



By law, Fiscal Sessions can only last 30 days (45 days with a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote to extend), so members work weeks in advance drafting appropriation measures in order to ensure our sessions are brief.

That preparation begins in budget hearings. Beginning January 9, the Joint Budget Committee will hold a series of meetings designed to begin the process of outlining a budget for the next fiscal year. The Fiscal Session begins February 12.

Budget hearings will begin with the Department of Finance and Administration presenting its annual forecast and recommendations for a balanced budget by the Governor.

Over the course of the next few days, the committee will hear budget requests for Higher Education Institutions, Department of Education, the Department of Human Services, Department of Health, Department of Correction and the Department of Community Correction, commonly referred to the “Big 6”.

In the following weeks, members will review budgets for all state boards, commissions, and agencies.

Six months into this fiscal year, general revenue is now \$74.5 million or 2.8% above this time last year. The most recent general revenue report showed revenue for December 2017 was 11.5% more than December 2016. This report and revenue forecast from economists will help us guide our decision making process in the months ahead.

Although legislation during the Regular Sessions typically attract more attention, it is important to remember the impact our budget making process has on our day to day lives.

The decisions we will be making show the priorities we make as state. Appropriations fund everything from classrooms to health care.

Members can begin filing appropriation bills and identical resolutions on January 8. As a reminder, the legislature cannot take up any non-appropriation bills during the Fiscal Session unless 2/3 of the body votes in favor of a resolution.

You can find a list of daily meetings as well as a link to keep up with the most recently filed bills on our website at www.arkansashouse.org.

We will keep you updated on this process as it continues.

