## **FISCAL FLUENCY** MADE EASY

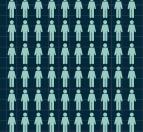


Numbers are at the core of public finance officer's job. A big part of the job is communicating those numbers to other people. However, numbers are not a first language of many in finance officer's audience.

Numbers are abstract concepts. Abstractions require effortful thinking. This is why young children are taught to count objects, like fingers and toes-this makes the numbers more concrete. The numbers that public finance officers need to communicate often go well beyond what can be accommodated by fingers and toes. However, we can take a cue from our childhood and transform numbers into human experience. GFOA's research report Fiscal Fluency Made Easy provides essential strategies for transforming numbers into human experience, based on the popular book, Making Numbers Count. Here, we are highlighting three ways in which large, potentially confusing numbers could be translated to human scale. Check out the report for more strategies to make fiscal fluency easy for your audience.

## CONSIDER THE DEBT SERVICE FOR SCHOOL BUILDINGS AT PALM BEACH PUBLIC SCHOOLS







ANNUAL DEBT SERVICE COSTS RESIDENTS

PER PERSON PER MONTH

THEN COMPARE THE \$8 TO THE AVERAGE ADULT'S MONTHLY COFFEE EXPENDITURE!







**PER PERSON** PER MONTH

## CONSIDER THE CITY OF SAN MATEO'S GENERAL GOVERNMENTAL OPERATING BUDGET

ANNUAL



IN SAN MATEO



PAYS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY, PUBLIC WORKS, LIBRARY, PARKS/ RECREATION, AND MORE



TO MAKE THIS NUMBER

CONCRETE, WE CAN **COMPARE IT TO COMMON** HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURES

SUCH AS THE AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD MONTHLY ENTERTAINMENT BILL

## **CONSIDER SAN MATEO'S GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND** TO FINANCE THE COST OF ITS MAIN LIBRARY





**COMPARE THE \$37 TO** THE AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD ANNUAL SPENDING ON READING MATERIALS!



MILLION PER YEAR **TOTAL PRINCIPAL** WITH INTEREST

OR CONSIDER IT BY MONTH

A BEST-SELLING PAPERBACK MIGHT COST AROUND \$7 AND TAKE ABOUT A MONTH TO READ



HOWEVER, THE MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD COST TO BUILD THE PUBLIC LIBRARY IS A FRACTION OF THAT AMOUNT!