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IN GOVERNMENT FINANCE



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2020 Winner for Creative Solution to a Common Challenge



EAST BAY MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT BUDGET-IN-BRIEF

Like many public agencies, California's East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) is experiencing increasing demands for financial data transparency. The district's biennial budget document presents an extensive amount of budgetary and financial data, but it can be challenging for non-financial readers to understand rate increases. Additionally, field staff indicated that they are often approached by members of the public with questions about the budget and billing rates, but they find themselves unable to provide informative answers.

To address these concerns, budget staff initiated the design and development of a first-of-its-kind tool for EBMUD. This "budget-in-brief" summarizes the organization's biennial budget in a brochure format that promotes transparency, better informs the public, and draws direct connections between the district's charges and the services it provides.

Budget staff created a rough draft of the document, including a graphic design specialist early on. Special care was taken to using as few words as possible, including vibrant graphics, and keeping the writing at a 10th grade reading level. The brochure was designed on legal size paper and tri-folded to form an easy to carry document.

Budget staff then held presentations with field staff, helping them become familiar with the brochure. Field staff were then asked to carry brochures in their work vehicles and distribute them to the public when they are approached by customers. Other channels of distribution include outreach events and displays at public watershed locations.

Evaluate →	Develop →		Review & Approve →			Implement
Oct, Nov, Dec	Jan, Feb	March	April	May	June	July
Evaluate budget goals and current factors; begin development of budget	Develop capital improvement program, operating budget and water and wastewater rates Budget workshop #1: January 22, 2019	Proposed budget presented to Board Budget workshop #2: March 26, 2019	Notify public of proposed rates via Proposition 218 notice, social media, website, bill insert, community briefings	Continued public outreach General Managers Report and Recommendation: May 14, 2019	Board discussion, review, adoption Public hearing: June 11, 2019	Implement rates fees and charges, operating and capital budget