

Welcome to ACNJ's

Lunch &  
Learn



# ***UNDERSTANDING THE STATE BUDGET***

**Empowering Advocates to  
Shape New Jersey's Future**

**Facilitated by:**

Shadaya Bennett, ACNJ Senior Legislative Analyst

# ACNJ: Who Are We

**Children can't vote. They have no political influence. They can't tell our state leaders what they need. That's why we're here.**

**Advocates for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ) works with local, state and federal leaders to identify and implement changes that will benefit New Jersey's children.**

**Our work results in better laws and policies, more effective funding and stronger services for children and families. This means more children are given the chance to grow up safe, healthy and educated.**

**A cornerstone of ACNJ's success is its independence. We are strictly non-partisan and accept no government funding for advocacy, freeing us to focus on our sole mission - helping children.**



# What is the State Budget???

- The state budget is a yearly financial plan that details how the government raises and spends money.
- The state budget must be balanced and follows a structured process from development to implementation.
- The state budget reflects the state's priorities by determining how much funding is allocated to essential services.
- The budget impacts programs and services that benefit children.

## The State of New Jersey APPROPRIATIONS HANDBOOK



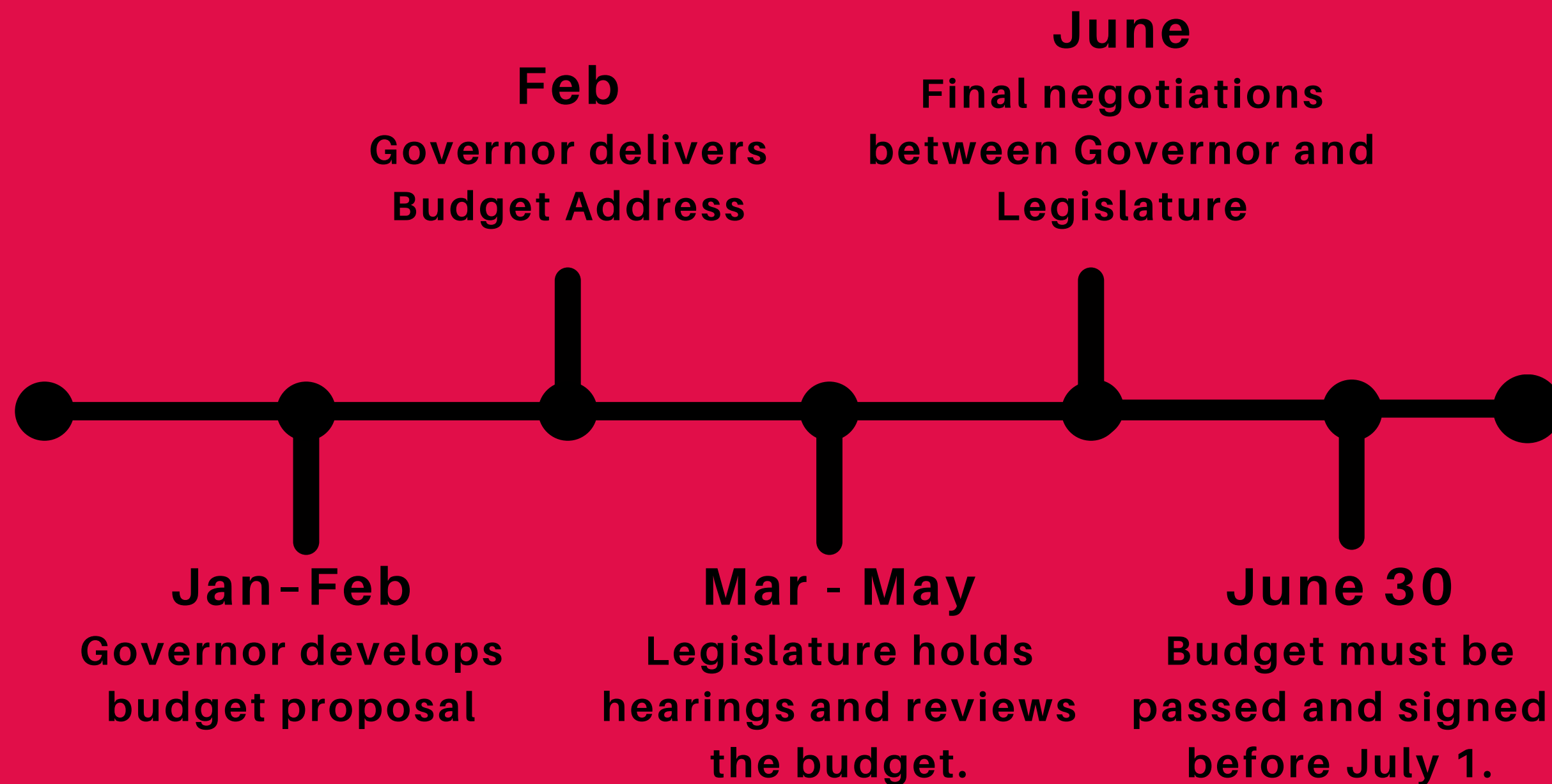
FISCAL YEAR 2025



Making New Jersey  
the Best Place to Raise a Family



# The State Budget Process



**Deadline: A late budget risks a government shutdown**

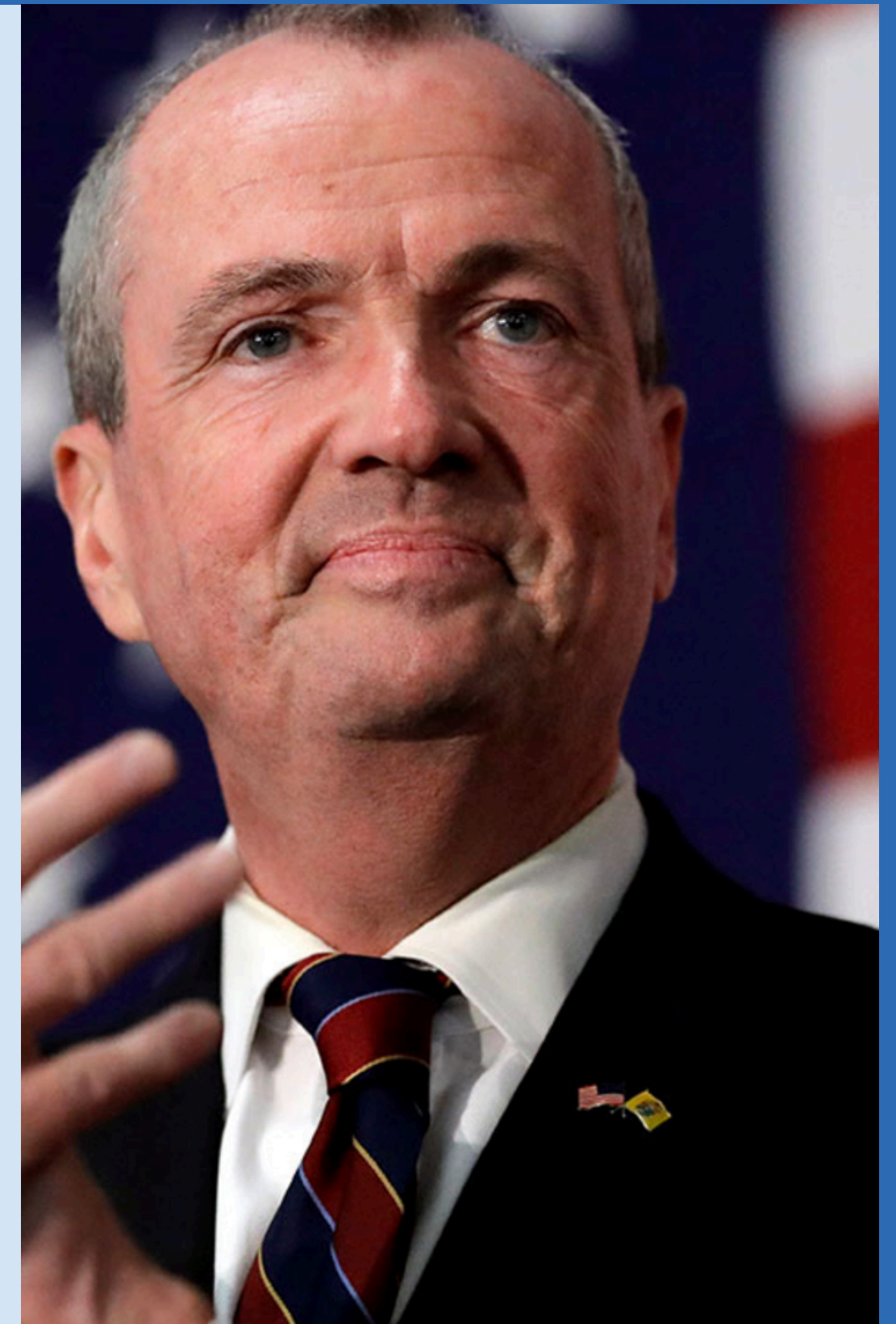




# The State Budget Process

## Key Players

- **Governor** - Proposes the budget, delivers the Budget Address, negotiates with the Legislature, and signs the final budget into law.
- **State Legislature** - The Legislature reviews, amends, and approves the budget through hearings, negotiations, and a full vote before sending it to the Governor.
- **Stakeholders** -
  - **State Agencies:** Submit data and funding requests to align resources with needs.
  - **Advocates & Community Organizations:** Shape the budget by raising awareness, providing testimony, engaging the Legislature and the Administration, and mobilizing support.





# The State Budget Process: From Proposal to Approval

## Step 1: Budget Development

- Governor's Office & State Departments Plan → Agencies assess needs and submit budget requests.
- Revenue Forecasting → The NJ Revenue Advisory Board & OLS project expected revenue.
- Governor's Budget Proposal → Finalized and presented in the annual Budget Address.

## Step 2: Legislative Review & Modifications

- Public Hearings & Testimony → Advocates and agency heads present priorities.
- Legislative Negotiations → Lawmakers debate and revise the budget
- Budget Bill Drafted → Reviewed by the Senate & Assembly Budget Committees





# The State Budget Process: From Approval & Implementation



## Step 3: Approval & Enactment

- Legislature Votes → Budget must be passed by June 30 to avoid a shutdown.
- Governor's Action → Signs, vetoes, or conditionally vetoes the budget.

## Step 4: Implementation & Monitoring

- State Agencies Allocate Funds & Begin Spending.
- State Treasurer & OMB Track Spending & Revenue Adjustments.

# How to Influence the New Jersey State Budget

## **Attend & Testify at Public Budget Hearings -**

Share real stories and data on why funding matters.

## **Submit Written Testimony -** If you can't attend,

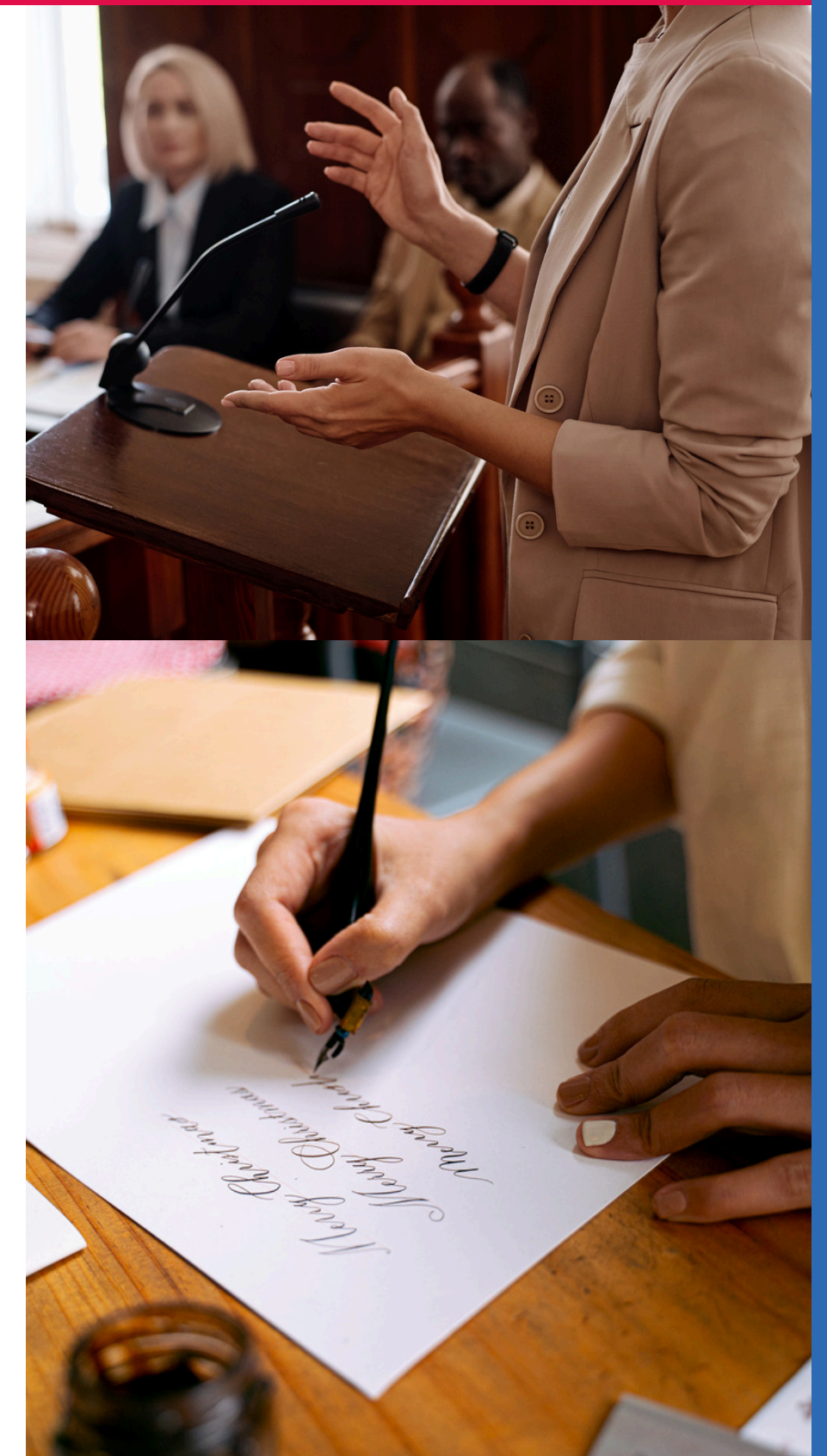
submit written testimony or send statements to lawmakers.

## **Engage Legislators Directly -** Meet with officials,

send emails, or call their offices to advocate for funding priorities.

## **Mobilize Your Community -** Encourage others to

participate and amplify the message.






# Budget Advocacy -- Practical Tips for Engaging in the Process



NEVER  
STOP  
LEARNING

- **Engage Legislators:** Advocate for key issues by contacting legislators via phone or email.
- **Learn the Process:** Understand key budget steps and timelines. Stay informed through advocacy organizations and government updates.
- **Take Action Today:** Contact your legislators and mobilize others by sharing key issues and action alerts.
- **Stay Connected:** Follow advocacy groups and sign up for newsletters to track policy developments.
- **Upcoming Advocacy Opportunities:** Participate in budget hearings, submit testimony, and attend advocacy events.





*Any*

**QUESTIONS?**



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