PREPARING A STATEMENT ON THE PRELIMINARY BUDGET

(City Charter § 238.) Not later than the fifteenth day of February, each community board shall submit to the mayor, the council, director of management and budget, the appropriate borough president and each member of the borough board of the borough in which the community board is located, a statement containing the community board's assessment of the responsiveness of the preliminary budget to its statement of budget priorities submitted pursuant to section 230 and any other comments or recommendations which it wishes to make in regard to the preliminary budget (section 238)

WHEN By February 15 (or 30 days after the release of the Preliminary Budget).

WHAT Community boards must comment on the City's Preliminary Budget in writing one month after the budget is released. In this **Statement on the Preliminary Budget**, the community board reacts to agency and mayoral budget choices and priorities by comparing them to the board's. The **Statement** should also reflect the public's testimony at the board's public hearings which are held between January 20 and February 15.

WHY **The Statement on the Preliminary Budget** satisfies Section 238 of the City Charter and helps the boards:

- Influence the selection of programs and projects included in the Executive Budget.
- Tell the Mayor what you think about the impact of Citywide budget policies.
- React to agency funding recommendations:
  - Support funding decisions you like.
  - Protest funding decisions you oppose.
  - Add evidence to support your budget proposals.
- Tell about changes in the community since the board sent in their budget requests and priorities.
- Tell the City Council, the Borough Presidents and the borough board about community board concerns. These bodies also hold public hearings on the Preliminary Budget. The Borough Presidents and Borough Boards submit recommendations to the Mayor and the City Council for consideration in preparing the Executive Budget.

HOW Organize the letter by **AGENCY** so that your comments can be sent to the proper agency and OMB decision makers.

HINT: **USE THESE COMMENTS AS TESTIMONY BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL AND THE BOROUGH BOARD IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH.**

HOW TO PREPARE STATEMENTS

First, make sure you understand the agency responses to your board's budget requests. Do they make sense? Contact the agency for any explanation, clarification or assistance. Contact names, fax and phone numbers at each agency are listed in the **Register of Community Board Budget Requests**.

Next, review the Departmental Estimates and the Four Year Financial Plan to understand City priorities for each agency and program.

The public gets their chance to comment when you hold public hearings in your district. Incorporate this testimony into your **Statement.**

Boards should compare the Preliminary Budget documents and the needs you have conveyed to City officials at district and borough consultations, in your **Needs Statement**, and in your budget requests, to determine whether the City's budget has included **your** district's needs.

DO NOT JUST LIST YOUR BUDGET REQUESTS.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Emphasize any major changes in your community. Otherwise, summarize your **Needs Statement**.
- Stress support for projects and programs recommended by the agencies. This will help keep them included in the Executive Budget.
- Oppose Preliminary Budget decisions which are contrary to the board's needs.
- Urge agencies to move projects ahead when possible in the four year Financial Plan and justify this request.

FORMAT

Organize your comments **BY AGENCY** to help us send the information to the OMB task forces as they review your budget requests for the Executive Budget. Copies also are sent to the agency.

Use the following as a guide.

- Opening statement
- General reaction to City policy as reflected in the Preliminary Budget (the Financial Plan, Departmental Estimates, and Program to Eliminate the Gap).
- Change or reaffirm district needs.
- React to agency decisions about your budget requests which are listed in the **Register of Community Board Budget Requests for the Preliminary Budget**:
  - Comment on projects which were or were not included in the agencies' Departmental Estimates.
  - Detail how funding recommendations relate to your Statement of District Needs.
  - Further justify those project requests which were not recommended.
  - Indicate continued support for funded projects.
- Briefly discuss the results of the board's public hearings, including the date, place, summary of events and conclusions.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION - Check www.nyc.gov for more information

- **Register of Community Board Budget Requests**
- **Statement of Community District Needs**
- Testimony taken at the boards' public hearings on the budget process
- The Commitment Plan for your district
- Capital Project Detail Data for your district
- Four-Year Financial Plan
  - Program to Eliminate the Gap (PEG)
- Agency Departmental Estimate
- Geographic Reports for the Capital and Expense Budgets

ADOPTING AND MAILING THE STATEMENT ON THE PRELIMINARY BUDGET

The **Statement on the Preliminary Budget** must be adopted by a majority vote of the community board, acting in the presence of a quorum. The **Statement** should be signed by the board chairperson who certifies that the text has been adopted by the board, the date of the meeting at which the board acted, and the recorded vote.

Send or e-mail the **Statement** to the Mayor, City Council, Office of Management and Budget, your Borough President, and each member of your borough board.