

FROM INPUT TO IMPACT:

A People-Powered Approach
to Budgeting + Governance

PRESENTED BY

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CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER



NFBPA
National Forum for Black Public Administrators

GEORGETOWN
UNIVERSITY



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?



CHALLENGES OF TRADITIONAL CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

✓ **Past Challenges**

- Old systems don't fit contemporary needs
- Global health emergency/delayed recovery

✓ **Current Challenges**

- Polarizing political environments
- Apathy toward government
- Disconnection between the public and private sector
- Shrinking municipal budgets



TO ENGAGE RESIDENTS YOU MUST INVOLVE RESIDENTS!



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT HAS ITS BENEFITS!



The Benefits of **Public Budget Forums**

Unanimous passage of largest budgets in the City of South Fulton, Augusta-Richmond County, and Atlanta's history

Alignment of public and government priorities

Improved public perception of government

PIVOTING TOWARD NEW SOLUTIONS



CITY MANAGER

Public Budget Forums, Citizen Budget
Activities, Mayor's Walk, Community
Conversations



LABOR COMMISSIONER

Public Budget Forums, Community
Conversations, DC Works Podcast



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Public Budget Forums, Mayor's Walk,
Community Conversations

CASE STUDY: SOUTH FULTON

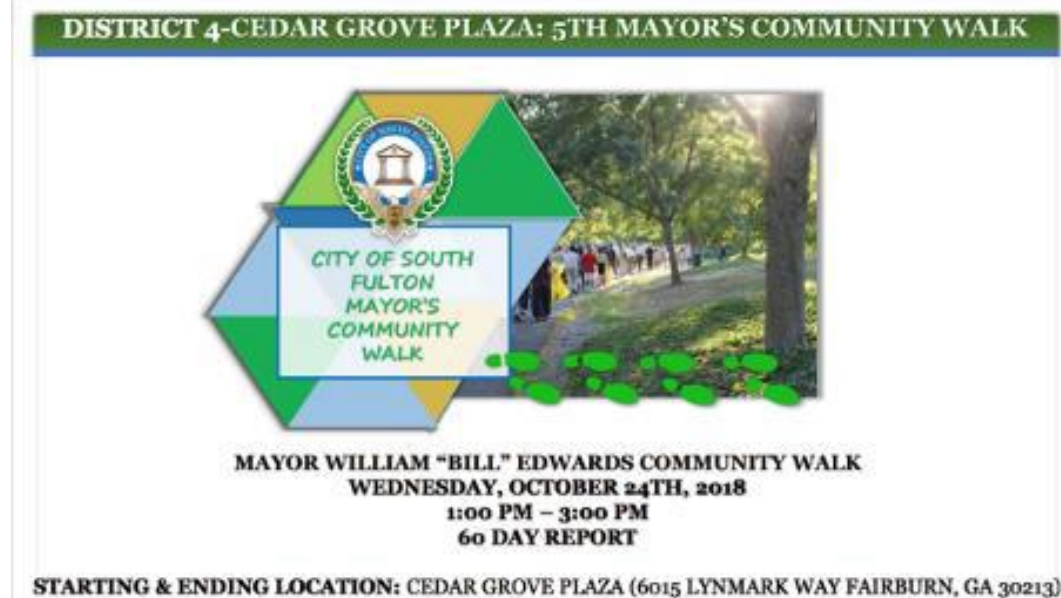


The Benefits of **The Mayor's Walk**

Access to City Services Improved

Community Relations Address

Community Issues



CASE STUDY: DC GOVERNMENT

The Benefits of Community Conversations



CUSTOMER SERVICE

BILL OF RIGHTS

- THE RIGHT TO PROFESSIONAL TREATMENT**
Our Customers have the right to receive prompt, courteous, and respectful service
- THE RIGHT TO KNOW WHO IS ASSISTING YOU**
Our Customers have the right to know the name of the DOES Employees and the Department or Office who assist them
- THE RIGHT TO EASE OF ACCESS**
Our Customers have the right to easily access clear and concise information, or be referred to the appropriate agency, when contacting DOES regarding inquiries or requests related to program services
- THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD**
Our Customers have the right to receive a response to their questions and concerns about DOES services and ensure that every question or request is addressed appropriately
- THE RIGHT TO BE PROTECTED**
Our Customers have the right to have their personal identity and financial information, protected during and after all interactions with DOES employees
- THE RIGHT TO FAIR SERVICE DELIVERY**
Our Customers have the right to consistent and fair delivery of DOES services; DOES serves all District residents without consideration to economic, social or cultural status
- THE RIGHT TO TIMELY SERVICE**
Our Customers have the right to receive responsive and timely service to their inquiries and requests from all DOES employees

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

CASE STUDY: AUGUSTA, GA

Resilient Augusta - Budget Overview Booklet

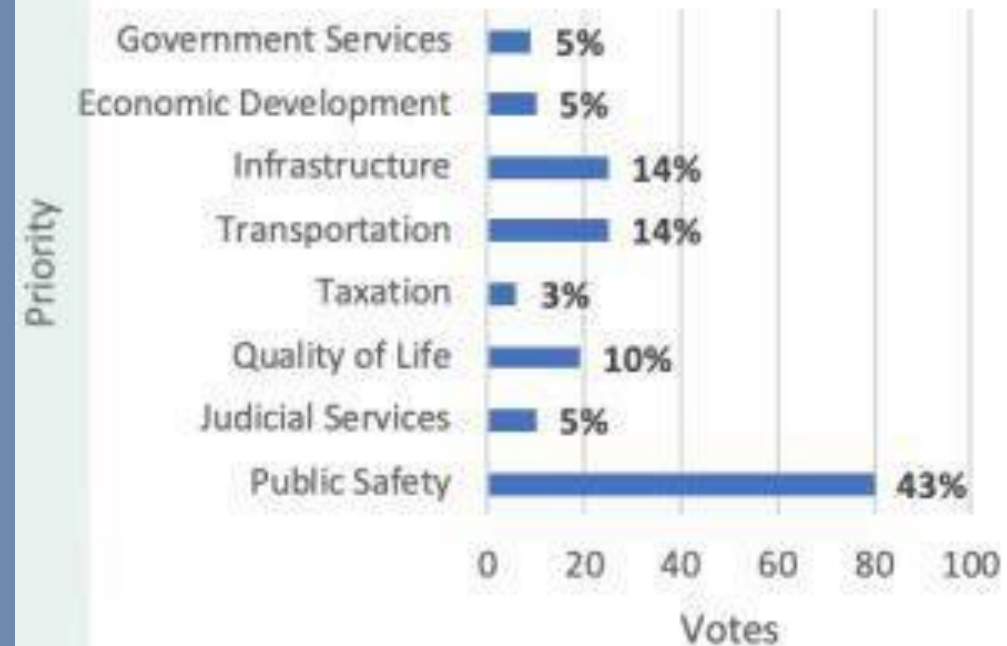
My Budget Priority Cards

Budget Allocation Card

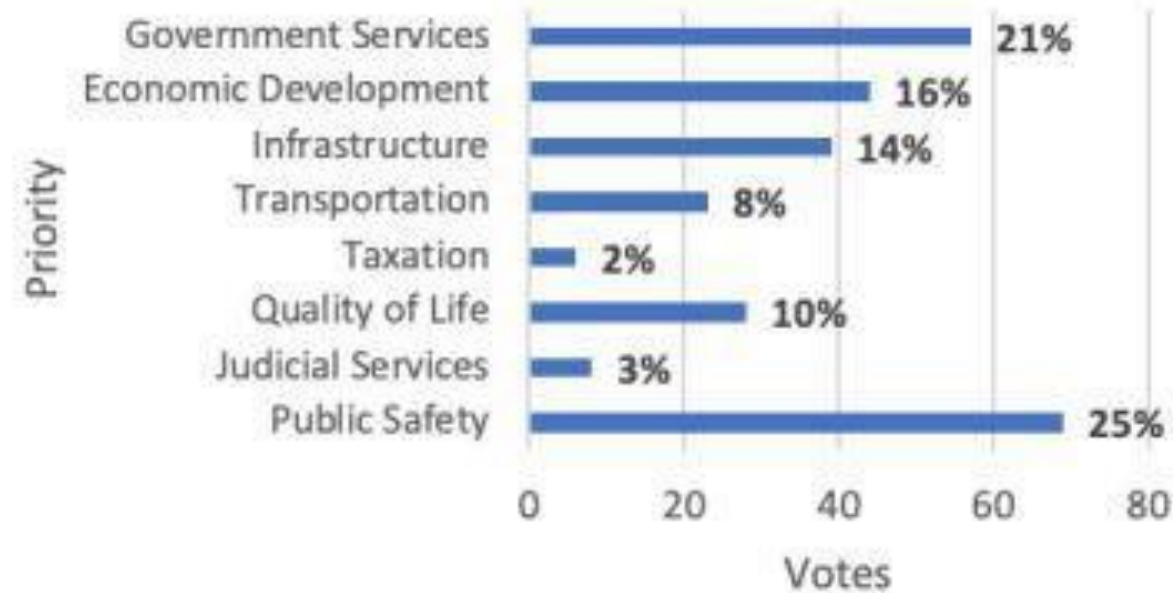


AUGUSTA, GA STATISTICS + OUTCOMES

Online Survey Results- Budget
Priorities



Budget Forum Survey Results-
Budget Priorities



Survey results from community budget engagement forums indicate Public Safety is the top priority to residents, while Infrastructure, Transportation, Quality of Life, and Economic Development (to include housing) also served as high level priorities.

The Augusta Commission unanimously passed the FY2022 budget, the largest (\$1 billion) in Augusta's history, without a residential property tax increase.

PEOPLE FIRST, PEOPLE ALWAYS



CASE STUDY: ATLANTA

People's Day is one of the ways that the administration engaged the community (employees, senior citizens, and others) directly.





WHAT HAPPENED WHEN WE GAVE 27 ATLANTA YOUTH \$790 MILLION?

The Benefits of **Youth Engagement**

In June 2023, Capital B Atlanta, in collaboration with partners like the Center for Civic Innovation, Atlanta Civic Circle, the City of Atlanta and Canopy Atlanta, hosted the Youth Civic Summit. Twenty-seven high school students participated, as a part of Atlanta's "Year of the Youth" initiative.

CLICK HERE 

<https://atlanta.capitalbnews.org/youth-civic-summit-atl-budget-2023/>

HOW DID YOUTH ALLOCATE FUNDS?



TRANSPORTATION

\$111M

Infrastructure issues

\$59M

Clean streets



CITY PLANNING

\$114M

Parks & Recreation

\$104.3M

Grocery stores and better housing



PUBLIC SAFETY

\$63M

Mental health and de-escalation training

\$58M

City's court system to accomodate more mental health cases



PUBLIC SAFETY

\$44.2M

New facilities at Fulton County Jail for a safer environment for inmates

\$76.5M

Fire department to better serve community



THE REST (\$\$\$)

\$180.9M

City executive offices to invest in programming

\$68.6M

Protection against cyber attacks

GOOD GOVERNMENT REQUIRES RESIDENT PARTICIPATION



CASE STUDY: RICHMOND, VA **ENGAGE RVA**





WHAT IS ENGAGE RVA?

The **EngageRVA** budget engagement process leverages City departments, internal and external communication services, data collection, and citizen education to simulate the experiences of government officials, while receiving insight from the public during the development of the FY2027 Budget.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Mayor sets vision and the CAO delivers and defines goals for administrative and operational staff
- The activities are carefully communicated across a variety of platforms including local media
- City Departments bring key sector insights and knowledge
- Departments with Finance and Budget office support provide information regarding finances and process
- Various mediums are used to distribute information, gather data and support town halls
- City leaders engage the public through a variety of methods





#ENGAGERVA

GOALS

- **Improve** public understanding of the budget process
- **Explain** how the budget is both developed and allocated
- **Collect** public input on priorities by service area





#ENGAGERVA AUDIENCES



RESIDENTS



BUSINESSES



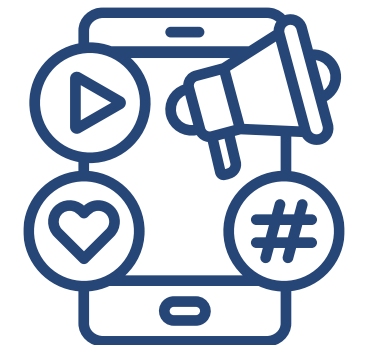
NON-PROFITS



EMPLOYEES



**STATE/LOCAL
OFFICIALS**

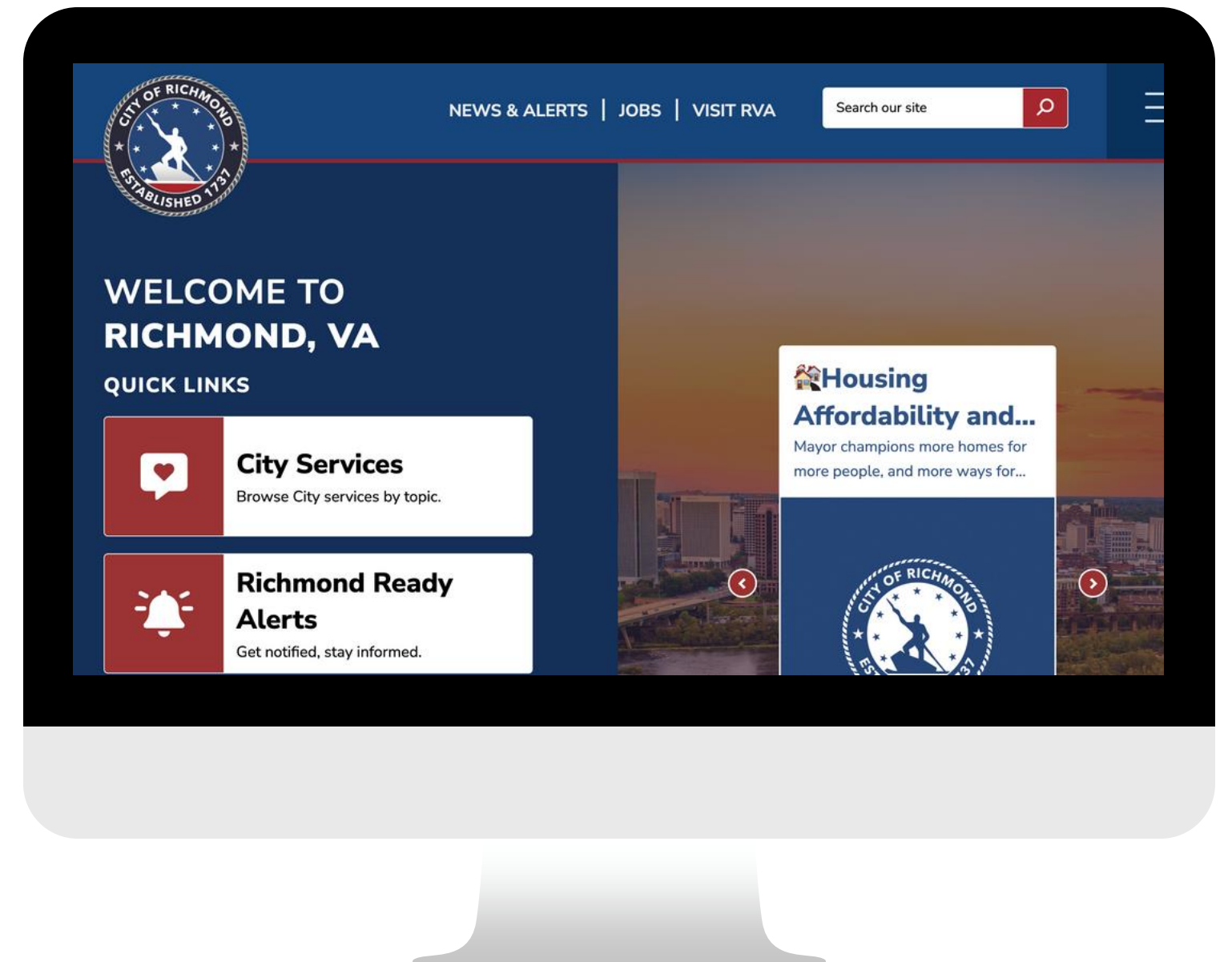


PRESS/MEDIA



BUDGET ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES

- › **Webpage (rva.gov)**
- › **Engagement Page (go.rva.gov/engage)**
- › **Online Survey**
- › **Town Halls**
- › **Social Media**
- › **Print Collateral**





BUDGET ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES

HOW DOES IT WORK?





#ENGAGE RVA

TELL US YOUR PRIORITIES!

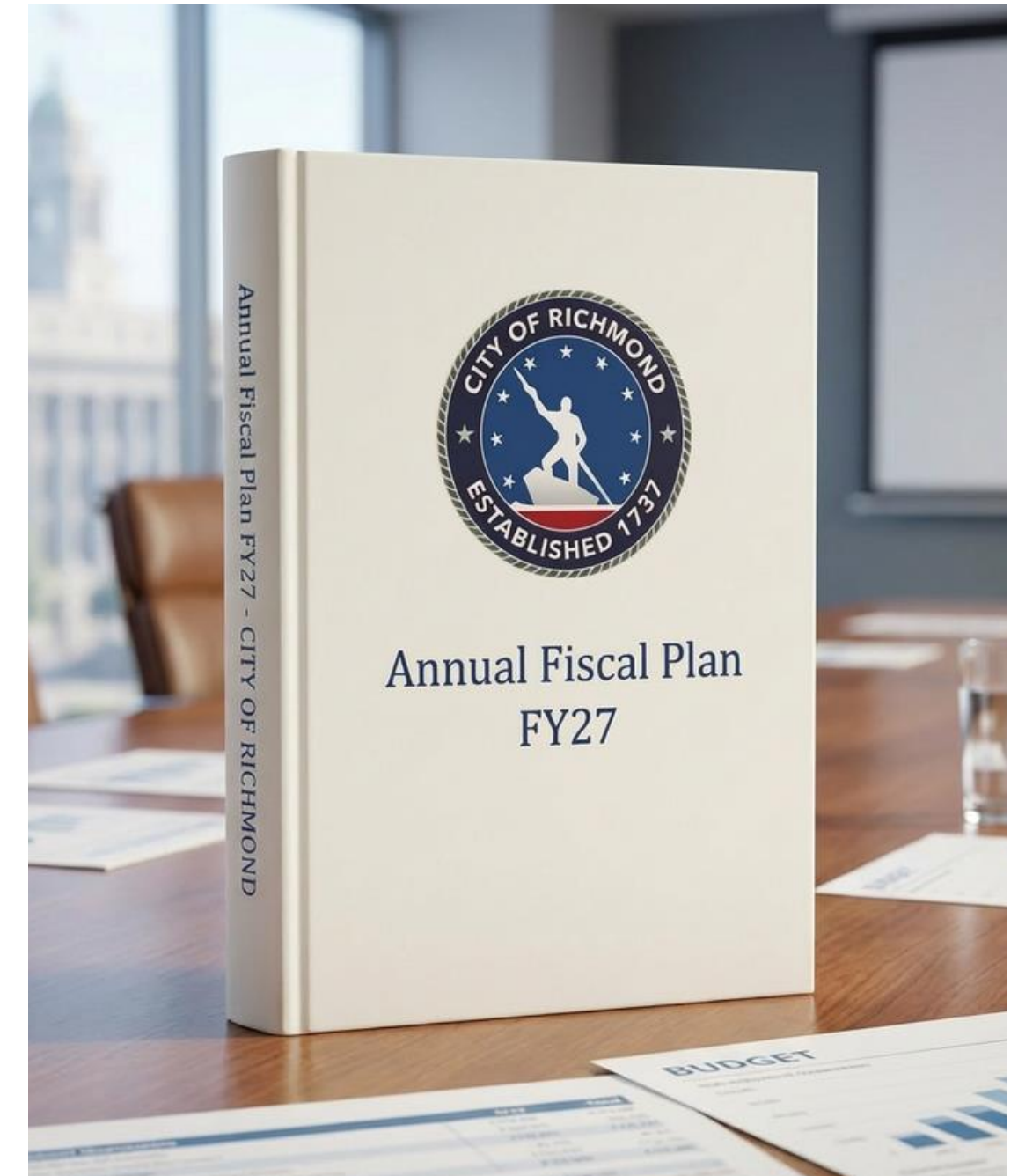
Residents will learn how the City's budget process works and have opportunities to share input before the Mayor's proposed budget is released.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Residents can engage with City leaders and staff through in-person events and online tools, including a survey to share priorities and community needs.

CITY PARTNERS: Mayor, Chief Administrative Officer, City Departments, Budget, Communications

TIMELINE: January 20 - February 28, 2026





PROCESS OVERVIEW

MEETING FORMAT



- **Public** Meetings
- **Regional** Locations
- **2-Hour** Duration
- **50 People** per Meeting

OBJECTIVES



- General education about budget
- Inform public before budget working meetings
- Residents will **learn, give feedback** on how their tax dollars are used and have an opportunity to **prioritize budget needs** based on service area



AGENDA

- Welcome/Networking
- Budget Presentation
- Overview of the Process
- Prioritizing Activities
- Closing & Next Steps

TIMELINE: January 20 – February 28



MESSAGING IS KEY

CAMPAIGN THEME

How do you prioritize and connect with the City budget?

OBJECTIVE

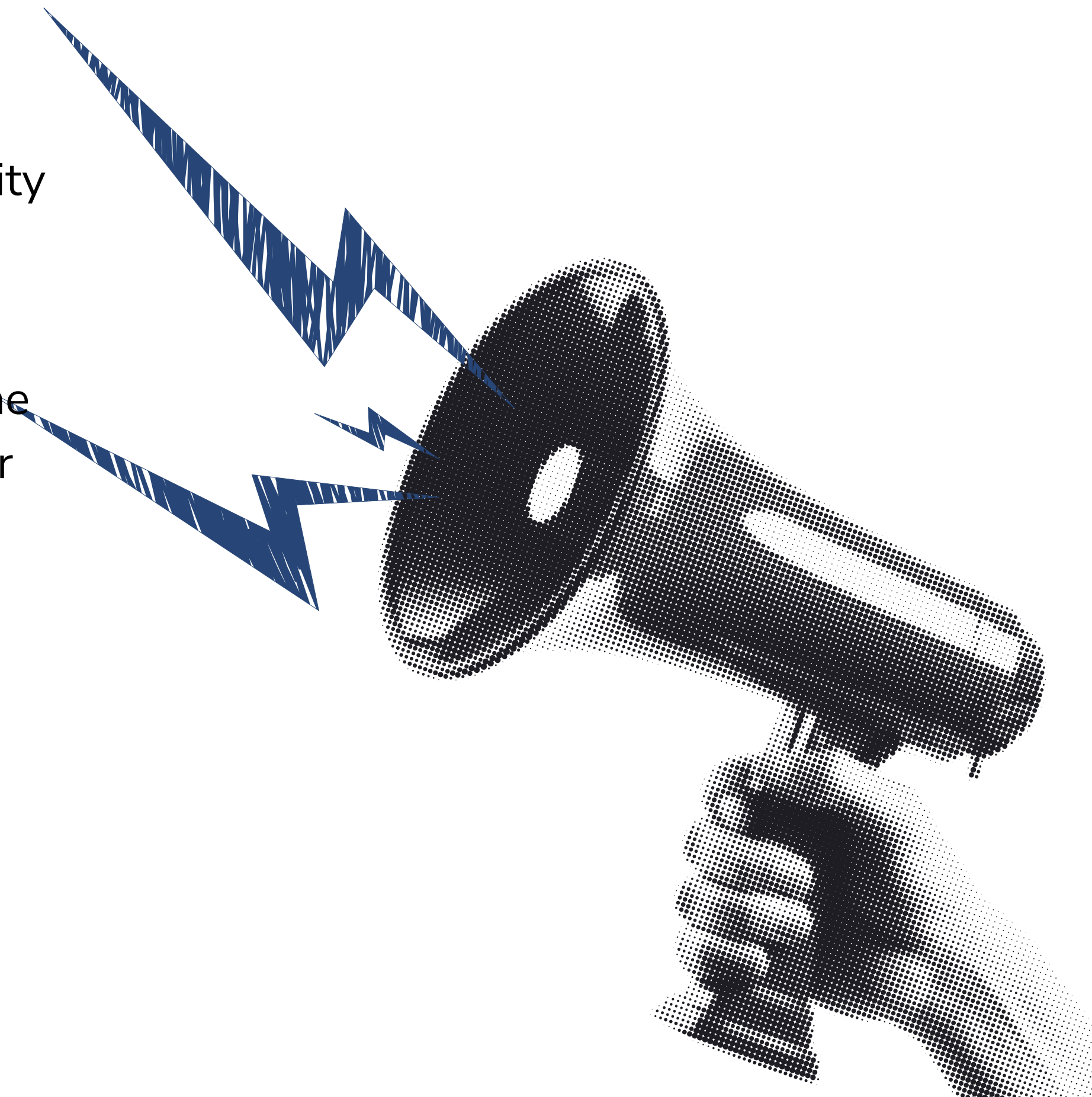
Our goal is to increase public awareness of the budget process and promote opportunities for community engagement.

APPROACH

Surveys and online tools distributed across multiple digital platforms.

SUCCESS MEASURE: We will track and measure engagement across all campaign activities.

TIMELINE: January 28 – Budget Passage





HOW DO WE COMMUNICATE?

WHAT TOOLS DO WE USE?



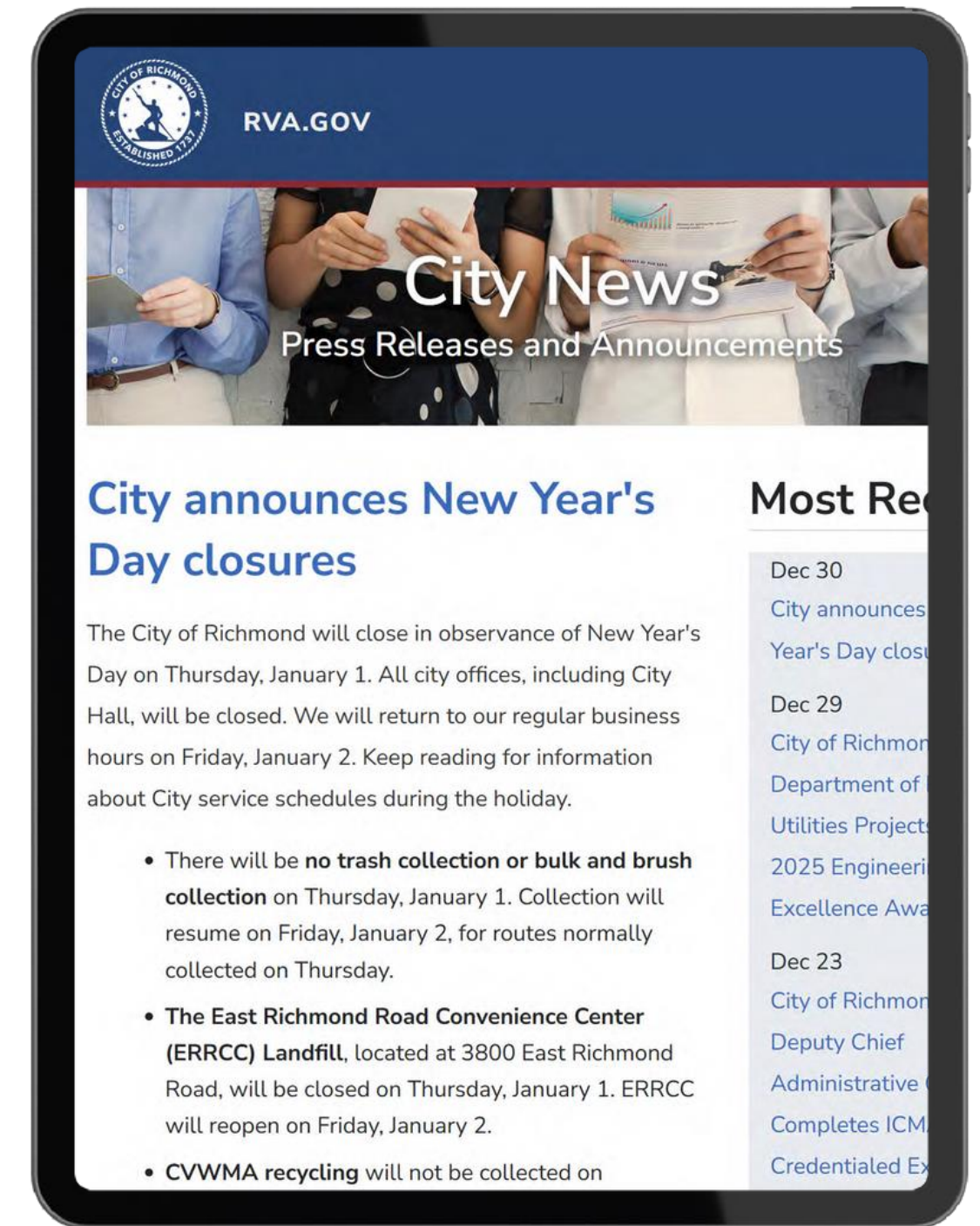


The Landing Webpage provides access to documents central to educating residents about the budget process.

What You'll Find on the Page

- Engage RVA overview
- Introductory video featuring the Mayor and City leadership (February)
- Town Hall explainer presentation (this document)
- Online survey link for resident input
- Town Hall calendar and sign-up (ongoing)
- Post-engagement results and outcomes (forthcoming)

LANDING WEBPAGE





OBJECTIVE

Provide clear and accessible opportunities for community budget engagement.

WHAT’S INCLUDED

Dedicated page on go.rva.gov/engage that includes:

- Education materials
- Budget process and procedural information
- Meeting dates and participation details
- Budget prioritization survey

GO.RVA.GOV/ENGAGE

NEWS & ALERTS | JOBS | VISIT RVA

Search our site

DocumentsEcon IndicatorsNonDepartmentalGrantsReportsAgenciesAwards

FY27 Budget Season

Budget Town Halls

The City of Richmond is inviting residents to take part in a series of Budget Town Halls, providing a forum for shared community input on Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) budget priorities and an opportunity to better understand how the City's budget is developed and executed.

The town halls, which will be held in neighborhoods and community centers across the City, will include representatives from City departments and will feature engaging, interactive sessions to walk residents through the budget process, including how revenues are allocated, how funding decisions are made, and how community input will be considered and incorporated into the proposed budget.

The Town Halls are free to attend, but registration is required.

Register Now

Date	Time	Location	Registration Link
Tuesday, January 20	6:00 - 8:00 p.m.	Lucks Field Community Center (1925 U Street)	Register here
Saturday, January 24	12:00 - 2:00 p.m.	To be announced	Coming soon



OBJECTIVE


Provide a way for the public to prioritize the budget based on City service areas grouped into categories.

APPROACH

Online form shared on multiple sites includes:

- Ability to **allocate** resources to key service areas
- Service **prioritization**
- Demographic **data collection**

ONLINE SURVEY



BUDGET TOWN HALL

COMMUNITY BUDGET ENGAGEMENT

EXIT SURVEY

Full Name _____ Age _____

Q3. Gender

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Non-binary

☐ I prefer not to answer

☐ I prefer to self-describe _____

Q4. Race

☐ African-American/Black

☐ American Indian

☐ Caucasian/White

☐ Mexican-American

☐ Asian-American

☐ Hispanic

☐ I prefer not to answer

☐ Other _____

Q5. Your Council District (choose one)

☐ District 1

☐ District 2

☐ District 3

☐ District 4

☐ District 5

☐ District 6

☐ District 7

☐ District 8

☐ District 9

☐ Unknown

Q6. Relationship with the City of Richmond

☐ Resident

☐ Non-resident

☐ Business owner

☐ Other

Q7. After this town hall, how well do you understand how the City's budget works?

☐ Very well

☐ Somewhat

☐ Not very well

☐ Not at all

Q8. Which parts of the budget were clearer after attending today's session?

☐ Where the money comes from

☐ How funds are spent

☐ The cost of City services

☐ How decisions are made

Q9. How helpful were the activities in understanding the City's budget?

☐ Very helpful

☐ Somewhat helpful

☐ Not helpful

Q10. Was the duration of the town hall appropriate?

☐ Too long

☐ About right

☐ Too short

Q11. Did today's session help you think differently about City spending priorities?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure

Q12. Which activities were most useful?

(choose all that apply)


☐ Budget 101 presentation

☐ Allocate yout \$1,100

☐ Cost of City Services stations

☐ Prioritizing City Services

Q13. What is one thing we could improve for future budget town halls?





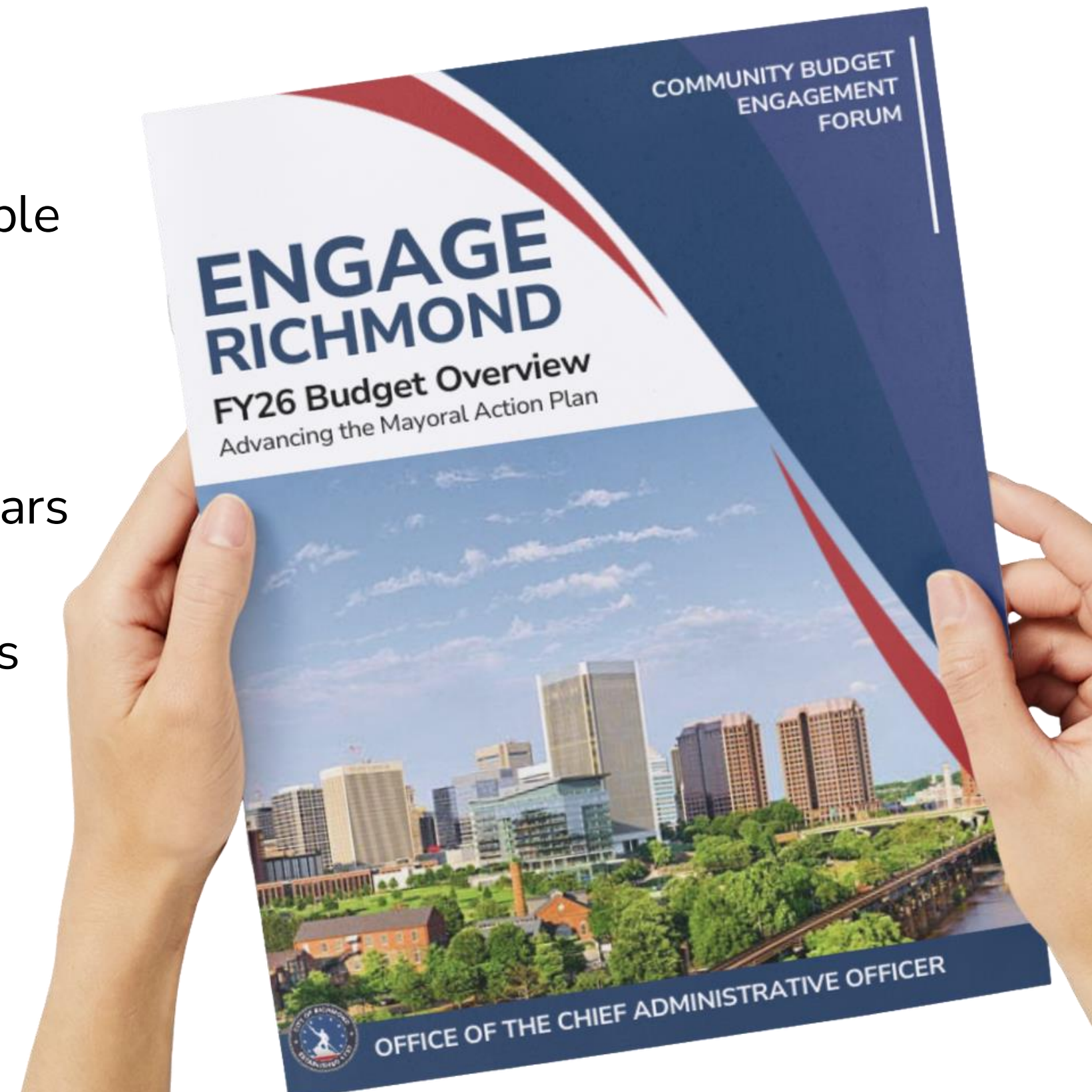
OVERVIEW OF SERVICES

OBJECTIVE

Provide a printed booklet during town halls to educate residents on City services. This resource will also be available on the City website.

APPROACH

- Provide residents with insights into how their tax dollars are spent by the City of Richmond.
- Give residents a better understanding of the outcomes they receive from the taxes they invest.





GEORGETOWN
UNIVERSITY

THANK YOU



Odie Donald II, Chief Administrative Officer



Rva.gov



[LinkedIn.com/in/odiedonald](https://www.linkedin.com/in/odiedonald)

