

CALHOUN COUNTY, TEXAS
COMPREHENSIVE FUND BALANCE POLICY
Approved by Commissioner's Court November 21, 2011

BACKGROUND

The Governmental Accounting Standards Board ("GASB") has issued Statement No. 54, *Fund Balance Reporting and Governmental Fund Type Definitions* ("GASB-54"). The primary objective of this new standard is to improve the usefulness and comparability of fund balance information by reporting fund balance in more intuitive and meaningful components. This standard also clarifies the definitions of the different types of funds that a governmental entity may set up for financial reporting purposes.

GASB-54 now requires our **County** to classify the fund balance amounts reported within our financial statements in accordance with five new and more detailed classifications shown below. These categories are as follows:

Nonspendable Fund Balance – Fund balance reported as “nonspendable” represents fund balance associated with inventory or prepaid items. The cash outlay for these types of items has already been made and therefore the resources represented by this fund balance category cannot be spent again; hence the term “nonspendable”.

Restricted Fund Balance – Fund balance reported as “restricted” represents amounts that can be spent only on the specific purposes stipulated by law or by the external providers of those resources.

Committed Fund Balance – Fund balance reported as “committed” includes amounts that can be used only for the specific purposes determined by a formal action of our **County's** highest level of decision-making authority.

Assigned Fund Balance – Fund balance reported as “assigned” represents amounts intended to be used for specific purposes, but not meeting the criteria to be reported as committed or restricted fund balance. In addition, our governing body may grant to an administrator within our organization the authority to “assign” fund balance.

Unassigned Fund Balance – Fund balance reported as “unassigned” represents the residual classification of fund balance and includes all spendable amounts not contained within the other classifications.

GASB-54 is effective for periods beginning after June 15, 2010. Therefore, our **County** is required to implement this new standard at the beginning of Fiscal Year 2011.

A written Comprehensive Fund Balance Policy is recommended to be formally adopted by the governing body of our organization depicting the procedures that will be used for committing fund balance, assigning fund balance, how stabilization funds, if any, will be determined, order of spending the fund balance categories, minimum fund balance levels, and use of governmental fund types.

COMPREHENSIVE FUND BALANCE POLICIES

1.0 Policy on Committing Funds

In accordance with GASB-54, it is the policy of this **County** that fund balance amounts will be reported as “Committed Fund Balance” only after formal action and approval by the **Commissioner’s Court**. The action to constrain amounts in such a manner must occur prior to year end; however, the actual dollar amount may be determined in the subsequent period.

For example, the **Commissioner’s Court** may approve a motion prior to year end to report within the year-end financial statements, if available, up to a specified dollar amount as Committed Fund Balance for Capital Projects. The exact dollar amount to be reported as Committed Fund Balance for Capital Projects may not be known at the time of approval due to the annual financial audit not yet being completed. This amount can be determined at a later date when known and appropriately reported within the year-end financial statements due to the governing body approving this action before year-end.

It is the policy of this **County** that the governing body may commit fund balance for any reason that is consistent with the definition of Committed Fund Balance contained within GASB-54. Examples of reasons to commit fund balance would be to display intentions to use portions of fund balance for future capital projects, stabilization funds, or to earmark special General Fund revenue streams unspent at year-end that are intended to be used for specific purposes.

After approval by the **Commissioner’s Court** the amount reported as Committed Fund Balance cannot be undone without utilizing the same process required to commit the funds. Therefore, in accordance with GASB-54, it is the policy of this **County** that funds can only be removed from the Committed Fund Balance category after motion and approval by the **Commissioner’s Court**.

2.0 Policy on Assigning Funds

In accordance with GASB-54, funds that are *intended* to be used for a specific purpose but have not received the formal approval action at the governing body level may be recorded as Assigned Fund Balance. Likewise, redeploying assigned resources to an alternative use does not require formal action by the governing body.

GASB-54 states that resources can be assigned by the governing body or by another internal body or person whom the governing body gives the authority to do so, such as a budget committee or the **County Auditor**.

Therefore, having considered the requirements to assign fund balance, it is the policy of this **County** that the **County Auditor** will have the authority to assign fund balance of this organization based on intentions for use of fund balance communicated by the governing body.

3.0 Policy on Order of Spending Resources

It is the policy of this **County** that when expenditures are incurred that would qualify as expenditures of either Restricted Fund Balance or Unrestricted Fund Balance (Committed, Assigned, or Unassigned), those expenditures will first be applied to the Restricted Fund Balance category.

Furthermore, it is the policy of this **County** that when expenditures are incurred that would qualify as a use of any of the Unrestricted Fund Balance categories (Committed, Assigned, or Unassigned), those expenditures will be applied in the order of Committed first, then Assigned, and then Unassigned.

4.0 Policy on the Acceptable Minimum Level of Fund Balances

This **County** desires to maintain, if available, stabilization funds of up to three months of regular General Fund operating expenditures, measured based on the most recently completed fiscal year. This funding is intended to provide stabilization in case of unforeseen events that may occur such as emergencies, contingencies, revenue shortfalls, or budgetary imbalances.

This **County** has considered the possibility that stabilization funding may be required to be used at times and that the overall fund balance level across all of the Unrestricted Fund Balance categories (Committed Fund Balance, Assigned Fund Balance, and Unassigned Fund Balance) may possibly be drawn down at times to a level posing a risk to our **County's** finances.

Therefore it is the policy of this **County** to maintain at all times an overall Unrestricted Fund Balance (Committed Fund Balance, Assigned Fund Balance, and Unassigned Fund Balance) of not less than **three** months of regular General Fund operating expenditures, measured based on the most recently completed fiscal year. If it is determined that the **County** is below this minimum established fund balance level, the governing body will be informed of this condition and take necessary budgetary steps to bring the fund balance level into compliance with this policy through budgetary actions.

5.0 Review of Governmental Fund Classifications

This **County** desires that the governmental fund types available for use in governmental financial reporting be appropriately selected based on the GASB-54 definitions of these fund types. Furthermore, the fund balance categories utilized within each these fund types are also to be appropriately selected from the new GASB-54 classifications.

Therefore, after consideration of the purpose of each governmental fund type, it is the policy of this **County** to limit the fund balance categories that may be used with each governmental fund type as follows:

Review of Governmental Fund Classifications (continued)

General Fund

Nonspendable Fund Balance
Restricted Fund Balance
Committed Fund Balance
Assigned Fund Balance
Unassigned Fund Balance

Debt Service Funds

Restricted Fund Balance
Committed Fund Balance
Assigned Fund Balance

Capital Projects Funds

Restricted Fund Balance
Committed Fund Balance
Assigned Fund Balance

Special Revenue Funds

Restricted Fund Balance
Committed Fund Balance
Assigned Fund Balance