



WEBINAR



CURRICULUM

ISSUES Tool Kit

Three ways to help you understand the issues

Knowledge is power and we want to make sure that you feel ready to talk about the issues when you make your video. AFSC and NPP have developed several ways for you to learn more about the federal budget and military spending. You can pick and choose from these three tools — use just one or use all three.

1. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): You can get a quick handle on the issues by reading the FAQ in this packet.

2. Out of Balance Webinar: This National Priorities Project webinar provides a critical look at the link between federal funds and state and local budgets. Your group can set up a time to

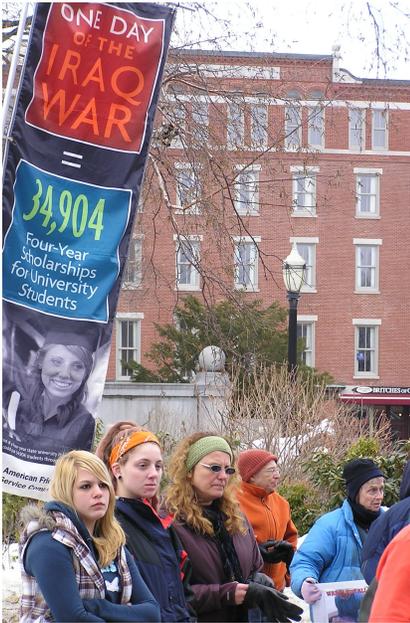
participate in the webinar by contacting: jo@nationalpriorities.org

3. IHTD Curriculum: This curriculum guide can be used by teachers and student groups to get a more in-depth look at the issues. Download at <http://afsc.org/action/if-i-had-trillion-dollars-youth-video-contest>



American Friends
Service Committee





Our tax dollars at work

By April 15th each year, people across the United States file their annual taxes paid on wages earned through working. These taxes, along with other smaller “pots” of money like corporate and estate taxes, go into a larger “pot” of money called “Federal Funds”. This is the bulk of revenue available to be spent by our government on an annual basis for federal programs and initiatives that do not have their own “earmarked” pot of money.

The President proposes an annual budget each year which is really a blue print for spending this money on everything from healthcare to international affairs. Since we live in a representative democracy, his spending decisions are actually done in our name. As such, we have a right to speak up if we disagree, or want to shift federal spending priorities from one area of the government to another.

FAQ

Why should people care about the federal budget?

Federal spending has an enormous local impact

Our nation is at a crossroads. The current economic crisis brings into stark relief the grim realities facing state and local governments and their social service sectors. In 2010, 48 out of 50 states face significant deficits, which are projected to increase in 2011. This has triggered deep cuts in funding to already stretched and underfunded programs and initiatives.

The crisis at the state and local level is often solely attributed to declining tax revenue. State and local budget analysts and members of the media rarely consider the

impact of federal funding on the current crisis. Yet, between 2001 and 2008, federal grant funding for state and local governments only increased by 14 percent, lagging behind the 28 percent growth of the federal budget. At the same time military spending outpaced federal budget growth with a 41 percent increase.

Declining and slowing revenue to the states is a long-standing trend, not an anomaly, which means that city-based Title 1, Head Start, Community Development Block Grants, the Children's Health Insurance Program – and a host of other vital community programs – will continue making do with less for years to come.



A banner displayed on Tax Day shows that 57% of the federal budget is spent on military spending.

FAQ

Why should people care about the federal budget?

For states like Massachusetts, this means more cuts to local programs. In 2010, the state lost 17.3 percent of federal revenue in the face of a \$5 billion budget shortfall and slashed funding to public health, disability services, education and job training initiatives. FY 2011 will bring even more cuts.

The following is a brief overview of federally-funded programs and where they “land” in our community.

Where

Schools
City Hall

Housing Authority
Community/Antipoverty

State Agencies

Employment agencies
Colleges

Federal programs

Head Start, Title I
Infrastructure (water, transit, roads, bridges), Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
Housing assistance
Early childhood, economic development, social services, block grant, weatherization, fuel assistance, youth programs, food and hunger programs, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
Medicare, Medicaid, TANF, SNAP, jobs programs
Unemployment benefits, job training, jobs
Pell grants, student loans, grants to schools

TIP: National Priorities Project has federal funding data for every state. You can go to their website www.nationalpriorities.org and look up data for your state.



FAQ

How do I make sense of \$1 trillion for the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan?

\$1 trillion spent on war and destruction...

There is a terrible human cost of this money spent on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Several reputable sources such as [The World Health Organization](#), The British medical journal [The Lancet](#), and the website [iraqbodycount.org](#) may have disagreed with each other about

the number of Iraqi casualties, but at least they helped to establish a range of possibility from 100,000 to over 1,000,000 casualties and kept a record of names via media reports.



- 4380+ US troops killed in Iraq
- 1030+ US troops killed in Afghanistan/OEF
- 100,000 - 1 million Iraqi civilians killed
- Unknown thousands of Afghan civilians killed

No comparable work has been done regarding Afghan casualties. In many ways the task might be impossible. We know someone has died as a result of the war when they have been hit by a drone, but what about the child who couldn't get treatment for an illness because there is no hospital in his town any longer?

Instead of \$1 trillion spent on creation of a secure society for all of us.

By September 30, 2010, taxpayers in the United States will pay \$1.05 trillion for total Iraq and Afghanistan war spending since 2001. (Note: this does not include possible supplemental funding attached to the Afghanistan "surge" authorized by the Obama Administration.) For the same amount of money, the following could have been provided for people in the US:



The same amount of money spent on development and aid in Afghanistan instead of military solutions could create a positive future for Afghans.

- 308,396,946 People with Health Care for One Year OR
- 22,599,968 Public Safety Officers for One year OR
- 17,944,326 Music and Arts Teachers for One Year OR
- 161,777,753 Scholarships for University Students for One Year OR
- 188,536,667 Students receiving Pell Grants of \$5,550 OR
- 8,139,680 Affordable Housing Units OR
- 461,193,337 Children with Health Care for One Year OR
- 143,595,239 Head Start Places for One Year OR
- 17,188,969 Elementary School Teachers for One Year OR
- 1,083,271,391 Homes with Renewable Electricity for One Year



FAQ

What is a trillion?

What is the difference between a million, a billion and a trillion?

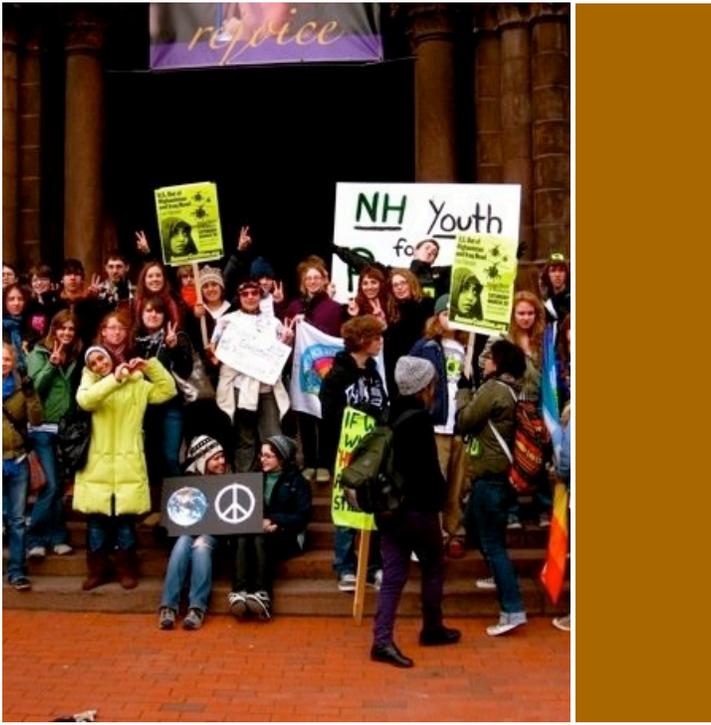
- A stack of one thousand dollar bills that equals one MILLION dollars would be four inches high.
- A stack of one thousand dollar bills that equals one BILLION dollars would be thirty feet taller than the Statue of Liberty.
- A stack of thousand dollar bills that equals one TRILLION dollars would be 63 miles high. In comparison, jet planes fly around 7 to 8 miles above the earth.
- If you converted \$1 trillion into one dollar bills, and laid them end to end, it would reach 98 million miles. That's 4,000 times around the Earth. That's 205 trips to the Moon. And back. It's more than the distance to the Sun
- \$1 trillion in one dollar bills would weigh 1.1 million tons. That's 12 aircraft carriers (one more than in the entire U.S. Navy). It's 147,000 adult African elephants. It's 11 Washington Monuments.
- If someone handed you a silver dollar every second, it would take almost 32,000 years for that person to hand you \$1 trillion. Not that you could hold them – they'd weigh nearly 9 million tons.

What does \$1 trillion look like?

\$1,000,000,000,000

- If you earned \$1 million a year, it would take you 1 million years to earn \$1 trillion.

- If you stacked those silver dollars one on top of another, the stack would be 1.7 million miles high. That's more than 7 times the distance to the Moon. It's 70 times around the Earth.



FAQ

Once I've made the video and submitted it, what else can I do to take action?

By making and submitting your video to the *If I Had a Trillion Dollars* video project, you will be contributing to a national effort to collect and channel youth voices in response to \$1 trillion for wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Project organizers and their allies will make sure this work is heavily promoted and integrated into the national war-spending/national priorities dialogue.

But, this is only the beginning!

By participating in this project, we hope you have learned about the local impact of federal spending

and have had time to reflect on *your* national priorities. You and your video are now ready to hit the road!

The following are just a few ideas of what else you can do to help others enter the conversation about war funding and our federal budget.

1. Share your video and others from the project on Twitter, Facebook, etc.
2. Call your U.S. Congressperson and Senators. Ask for a meeting with them or a member of their staff. Tell them you'd like to bring a short video you've made. The FY 2011 budget year begins on October 1, 2010 and Congress and the President will begin preparing the FY 2012 budget! Make your voice heard!
3. Call your local radio, newspaper or television station. Tell them about your participation in this process and ask if you can speak with them, either as part of a story they might write, or simply to share what you've learned through the process of participating in this project.
4. Write a letter to the editor about the \$1 trillion milestone and your national priorities.
5. Hold a local screening of your video as part of a community meeting or teach-in.
6. Scan the paper each morning for stories about federal, state and local budgets. Share these stories, and your viewpoints, with your family, friends and neighbors.

