



A Checklist for Fiscal Fluency

Government finance officers need to communicate numbers in a clear and understandable way. This can be difficult, since for many people numbers don't come easy. Taken from the book *Making Numbers Count*, the principles below are designed to help communicate with the fiscal fluency necessary for productive conversations and good decisions about public finance. To see examples of those principles in action, read the full report [here](#).

Understand the limits of rationality

Human thinking is more automatic and less rational than we may think, often leading to an overestimation of people's ability to grasp numbers. The presentation of numbers must be mindful of those limits.

Translate numbers to human scale

Break numbers down to a level that people can easily relate to. For example, rather than the total amount of money the public would pay for a new tax, show the impact per household.

Help people grasp the numbers

Compare the numbers to those of familiar items and events in people's lives. For example, compare the cost of a public service to the cost of consumer goods or services people are familiar with.

Catalyze action with emotional numbers

When it is important to catalyze action, fuse the logic of numbers with a presentation that engages the emotions of the audiences. For example, there might be opportunities to relate the numbers to something the audience will personally experience.

Build a scale model

Use geospatial information on maps to help people visualize the impact of numbers on their communities.
