

We the 99% Demand a Totally Different Federal Budget

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We can fit our demands on a bumpersticker: “Majority Rule” or “People Over Profits” or “Love Not Greed.” But we don’t want to. Our government is doing everything wrong, and we should be allowed to present the full list of grievances. We can, however, give the world a thousand words’ worth in an image, a pie chart to be exact. Our federal budget funds the wrong things. We want it to fund the right things.

Here are pie charts produced by some of us members of the 99%: [gallery](#).

Here’s where you can make your own: [start](#).

You’ll have to register and log in, which prevents spam. Then you’ll have a chance to fill in the percentage of the federal budget that you’d like devoted to various areas. This budget tool — the programming for which was done by Karl Anliot — will let you know if your total adds up to 100%. You can do this in 60 seconds, but I recommend giving it some thought and really making this into your vision for future activism.

After you create your own ideal budget pie chart, you can compare it with the actual government budget and with the ideal budgets created by the rest of us. I suspect the biggest gap is going to be between the government and everybody else. You can also go back in and edit your budget. You can link to it. You can facebook it and tweet it.

Below is an image of my ideal federal budget. I might still change it, but I’m pretty certain of the basics here. This is discretionary spending, so Social Security and other mandatory spending are not included. A trust fund into which we pay, trusting that we will be paid back, should never be placed on the chopping block. Discretionary spending, as the name suggests, is spending over which Congress has discretion each year.



The inner pie chart is broad categories, and the outer layer subcategories for spending. The yellow-orange area in the lower right is sustainable policies, including job training, mass transit, pollution control, green energy research, etc. The blue areas include education and research. The green slices are elements of friendly foreign relations. The purple is hostile foreign relations, including the military and wars. The raspberry colored sections cover basic governance, and the little black slice on the right goes to big agriculture and transportation.

Now here's an actual government budget, specifically a budget proposed by the Obama White House for 2015. The first thing you'll notice is that the military and wars have swallowed everything else. The rest of the funding areas are all crammed together in teeny little slices over on the right.



The National Priorities Project has produced a very similar [pie chart](#) using 2012 numbers, but the numbers used here come from the White House's proposed 2015 budget, also used in [this survey](#) which inspired this budget tool.

As much as I sympathize with cries of "jobs not cuts" I wonder if awareness of the state of our budget would lead us to demand that money be moved, that money be cut in one place and added to all the other sectors. Of course it could also be added to by taxing billionaires and corporations. But whatever size the pot, our public funds ought to be distributed fairly, humanely, and sustainably. Perhaps this online tool can help us develop the vision we need moving forward.

Make your own budget here: [start](#).

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