

FCNL Classroom Budget Activity



Activity Purpose

The goal of this activity is get student thinking about federal spending. The key question and takeaways should be “How do you think the US federal budget should be broken down? What is the difference between your idea and how it’s actually broken down?”

Materials:

- Pie graph worksheets
- Discretionary funding explainer
- Colored pencils and markers
- E-ballot QR code

Run Time: 30 minutes

Agenda Overview:

Introduction (00:00-04:00)

Individual Work (05:00-10:00) -

Small Group Work (10:00-18:00)

Voting (18:00-21:00)

Final Defense (21:00-25:00)

Compare and Contrast (25:00-30:00)

Full Outline

Introduction (00:00-04:00)

- Facilitators introductions
- What is FCNL and why are we here?
 - Brief (<60s) overview of FCNL
 - Overview of our goals
 - Hearing what matters to students
 - Exploring the discretionary budget & people's priorities
 - Brief explanation of discretionary spending

Individual Work (04:00-09:00)

Assistant(s) begin handing out the worksheet as the facilitator introduces the exercise. The handouts have the fill-in pie chart and a randomized group # on the front. On the back will be the voting QR code.

- Instructions: Each person gets a blank pie chart and colored pencils/crayons/markers. Each one has a little key for the various categories and how much \$ to divide
- Students will get 4-5 minutes (?) to fill out their pie charts according to their own priorities.

Small Group Work (09:00-17:00)

Facilitators will lead the transition, and assistant(s) will pass out the group worksheet, which will also have a number that will correspond to the e-ballot.

- **Instructions:** According to the number on the student's worksheet they will get into a group to debate and come up with a final budget. Discuss and decide together a shared pie aggregating their ideas.
- Once the group is done, they will bring their final negotiated pie to the front and hang them up.
- Students should take a minute to look at other groups' pies and compare other people's priorities.

Voting (17:00-20:00)

- *Facilitators will lead the transition. The class takes 2 minutes to scan the QR code and rank the pies from each group (include QR code on printed worksheet).*
- MAYBE - Final Defense (20:00-23:00)
- The winning pie group gets to give a victory speech on their pie.

Compare and Contrast (23:00-30:00)

- The facilitators will share a slide with the actual breakdown of the budget and lead the class through a number of queries:
 - Queries:
 - Why did your group's pie look different from this one?
 - How do you think our society can get more perspectives represented in how discretionary spending is allocated?
 - Etc.
- The students receive a take-away sheet with more on how citizen advocacy can impact the budget.

- Either way: Print one pagers about each category to show what they fund, what remains unfunded, waste in pentagon or other things. Here's all the stuff that needs more money in these different categories that could get more money if it wasn't all going to pentagon
- Agriculture
- Environment
- Education
- Poverty
- Homelessness/Hunger