



Grassroots Collaborative Toolkit

Economic Equity Education

The Penny Budget

Time

35 Minutes

Materials

Timer, two zip lock bags per group of five, 100 pennies in each zip lock bag, markers, Illinois budget sheet, bucket

Purpose

To demonstrate to participants the need for additional state revenue and encourage them to think creatively about what a budget that reflects their values would look like

Preparation

Count total number of participants, ensure you have two zip lock bags per group of five participants, and ensure there are 100 pennies in each zip lock bag.

Description

Budgeting in small groups (10 minutes)

- Divide participants into small groups of (5).
- Distribute IL budget sheet, markers, and one zip lock bag containing 100 pennies to each pair. Explain that each group has been given 100 pennies to divide between the different budget categories on the sheet.
- Encourage participants to add additional budget categories they would like to see in their community.

Gallery (5 minutes)

- Have each group get up and look at another group's budget. What is similar/different? Did they have any different categories that they put in?

Impact of Disinvestment (10 minutes)

- Tell participants that they must remove 27 pennies from their penny budget. Explain that since 2002 the state of Illinois has cut over 25% from public services.
- Give participants 3 minutes to choose what they want to cut, then come to each group and remove collect the pennies.
- Now tell participants that they must remove 10 more pennies from their budget. Explain that the budget that Illinois finally passed includes 5% additional cuts on top of the years of cuts that have already happened, with some area facing even more cuts.



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Description continued

- Give participants 2 minutes to choose what they want to cut, then come to each group and remove collect the pennies.

Progressive Revenue Solutions & Debrief (10 minutes)

- Hand out bag with additional 100 pennies. Explain to participants to group that if instead of cutting legislators could pass progressive revenue that generate more pennies for the state to use.
 - \$9.4 billion from a progressive income tax (WI)
 - \$1.7 billion from closing carried interest loophole
 - \$10 billion La Salle Street tax
 - \$2 billion from closing corporate loopholes

Invite groups to report back.

Ask participants how it felt when they had to cut from their penny budget.

Debrief

Ask them to imagine what it would mean for their communities if they had 100 more pennies

Explanation of Math

Total IL Budget:

\$56 billion

45% of budget public services (Health, Education, Human Service, and Transportation)

\$25.2 billion = 100 pennies

Cuts since 2002 \$6.8 billion = 27 pennies

Cuts in latest budget = 10 pennies

Revenue:

\$9.4 billion from a progressive income tax (WI)

\$1.7 billion from closing carried interest loophole

\$10 billion La Salle Street tax

\$2 billion from closing corporate loopholes

Total: \$24 billion = 98 pennies