

Commentary

Missourians must engage in the fiscal debate

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by [Amy Blouin](#)

A considerable portion of Missouri's economic production depends on the fiscal policy decisions made in Jefferson City. State budget and policy can enhance vital infrastructure, including roads and public transportation, support an educated work force through investment in education and foster healthy citizens through access to affordable health care. These policies promote Missouri's ability to do business and improve the quality of life for our citizens.

Yet, too few of us become engaged in the budget and fiscal policy issues that impact our daily lives. These issues are often complex, hampering the public's ability to engage in fiscal policy debates. In response, the Missouri Budget Project (MBP) was founded in 2003 to provide timely, well-researched information and analyses on state and federal budgetary and tax policy and its impact on Missouri.

As a nonprofit, nonpartisan fiscal analysis organization, the MBP works to improve public policies for all Missourians and provide the public with the information they need to understand and engage in fiscal discussions. A central tenet of our work is that for Missouri to be fiscally sound and to foster economic development, we must ensure that there are sufficient resources to fund vital and basic state services. An important aspect of this is fostering policies that assist Missouri's hard-working families to remain healthy and productive.

The MBP recently was selected to join the State Fiscal Analysis Initiative, a national network of 29 state-based fiscal policy analysis organizations coordinated by the Center on Budget & Policy Priorities in Washington, D.C. Begun in the early 1990s, the SFAI provides credible research and analysis for state policy makers and the general public to facilitate the understanding of fiscal policy decisions. The inclusion of the MBP in the SFAI network means we will be able to serve Missouri with enhanced and sustained capacity.

Missouri faces a breadth of complex fiscal issues: While general revenue is beginning to rebound, the state has significant unmet needs in education, health care and public services; Missouri faces growing numbers of ballot proposals; and with term limits in the Capitol, fewer decision makers have experience navigating complex fiscal issues.

We encourage Missourians to learn more about the state's fiscal policies and to become engaged in the public policy process. To access the Missouri Budget Project reports and analyses visit www.mobudget.org

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