

NEWS:

Citizens to be Solicited for Ideas to Deal with Budget Challenges

JANUARY 27, 2017 – If you have ideas about tackling the state's budgetary shortfall, you will soon get a chance to share them with the governor and your local elected officials.

A group of state lawmakers joined Governor John Carney on Thursday (1/26) at Legislative Hall to announce plans to engage citizens in a series of "Budget Reset" Community Conversations.

Together with members of the General Assembly, Gov. Carney will listen to ideas from Delawareans on how to address Delaware's structural budget challenges. (See partial schedule below.)

Anemic state revenue growth, combined with higher expenses, have produced an operating budget shortfall currently estimated at \$350 million for the fiscal year that begins July 1st.

Before leaving office earlier this month, then-Governor Jack Markell released his recommendations to close the gap and balance the budget. The package of tax hikes, program cuts, and cost-shifting received a chilly reception from lawmakers and was roundly criticized by citizens.

Gov. Carney said the Budget Reset meetings would be a chance to "present the problem to the public and invite their suggestions."

Some of the events will be special public meetings staged by small groups of lawmakers. On other occasions, Gov. Carney will visit regularly scheduled constituent coffee meetings.

"I think the conversations could get as hot as the coffee," quipped State House Minority Leader Danny Short, R-Seaford. The governor is making an appearance at Rep. Short's monthly constituent meeting on March 1st.



State Rep. Lyndon Yearick (left) joined Gov. Carney for the announcement.

The face-to-face meetings will not be the only way for the public to participate.

"Telephone town halls" -- large conference calls that Gov. Carney said he occasionally used during his tenure as a Congressman -- will also be employed. "It's an effective way to reach out to the public," he said. "You can get thousands of people on the line."

Members of the public can also offer ideas online by [clicking here](#).

Community Conversations*

7:30 a.m. - January 30 - Timothy's on the Riverfront, Wilmington, with Representative Stephanie T. Bolden

7:30 a.m. - February 15 - Drip Café, Hockessin, with Senator David Sokola

8:00 a.m. - February 21 - Drip Café, Hockessin, with Senator Greg Lavelle

9:00 a.m. - February 22 - Downtown Dover Partnership, Dover, with Senator Brian Bushweller

February 22 - TELE-TOWN HALL

9:00 a.m. - March 1 - Nanticoke Senior Center, Seaford, with Representative Daniel Short

8:00 a.m. - April 5 - Café Gelato, Newark, with Representative Paul Baumbach

*Additional meeting dates to be added. [Click here](#), then scroll to the bottom of the page, for the most current list.