



NATIONAL PRIORITIES PROJECT

Bringing the
Federal Budget Home

2012
ANNUAL
REPORT



Letter from the Executive Director

Greetings Friends,

What will our nation look like when the federal budget—and by extension, federal policy—reflects the priorities of a broad diversity of people, instead of a powerful few?

In 2012, National Priorities Project built a public voice to answer that question.

We became the *people's guide* to the federal budget – providing ever-more creative tools, research, and materials to help citizens understand and effectively engage with a high-stakes presidential election, a looming “fiscal cliff,” and myriad other national budget debates.

Our constituents and partners rallied around NPP's work in exciting new ways. Here's a brief look at how we went beyond the spin, moved people to action, and made the federal budget personal:

- Junior high school students in **Montana** used our Federal Budget 101 pages to create a YouTube video about the federal budget.
- **Minnesota** residents put NPP's numbers on a southbound I-35 billboard, igniting a state-wide conversation about Pentagon spending.
- Young delegates representing **400 U.S. Student Association campuses** took our budget fact sheets to the Hill for critical meetings with lawmakers.
- People in **New Mexico, Massachusetts, Illinois, and beyond** wrote letters to the editor using NPP data, making the federal budget both local and personal.
- Community members in Durham, NC, Binghamton, NY, and beyond passed **budget priorities resolutions through their city councils**, taking grassroots voices to the state and federal level.
- **Bookstore windows from Denver to Chicago** featured stacks of NPP's *People's Guide to the Federal Budget*, offering readers a solid way to make sense of our nation's budget in the midst of political lock-down and spin.
- And dozens of partner organizations downloaded, linked to, shared, tweeted, emailed, mailed and flyered with our **2012 Voter's Guide** and unique side-by-side election comparisons – sending millions of informed, impassioned, and engaged Americans to the polls on Election Day.

Here's one example of how NPP's materials hit home for people in 2012. In New York City, Research Director Mattea Kramer spoke to a packed gathering at the New York Public Library about *A People's Guide to the Federal Budget*. Two days later, she received an email from Helga of Nassau County, Long Island. Helga attended Mattea's talk and wrote how helpful it was to learn from a "skilled teacher," noting that with Mattea's budget explanations and NPP's materials she was no longer "lonely" while grappling with this difficult but important topic.

Another testimonial came from Lila, a student at New York University who finished reading *People's Guide* and wrote that it was, "a real eye-opener...I can clearly see the importance of the federal budget and of electing people who will work to make sure it supports the American people."

I think of Helga and Lila often. They've come to embody a broad cross-section our constituents: deeply rooted in local communities, resilient, hungry for information, and searching for ways to make their voices heard.

Dozens of partner organizations shared our 2012 Voter's Guide—sending millions of informed, impassioned, and engaged Americans to the polls on Election Day.


Your dedicated support in 2012 made it possible for us to get our materials into the hands of millions of people like Helga and Lila. Time and again, National Priorities Project's information turned an individual thought or question into a touchstone for collective action. Good data does that. At NPP, we call it the "Aha" factor. Information wakes us up, motivates us, bolsters our resolve and sharpens our arguments. We are no longer alone in a sea of complex and politicized spin. This year our partners told us our numbers were "like gold" – "brilliant" and "just what was needed."

In our 30th Anniversary year, National Priorities Project is leveraging your partnership to reach more and more people who, like Helga and Lila, want to be more active and effective participants in our democracy. Together, we're creating the next generation of Democracy Champions – impassioned, equipped with information, and motivated to reclaim our nation's budget – *our budget*.

Stay with us.



Jo Comerford
Executive Director



2013 is NPP's 30th Anniversary Year.
Stay tuned for celebratory events and updates.

Going Beyond the Spin

Through expert research and analysis, interactive tools, rich national partnerships, and expanding communications, NPP solidified our role as the people's guide to the federal budget— a reliable, go-to source for organizations, individuals, and media looking for clear, concise, relevant information about the budget debates of our time.



Major 2012 Accomplishments

- Published the critically-acclaimed *A People's Guide to the Federal Budget*
- Produced a 2012 Voters Guide with candidate comparisons on key budget issues
- Explained the opposing priorities in the Romney/Ryan and Obama/Biden budget proposals through a series of side-by-side comparisons
- Launched the Build a Better Budget tool reflecting the impact of sequestration
- Created "If Paychecks Could Talk" animated video
- Expanded the localized federal spending data available in our Federal Priorities Database

NPP's information and our blogs were featured in top national media outlets including the Christian Science Monitor, Bill Moyers, Huffington Post, MotherJones, the Washington Post, Reuters, the Associated Press, the San Francisco Chronicle and more.



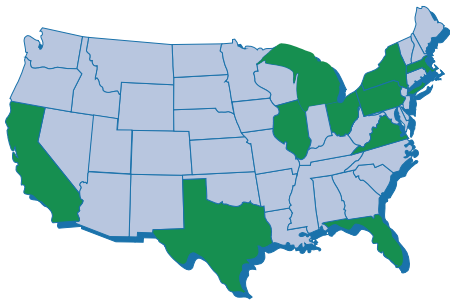
REUTERS



As part of the If I Had a Trillion Dollars National Youth Video Contest, 93 young people from 15 cities traveled to Washington D.C. to participate in AFSC- and NPP-led workshops breaking down the barriers to the federal budget. Youth then had 29 meetings with legislators on Capitol Hill to express their own national priorities. One participant said, *"I think it's very important for people my age to be able to have our voices heard. I feel like change is going to happen in the future."*

Moving People to Action

- 100% increase in visits to nationalpriorities.org
- 800,000 visits to NPP's online interactive tools
- 500,000 visits to our 2012 Voter Guide and election materials
- 900% increase in views of NPP videos
- 190% increase in views of NPP's blog
- 120% increase in use of our "Take Action" resources
- 100% increase in Facebook followers



Top 10 states by number of visitors to our website:

California ■ Florida ■ Illinois
Massachusetts ■ Michigan ■ New York
Ohio ■ Pennsylvania ■ Texas ■ Virginia

NPP's Build a Better Budget tool moved tens of thousands of Americans to create federal budgets based on their own priorities and to send their *better budget proposals* to Congress.

A screenshot of the 'BUILD A BETTER BUDGET' website. The header features the title 'BUILD A BETTER BUDGET' and a background image of the US Capitol. Below the title is a red navigation bar with a '\$ GET STARTED' button and input fields for 'Your email address', 'Zip code', and 'Your first name'. To the right, a blue box displays 'ADJUSTED TO SPEND: -\$99,030,000,000'. The main content area is divided into sections for 'REVENUE' and 'EXPENDITURE'. The 'REVENUE' section lists three categories: 'Income tax' (\$3,531 TRILLION), 'Social Security' (\$3,654 TRILLION), and 'Other' (\$3,803 TRILLION). The 'EXPENDITURE' section lists various categories like 'Social Security, Medicare & Medicaid', 'Military', 'Education', 'Health', 'Social, Economic Development & Agriculture', 'Income Security', 'Loan Guaranty', 'International Affairs', and 'Investment in Local Jobs & Communities'. A small note at the bottom right states: '*All figures current as of 10/1/11 and spending to cover the government operating is only a part of the total federal debt. Any other spending that did not occur will be added to your total spending.'

Brilliant and helpful.

Thank you for getting the word out in a way that we can take hold and influence trends.



-Pushkara Sally Ashford, via Facebook

Boosting Advocacy with Data

RESEARCH Our research team spent countless hours analyzing and distilling complex federal budget data so that millions of people could finally make sense of where their tax dollars go and how the federal budget affects their lives.

- Released 8 in-depth publications including Tax Day, President's Budget, the Untold Story of Deficits, a 2012 Voter Guide, and a Fiscal Cliff Primer
- Wrote 122 blog posts and filmed 79 short Budget Briefs

PARTNERSHIPS Collaborating with national groups across multiple sectors and issue-areas allows NPP to scale the reach of our materials while supporting important, highly effective national, state and local efforts.

- Produced a report with Young Invincibles on the impact of federal budget decisions on young people
- Collaborated with and/or fielded research requests from Caring Across Generations, U.S. Student Association, MomsRising, USAction, National People's Action, Coalition on Human Needs, Grassroots Global Justice, National Women's Law Center, Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, Free Press, Friends Committee on National Legislation, and many more
- Organized a national youth video project with American Friends Service Committee

CAPACITY BUILDING NPP conducted national book talks and Federal Budget 101 workshops. We also developed a new training curriculum in partnership with Peace Action and launched an educator's toolkit in conjunction with *A People's Guide*.

- Conducted 41 public speaking engagements and 15 training workshops nation-wide
- Hosted 22 live webinars



NPP's military spending analysis bolstered advocacy efforts of groups from Albany to New Haven to Minneapolis, as well as an international group assembled in San Diego.

International participants at the Institute for Training & Development in San Diego used NPP materials to deepen their understanding of U.S. national security policy.

“Excellent site for understanding

what the US gov really cares about and debunking myths on deficits, costs of war, health care and education spending.

– Alisa Mariani, via Facebook

Making the Budget Personal

At a TEDx talk in November, Executive Director Jo Comerford inspired listeners to use NPP's individualized tax receipt tool to find out how their own federal tax dollars were spent.



Our 2012 Voter's Guide and Candidate Side-by-Side Comparisons helped people cast informed votes on November 6th. We heard accolades from our constituents such as these:

"It feels darn good to be an educated voter!"

"NPP is a breath of fresh air."



Participants at our Washington State workshop

NPP co-developed and piloted a participatory training curriculum with labor, faith, and human service organizers in Ohio, Maryland, and Washington. After the workshops, 92% of participants said they felt more prepared to engage in federal budget debates; 91% said they had a better understanding of the federal budget; and 97% said they would take action to make their own budget priorities heard.

With our interactive federal tax receipt, NPP gave people the tools to trace how their individual income taxes were spent by the government. Here's what one person told us:

"Ah ha! I've been wondering what happens to the money taken out of my paycheck for taxes – thanks National Priorities Project!"



Mattea Kramer spoke at bookstores across the country.

Praise for A People's Guide...

This primer on the complicated federal budget process is offered in readily understandable language for all readers—novices, those with more information, and high school and college students.

”

This is a valuable resource for a wide range of library patrons. – *Booklist*

Our Supporters

NPP relies solely on support from individuals and foundations to fulfill our mission. We are honored to have dedicated donors from across the U.S. who, like us, believe in building a better federal budget.

NPP is proud to launch three new giving societies to recognize our lead donors.

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I just recently discovered the National Priorities Project with their amazing interactive tools that help demystify the federal budget. As a young Washingtonian, it's great to have such a resource to help break through the white noise and media coverage. I found that their recent publication, *A People's Guide to the Federal Budget*, really enhanced my understanding of the federal budget process, the actors involved and their responsibilities, and where — as a taxpaying citizen — I can provide feedback on my priorities when it comes to investments and federal expenditures.

— Tarsi Dunlop
 Communications Director,
 Roosevelt Institute
 Pipeline, DC Chapter



Mount Holyoke's mission of providing access to excellence for talented women from all socio-economic backgrounds is inextricably linked to the nation's historic commitment to educating for democracy. In fostering the next generation of women leaders, I am reminded every day of the critical importance of making our voices heard as citizens in a democratic society. National Priorities Project understands that we, the people, should be deciding what values should be reflected at the national level and how these should inform the allocation of our collective resources. National Priorities Project's leadership, in making the federal budget more democratic and responsive to citizens' priorities, is truly indispensable in framing complex issues in a way that promotes civic engagement.

– Lynn Pasquerella
President, Mount Holyoke College



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Jack Hornor and Ron Skinn
Paul Martin
Miriam Pemberton

TRIBUTE GIFTS

Gifts made in honor or memory of the following individuals

Afganistan/Iraq war veterans
Julie Allen
Dennis Bidwell
Bruce, Thomas and Margaret
Cindy Chandler-Guy
Deborah Koff Chapin and Ross Chapin
Democracy
Chloe and Isiah
Chris Hellman's work in Leverett
Richard Clapp
Hugh Claremont
Clients of Principle Profits, Inc.
Jo Comerford
Francis Crowe
deRivera Family
Ken Distler
Nancy Foster
Jean Grossholtz and Eileen Elliott
Priscilla Hardy
Patie Harris Kemp
Lily Lawrence
Rachel Maddow
Elliott Marcus
Lloyd R. McElheny
Michael Klare's 70th Birthday
Francis D. and Marcella A. Moran
Randall G. Muir
Wally Nelson
Nan Ovrock
Anita Pepper
Don Pitkin
Anne and Milton Rogovin
Doris Rominske
Joan Shanley
Lily Silva
Greg Speeter
Robert L. Speeter
William Sweeger
Allan Taylor
Cate Woolner

+ NPP celebrates the lives of three dedicated supporters who passed away in 2012:

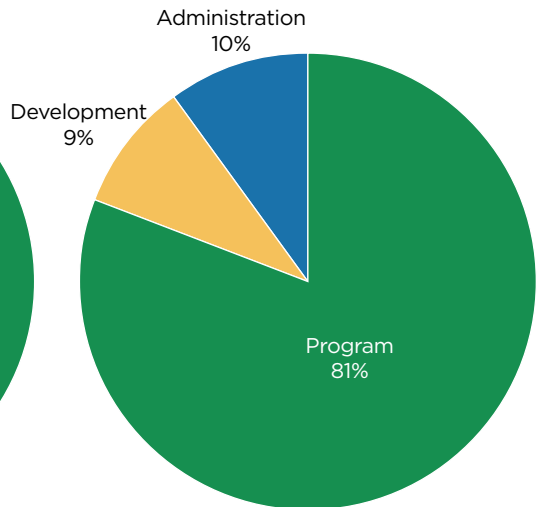
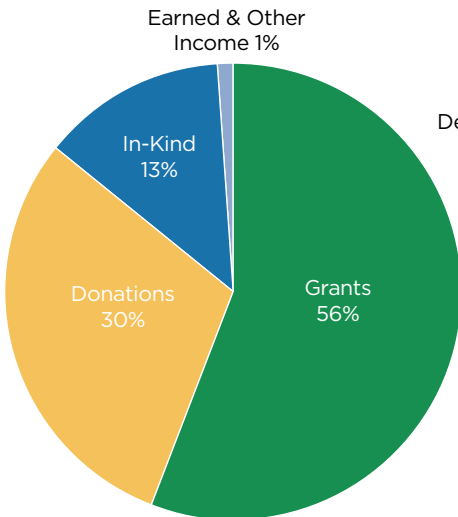
Dennis Delap, Helen Ladd, and Carlos Vega.

We remain honored by their long-time commitment to and belief in our mission.

NPP Financial Summary

Expenses and Revenue for the year ended December 31, 2012 with comparative totals for 2011.

	2012	2011
REVENUE & SUPPORT		
Grants	\$492,991	\$320,386
Donations	\$257,459	\$285,556
In-Kind	\$113,311	\$36,175
Earned Income	\$6,409	\$3,269
Other Income	\$44	
TOTAL REVENUE AND SUPPORT	\$870,214	\$645,386
EXPENSES		
Program	\$673,678	\$475,614
Administration	\$72,981	\$68,709
Development	\$84,342	\$80,352
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$831,001	\$624,675
OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	\$39,213	\$20,713
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		
Beginning of the Year	\$369,364	\$216,008
End of the Year	\$411,401	\$369,364



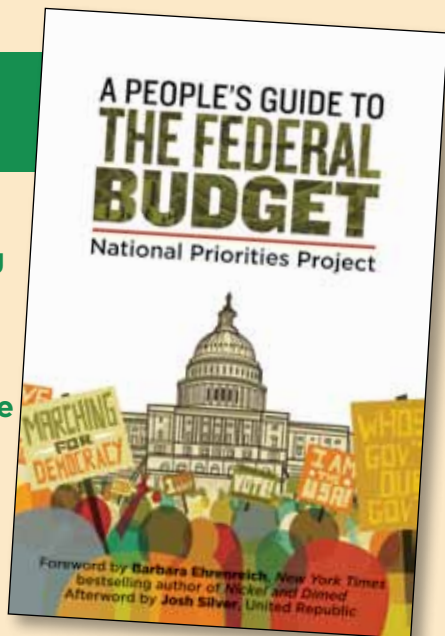
Praise for *A People's Guide to the Federal Budget*:

It's nice to have an easier way to understand what exactly is going on before I vote.

– Naomi Wymer via GoodReads

This is a readable and informative little book. I would recommend that it be required reading for every high school senior in America.

– Mike Monanon via Amazon



STAFF

Robin Claremont, Director of Development and Communications

Jo Comerford, Executive Director

Kris Elinevsky, Director of Administration and Finance

Chris Hellman, Senior Research Analyst

Mattea Kramer, Director of Research

Jason Leveille, Web Developer

Sondra Morin, Individual Gifts Officer

Becky Sweger, Director of Data and Technology

ASSOCIATES/ASSISTANTS

Samantha Dana, Research Associate

Andrew Fieldhouse, Budgetary and Economic Consultant

Anders Fremstad, Research Associate

Sheila Heady, Outreach Assistant

Osman Keshawarz, Research Associate

Max-Edouard Mondesir, Research Associate

Abby Rusk, Development Assistant

NPP's work was augmented by the skills and contributions of more than 25 talented graduate and undergraduate interns in 2012.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS*

Laura Berry, Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility

Dennis Bidwell, Bidwell Advisors (Chair)

Bill Breitbart, Massachusetts Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation (Treasurer)

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Roz Lemieux, Fission Strategy

Paul Kawika Martin, Peace Action

Miriam Pemberton, Institute for Policy Studies

Lorna Peterson, Five Colleges Inc., Emerita

Jeff Rosen, Solidago Foundation

Preston Smith, Mount Holyoke College

Ericka Taylor, The Other 98%

John Urschel, Mount Holyoke College

Cate Woolner, Amherst College

*Organizations listed for identification purposes only.