," 2013 State-Tribal Relations Report, September 15, 2013, http://tribalnations.mt.gov/Portals/34/docs/2013_Tribal_Relations_Report_final.pdf.
8. Sarah L. Hicks, "Intergovernmental Relationships: Expressions of Tribal Sovereignty", *Rebuilding Native Nations: Strategies for Governance and Development*, (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2007),
9. Montana Constitution, Art. 2, sec. 8, March 22, 1972, <http://courts.mt.gov/content/library/docs/72constit.pdf>.
10. Western Native Voice 2013 Annual Report; Cowgirl Blog, "Analysis: Indian Vote Key to Democratic Victories," Tag Archives: Voter Turnout, <http://mtcowgirl.com/tag/voter-turnout/>.
11. CNN Wire, "Report shows turnout lower than 2008 and 2004," CNN Politics, November 8, 2012, <http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2012/11/08/report-shows-turnout-lower-than-2008-and-2004/>.
12. For information on American Indian state legislators, see American Indians in the Montana Legislature 1989-Present, <http://leg.mt.gov/css/About-the-Legislature/Facts-and-Statistics/indian-legislators.asp>.
13. Sarah Hicks, "Intergovernmental Relationships: Expressions of Tribal Sovereignty," *Rebuilding Native Nations: Strategies for Governance and Development* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2007), page 246-271.
14. Sarah Hicks, "Intergovernmental Relationships: Expressions of Tribal Sovereignty," *Rebuilding Native Nations: Strategies for Governance and Development* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2007), page 246-271.
15. Hanna, T., Deloria, S., Trimble, C., *The Commission on State-Tribal Relations: Enduring Lessons in the Modern State-Tribal Relationship* (2012), <http://digitalcommons.law.utulsa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2828&context=tlr>.
16. Public Works, "Government: a Tool for Racial Justice, May 2013, <http://www.publicworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Public-Works-Race-and-Government-Short-Description.pdf>.
17. Public Works, "Government: a Tool for Racial Justice, May 2013, <http://www.publicworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Public-Works-Public-Budgets-Presentation.pdf>.
18. Montana Legislative Fiscal Division, "Understanding State Finances and the Budgeting Process," 2009 Legislative Session, http://leg.mt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/leg_reference/Understanding_State_Finances.pdf.
19. <http://www.nasbo.org/sites/default/files/State%20Expenditure%20Report.pdf>.
20. For more information on the budget process, see Montana Legislative Fiscal Division, "Understanding State Finances and the Budgeting Process," 2009 Legislative Session, http://leg.mt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/leg_reference/Understanding_State_Finances.pdf.
21. Montana Legislative Fiscal Division, "Understanding State Finances and the Budgeting Process," 2009 Legislative Session, http://leg.mt.gov/content/Publications/fiscal/leg_reference/Understanding_State_Finances.pdf.

**TAKING A SEAT AT THE
TABLE:**

State Budget Handbook for Indian Country

**December 8 – 9 | 2014
HELENA | MONTANA**

