

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

IN GOVERNMENT FINANCE



GFOA's Awards for Excellence in Government Finance recognize innovative programs and contributions to the practice of government finance that exemplify outstanding financial management. The awards stress practical, documented work that offers leadership to the profession and promotes improved public finance.

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Explore
ADA COUNTY
FY20 BUDGET



2020 Winner for Exceptionally Well Implemented Best Practice



ADA COUNTY, IDAHO THE ADA COUNTY BUDGET EXPLORER

Ada County's Budget Explorer follows three main tenets to improve public engagement and transparency in the budget process.

1. Encouraging Public Engagement. As part of its commitment to transparency, Ada County has encourages a broad array of perspectives. Central to this idea is communicating information to the public in a format that they can understand easily. The interactive Budget Explorer is easy to navigate as it details the steps of the budget process. It also provides more detailed information for users who want a better understanding of revenue sources and what expenditures are used for.

2. Providing the Engagement Medium. The Budget Explorer provides all residents with online access to information about how every dollar of the annual budget, along with detailed explanations for users who don't understand technical terminology. Hovering over each element of the budget process provides pop ups that supply additional information to contextualize the budget elements. For instance, the county spends more than \$123 million on public safety each year. That number makes a lot more sense when users realize it represents nearly 43% of the annual budget.

3. Proposing Opportunities for Future Engagement. Beyond engaging with the data provided through the Budget Explorer, Ada County citizens can also voice their concerns, ask probing questions, seek clarification, and suggest solutions to current budget issues, proposed budget items, and future resource requirements. County officials encourage participation at monthly board meetings, along with special meetings that primarily focus on the budget.

Ada County has improved transparency of the budget process, along with citizen engagement, by publishing timely, relevant budget data in an easily understood format. Residents can use the tiles on the home page to quickly navigate to the county's budget process, drill down to specific revenues, learn about expenditure needs, and even meet the county budget team. The Budget Explorer has been hailed as great stride forward.

GFOA Best Practice: Public Engagement in the Budget Process