



New York City Comptroller  
John C. Liu

NEWS RELEASE

PR13-05-069  
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May 7, 2013  
Page(s): 3

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**LIU LAUNCHES ONLINE TOOL TO  
'CROWD-SOURCE' CITY'S \$70 BILLION BUDGET**  
*Every New Yorker Can Now Vote on City's Budget*

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NEW YORK, N.Y. – City Comptroller John C. Liu today launched a new online tool, The People's Budget NYC, to give the public a chance to vote on City budget proposals. The announcement comes less than a week after Mayor Bloomberg unveiled his \$70.0 billion Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2014.

“The City budget should be of the people, by the people, and for the people – and yet budgets continue to be determined without sufficient public feedback,” Comptroller Liu said. “Engaging more New Yorkers in the budgetary process will help reduce cynicism in government and produce a better, stronger, and fairer budget. Our new website will ‘crowd-source’ the budget by providing taxpayers with a forum to speak out on issues that are most important to them and their communities.”

The People's Budget NYC ([peoplesbudgetnyc.com](http://peoplesbudgetnyc.com)) was developed using the IdeaScale platform – an easy-to-use, yet powerful tool for the collection of feedback and ideas. The platform's interactive features allow users to vote ‘thumbs up’ or ‘thumbs down,’ discuss, and suggest new budget ideas. It also includes functionality to share budget ideas with others through email, Twitter, and Facebook.

Liu plans to incorporate the three most popular ideas into testimony he will deliver before the City Council in June, when he next fulfills his City Charter-mandated duties to comment and advise on the Mayor's budget. Through The People's Budget NYC, Liu will, in effect, be giving the public a voice in that bully pulpit. The period of “voting” on proposals ends Sunday, June 2 at 11:59 p.m.

The People's Budget NYC website is based on “The People's Budget” report, unveiled by the Comptroller last month, which identifies some \$15 billion of new revenues over the next four fiscal years and nearly the same amount of new investments. Proposals include investing more in schools, hiring more police officers, creating affordable housing, cutting taxes on small businesses, and keeping libraries open longer hours.

Crowd-sourcing of budget ideas has been tried elsewhere in America, notably in Chicago. In 2011, Mayor Rahm Emanuel's crowd-sourcing tool, Chicagobudget.org, elicited feedback from thousands of residents. President Obama's annual SAVE Award (Securing Americans Value and Efficiency), which seeks ideas from federal employees to make government more effective and efficient and ensure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely, uses the same technology.

The People's Budget NYC is the latest in a series of online tools launched by the Comptroller's office to stimulate citizen participation in government. Earlier this year, the office inaugurated Checkbook NYC 2.0, an online transparency tool that enables the public to view the spending of the City's \$70 billion annual budget by agency. The tool empowers and enlists the public to keep an eye on that spending and thereby curtails wasteful and improper use of public money. On the basis of Checkbook NYC 2.0, a comprehensive national study by the U.S. Public Interest Research Group ranked New York City the most transparent municipal government in the nation.

"The People's Budget NYC is a milestone project recognizing that technology and the collective intellectual power of citizens can help make government work better, be more transparent and accountable, and accelerate New York City's shift into the reality of the 21st century," said **Andrew Rasiej, Founder of Personal Democracy Media and Chairman of N.Y. Tech Meetup.**

"With less funding coming from Albany and Washington, tough decisions will be needed in the coming years if we are to solve the City's structural deficits without compromising vital public services. Engaging all New Yorkers in this decision-making process is vital," said **Kathryn Wylde, President and CEO of the Partnership for New York City.**

"The People's Budget NYC website is a good way to engage New Yorkers in the budget process, and I hope it prompts them to learn more about fiscal matters and consider the trade-offs that have to be made to fund priorities that matter to them," said **Carol Kellerman, President of the Citizen's Budget Commission.**

"The People's Budget NYC is a positive new website that will enable the Comptroller to engage the public about how taxpayer dollars should be spent. This crowd-sourcing tool is a promising new way of encouraging the public to weigh in on the City's spending decisions and propose their own ideas," said **Dick Dadey, Executive Director of Citizens Union.**

"The People's Budget tool is an innovative way to engage New Yorkers in the City's annual budget. By creating this platform for people to learn about different budget priorities, voice opinions, and add suggestions, the Comptroller's office has drawn back the curtain on some of what goes into the City's budget. We hope the opinions voiced by everyday New Yorkers will find a place in this year's budget debate," said **Cate Contino, Campaign Coordinator of the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG).**

"The People's Budget NYC website provides the average New Yorker with a forum for participation and engagement. As parents and community leaders, we have pushed for many of the educational policies reflected in it, such as in investing in early childhood education. Finally,

we have a space other than the steps of City Hall in which to participate in the City’s budgeting process,” said **Zakiyah Ansari, Advocacy Director of the Alliance for Quality Education.**

“Parents, students, and community members know what public schools need, but their contributions are too often disregarded and disrespected. The People’s Budget website will finally let them be heard, and will spur a vibrant public conversation about how to ensure an excellent education for all City children,” said **Ocynthia Williams, Parent Leader, NYC Coalition for Educational Justice.**

“This is a good step. When people can engage with the issues that are most important to them, they see that government values their input. This valuable feedback helps establish successful plans and processes that best serve community,” said **Anthony Feliciano, Director of the Commission on the Public’s Health System.**

“The community’s voice is an essential ingredient to sustaining excellent public schools. This tool will amplify the priorities of parents, students, educators, and community members and will be a powerful contribution to school reform in New York City,” said **Megan Hester, Collaborative Coordinator at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University.**

## **Background**

Press Release: “The People’s Budget” (April 10, 2013)

[http://comptroller.nyc.gov/press/2013\\_releases/pr13-04-052.shtm](http://comptroller.nyc.gov/press/2013_releases/pr13-04-052.shtm)

Report: “The People’s Budget” (April 10, 2013)

<http://comptroller.nyc.gov/bureaus/opm/reports/2013/NYC-Comptroller-Liu-Peoples-Budget.pdf>

Video: Liu Proposes “The People’s Budget” at ABNY Breakfast (April 10, 2013)

<http://www.youtube.com/embed/u7wObggZU0g>

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