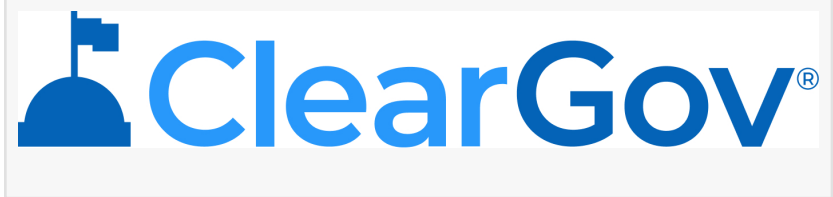


# 60% of Local Government Finance Leaders Call Modernization Top Priority for Next Year, New Study Finds

*New report by ClearGov examines local governments' top budgeting and planning challenges, priorities*



MAYNARD, MA, UNITED STATES,  
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ClearGov®, the leader in budget cycle management solutions for local governments and school districts, today announced the findings of the company's 2025 Local Government Budgeting & Planning Outlook Report.

Based on a national survey of nearly 200 municipal and county leaders, this inaugural report offers a comprehensive look at the current state of budgeting, financial reporting, and strategic planning across local governments in the U.S., as well as the future outlook on public finance.

"The aim of this new research study was to better understand the key challenges and investment priorities in local government finance," said David Karel, Chief Marketing Officer of ClearGov. "Communities are facing some of the toughest fiscal conditions in years, but what stood out in the survey results was their resilience and focus on fundamentals. The findings here show that local agencies are doubling down on transparency, long-term planning, and smarter budgeting practices that earn trust and make lean teams more productive."

Key findings from the report include:

— Planning, budgeting, and reporting work best when they're carried out together —  
Nearly 60% of survey respondents said that tying their budget to their strategic plan is very important. And 74% of respondents called communicating the final budget to stakeholders (i.e. via reporting) very important, making it the most important out of all keys to budgeting success.

— Budgeting is the most time-intensive financial function —  
44% of respondents spend more than 20 hours per week on budgeting during peak season. Respondents said that personnel budgeting was the most difficult budget to develop, with 42% saying such.

— Aspects of financial reporting are tougher to execute than budgeting —

50% of respondents noted that developing budget books is difficult, and almost half (47%) said the same about preparing annual financial reports. Meanwhile, 42% of respondents rated personnel budgeting as being difficult, which still confirmed it as the most challenging of the three budget categories.

— Strategic planning is widespread but unevenly tracked —

85% of respondents have a strategic plan, but only 31% frequently update progress metrics, and 29% do not track metrics at all. And more than half of the respondents cited staff expertise and progress tracking as moderate-to-significant challenges.

— Modernization is a top priority among public finance professionals —

60% of respondents said that modernizing inefficient systems was a top priority in the coming year. Software investment interest is highest in budgeting and reporting, and governments expressed the most near-term interest in budgeting and financial reporting tools.

This new 2025 report also includes an analysis of transmittal letters from over 100 budget books of local governments across 27 states to provide directional insights to further inform survey data. Survey data shows that over 70% of respondents expect their budgets to increase in the following year, and the budget book analysis shows that inflationary pressures, labor market volatility, aging infrastructure, and rising economic development and population numbers are key contributors to this increase.

“What stands out in this research is how modernization has become a top priority across communities of all sizes,” said Bryan Burdick, President and Co-Founder of ClearGov. “We hear it all the time from our customers. Smaller agencies with limited resources are just as determined as large districts to improve their efficiency. The survey findings make clear that modernization is fueling impact across the country.”

The full report also explores local governments’ investment priorities, their biggest opportunities for operational improvement, and the length of time each financial function takes. The 2025 Local Government Budgeting & Planning Report is available now here:

<https://cleargov.com/rc/report/2025-local-government-budgeting-planning-outlook>.

## ABOUT CLEARGOV

ClearGov® makes it easy to plan, build, and present your budget with confidence. Over 1400 local governments, counties, schools, and special districts use ClearGov to bring stakeholders together in one central platform to manage the complete budget cycle - planning and tracking, budgeting, reporting, and engaging the community. Modern software built for the specific needs of the public sector, ClearGov is how to build the budget quickly and accurately, tell your financial story in a way that builds trust and support, and spend more time on the strategic

initiatives that will help your community thrive. ClearGov is proudly endorsed by the National Association of Counties (NACo) and is an Affinity Partner with the International Association of School Business Officials (ASBO). For more information, visit [www.cleargov.com](http://www.cleargov.com).

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