FLC
FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES

Florida League of Cities
Center for Municipal Research
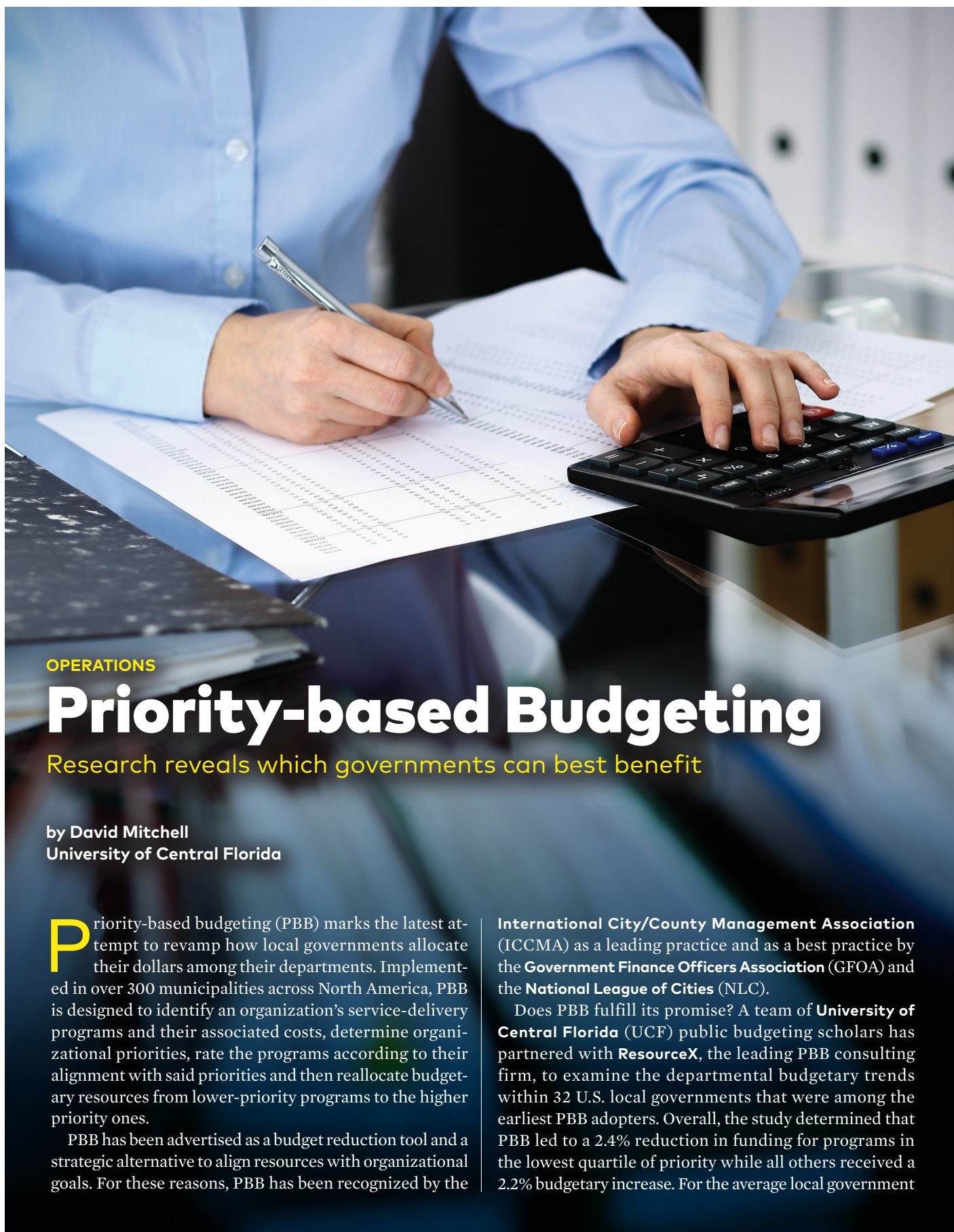## Research Article Journal | 2022 Edition

The **Florida League of Cities' Center for Municipal Research** (CMR) connects you with the latest local government data and statistics. The Center provides Florida's city officials with the municipal data resources needed to effectively lead their local governments. The Center also offers Florida's government research institutes opportunities to collaborate with municipal government practitioners across the state.

The cornerstone of the Center's research is the annual CityStats survey, which collects data on municipal operations, budgets, policies and services. The CityStats survey forms the basis for the State of the Cities report and the online Find a Peer City database tool.

Through the Center's Partners in Municipal Research program, a regular research column is published in the League's Quality Cities magazine featuring articles from our research institute partners. The following is a compilation of the articles featured in 2022.

OPERATIONS

Priority-based Budgeting

Research reveals which governments can best benefit

by David Mitchell
University of Central Florida

Priority-based budgeting (PBB) marks the latest attempt to revamp how local governments allocate their dollars among their departments. Implemented in over 300 municipalities across North America, PBB is designed to identify an organization's service-delivery programs and their associated costs, determine organizational priorities, rate the programs according to their alignment with said priorities and then reallocate budgetary resources from lower-priority programs to the higher priority ones.

PBB has been advertised as a budget reduction tool and a strategic alternative to align resources with organizational goals. For these reasons, PBB has been recognized by the

International City/County Management Association (ICCMA) as a leading practice and as a best practice by the **Government Finance Officers Association** (GFOA) and the **National League of Cities** (NLC).

Does PBB fulfill its promise? A team of **University of Central Florida** (UCF) public budgeting scholars has partnered with **ResourceX**, the leading PBB consulting firm, to examine the departmental budgetary trends within 32 U.S. local governments that were among the earliest PBB adopters. Overall, the study determined that PBB led to a 2.4% reduction in funding for programs in the lowest quartile of priority while all others received a 2.2% budgetary increase. For the average local government

in the study, this difference translated to a $900,000 transfer of funds within a $73 million budget. While this level of reallocation is significant, it must be considered against the substantial upfront organizational burden to identify program costs and organizational priorities, which leaves some to question whether this level of reallocation is worth all the work.

However, further research indicated that PBB might work in some communities better than others. For instance, the more politically conservative communities in the study witnessed a 10.2% reduction in funding for their lowest-priority programs, almost 8% more than average. Those local governments that received the most federal and state assistance saw an 8% reduction for lower-priority programs. Communities with a smaller population, more affluence or less racial diversity each produced approximately 5% reductions. Interestingly, in all of these cases, there was not a fully corresponding increase for higher-priority programs, which means the reallocated funds were put toward capital projects, put toward organizational reserves or used to address budgetary deficits. Additional research is necessary to understand this dynamic better.

Likewise, the research indicates that PBB disproportionately impacts some municipal functions while others are largely exempt from the process. Core functions such as public safety and public works did not see significant budgetary reductions in their lower-priority programs, but the budget for higher-priority programs in these departments largely remained static as well. For these functions, broader factors such as shifts in community population, politics, income and age tended to drive budgetary changes. However, the more discretionary functions such as planning and development, quality of life and general administration encountered relatively deep cuts to their lower-priority programs, ranging from 4-6%. Higher-priority programs in these departments correspondingly received 1-4% budgetary increases, indicating that the logic behind PBB rings truer for discretionary functions.

Taken together, these findings indicate that PBB is not a "silver bullet" to slash budgets, align dollars with goals or achieve strategic objectives, because that silver bullet does not exist. However, it has proven to be a useful budgetary tool, especially in particular contexts. PBB appears to be most effective in more homogenous, resource-rich environments where budgetary conflict is less prevalent. Additionally, PBB looks to be more impactful for marginal, discretionary functions, working at the edges of government without threatening core services. Thus, while implementing PBB may not single-handedly eliminate a substantial structural budget deficit or overcome diverse and deep community divisions, the system can streamline municipal functions and free up significant funds to be reoriented toward organizational priorities. Local governments that find this appealing should also weigh these benefits against the often substantial organizational burden to implement PBB.

More and more local governments implement PBB each year and generate impressive success stories that indicate a staying power for the budgetary approach beyond the typical "management fad." However, a savvy municipal leader recognizes that even the most effective tools work best only in certain contexts. Do you wish to overcome a fractious and divisive budgetary fight,

Priority-based Budgeting

LEADS TO:

↓2.4% **decrease in budget for low-priority programs**

↑2.2% **increase in budget for high-priority programs**

GREATER EFFECT:

▶ **In communities that are:**

⤧ Smaller

🛍 More affluent

🐘 More politically conservative

👥 Less diverse

▶ **On discretionary services**

Source: University of Central Florida and ResourceX

dramatically revamp the organizational budget or implement PBB without sufficient fiscal and administrative capacity? PBB may not be for your organization. Do you wish to engage the community collaboratively to streamline government, make measured investment toward community goals and have sufficient capacity to implement? In this case, research has demonstrated that priority-based budgeting can make the difference in your organization achieving these budgetary and strategic goals.

David Mitchell is an Associate Professor at the University of Central Florida (UCF) School of Public Administration. Mitchell led the research team behind this study and specializes in public budgeting and strategic management within local governments. **QC**

CITYSTATS

The Value of Data For Decision-Making

Annual survey provides insight for Florida Cities

by Wade Burkley
Florida League of Cities

Today's leaders understand the importance of data-driven decision-making. Gathering reliable and actionable data is important to all organizations, whether private or public. When a city, town or village is curious about what services a peer city offers, considers changing the way a service is provided or is interested in trends for municipal staffing, data from the **Florida League of Cities** (FLC) can provide the insight they need.

The League's **Center for Municipal Research** (CMR) began collecting data to better understand the operations and services of Florida cities in 2011 when the state's Legislative Committee on Intergovernmental Relations was eliminated. The League recognized that no one else was compiling this data and that making it accessible to cities would be another valuable member benefit. Not only is this information beneficial to cities, but League staff find the data helpful as they advocate on behalf of all 411 cities and develop member training that addresses the latest trends.

CITYSTATS

The annual CityStats survey averages 40 questions and captures information regarding revenue sources, number of employees, services and facility details, as well as information on public safety and utility services. These results are then combined with various data sets from state agencies to build a robust repository of information available to FLC members. The participation of Florida cities makes CityStats the most comprehensive source of municipal information in the state. The average response rate since its initial launch is 80%, with the 2021 CityStats response and the most recent survey reaching 86%. (See list of cities that responded, p. 4)

Any League member – Mayor, Council Member, Clerk, Manager or other staff member – can contact CMR staff with requests for data. CMR staff members work with the requestor to understand the nature of the specific request and provide tailored information that is most helpful to the city.

Since 2013 there have been over 700 unique information/data requests fulfilled by CMR to member cities and League staff. Some examples of basic municipal information that can be provided as benchmarks include:

- Population
- Form of government
- Incorporation date
- Budget information
- Millage rate
- Region/county
- Revenue sources
- Number of municipal employees (full- and part-time)
- Services details, including in-house or contract
- Facility details, such as airport, beach access, golf course and parks
- Public safety and utility services
- Number of miles of city-maintained roads.

OVER **700** unique data requests fulfilled **since 2013**

MINI-SURVEYS

CMR occasionally conducts supplemental surveys that are more narrowly focused on a particular issue. These mini-surveys or issue-specific research can be used to prepare for a legislative issue, gather feedback for associations or collect information on behalf of our partners at state agencies. We combine the most recent CityStats data and overlay it with the results from the mini-surveys to see a complete picture of each city.

Examples of previous mini-surveys include:

- Municipal recycling operations – 2018
- Operation of eScooters within cities – 2019
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) logistics and contacts – 2021
- Resiliency officers – 2022.

The next time your city is considering a change in service or structure, know that the League's CMR staff can assist you in providing a clear picture of how other cities compare. Don't go into these discussions blindly. Be armed with the latest and most comprehensive information available, free to you as a League member.

Wade Burkley is the Research and Policy Administrator for the Florida League of Cities. QC

How to Improve Data Accuracy

CityStats started in 2011 as a way for the League to get a snapshot of all cities in Florida. What started as a way to understand what services cities offered and what general policies were in place has since become the backbone of all **Florida League of Cities** (FLC) research and data requests. However, the data is only as helpful as it is accurate. The greater participation of cities in the CityStats survey, the more useful and applicable the data becomes. The 2021 survey's 86% participation rate is commendable, but all cities are encouraged to participate. See list of participants below. For more information about the CityStats survey and available data, go to *bit.ly/3qGkeS4*.

86%
CityStats response rate

Alachua
Alford
Anna Maria
Apalachicola
Apopka
Arcadia
Archer
Astatula
Atlantic Beach
Atlantis
Auburndale
Aventura
Avon Park
Bal Harbour
Baldwin
Bartow
Bay Harbor Islands
Bay Lake
Belle Glade
Belle Isle
Belleair
Belleair Beach
Belleair Bluffs
Belleair Shore
Belleview
Beverly Beach
Biscayne Park
Blountstown
Bonita Springs
Bowling Green
Boynton Beach
Bradenton
Bradenton Beach
Branford
Briny Breezes
Bronson
Brooker
Brooksville
Bunnell
Bushnell
Callahan
Callaway
Campbellton
Cape Canaveral
Cape Coral
Carrabelle
Casselberry
Cedar Key
Center Hill
Century
Chattahoochee
Chipley
Cinco Bayou
Clearwater
Clermont
Clewiston
Cloud Lake
Cocoa
Cocoa Beach
Coconut Creek

Cooper City
Coral Springs
Cottondale
Crescent City
Crestview
Crystal River
Cutler Bay
Dade City
Dania Beach
Davenport
Davie
Daytona Beach
Daytona Beach
  Shores
DeBary
Deerfield Beach
DeFuniak Springs
DeLand
Delray Beach
Deltona
Destin
Doral
Dundee
Dunedin
Dunnellon
Eagle Lake
Eatonville
Ebro
Edgewater
Edgewood
El Portal
Estero
Esto
Eustis
Everglades City
Fellsmere
Fernandina Beach
Flagler Beach
Florida City
Fort Lauderdale
Fort Meade
Fort Myers
Fort Myers Beach
Fort Pierce
Frostproof
Fruitland Park
Glen Ridge
Golden Beach
Golf
Graceville
Grant-Valkaria
Green Cove Springs
Greenacres
Gretna
Groveland
Gulf Breeze
Gulf Stream
Gulfport
Haines City
Hallandale Beach

Hampton
Havana
Haverhill
Hawthorne
Hialeah Gardens
High Springs
Highland Beach
Hillcrest Heights
Hilliard
Hillsboro Beach
Holly Hill
Hollywood
Holmes Beach
Homestead
Horseshoe Beach
Howey-in-the-Hills
Hypoluxo
Indialantic
Indian Creek
Indian Harbour
  Beach
Indian River Shores
Indian Rocks Beach
Indian Shores
Indiantown
Inglis
Interlachen
Inverness
Islamorada, Village
  of Islands
Jacksonville Beach
Jacob City
Jasper
Jay
Jennings
Juno Beach
Jupiter
Jupiter Inlet Colony
Jupiter Island
Kenneth City
Key Biscayne
Key Colony Beach
Key West
Keystone Heights
Kissimmee
La Crosse
LaBelle
Lady Lake
Lake Alfred
Lake Buena Vista
Lake Butler
Lake City
Lake Clarke Shores
Lake Hamilton
Lake Helen
Lake Mary
Lake Park
Lake Placid
Lake Wales
Lake Worth Beach

Lakeland
Lantana
Largo
Lauderdale Lakes
Lauderdale-By-
  The-Sea
Lauderhill
Laurel Hill
Lawtey
Layton
Lee
Lighthouse Point
Live Oak
Longboat Key
Longwood
Loxahatchee
  Groves
Lynn Haven
Madeira Beach
Madison
Maitland
Malabar
Malone
Manalapan
Mangonia Park
Marco Island
Margate
Marianna
Mary Esther
Mascotte
McIntosh
Melbourne
Melbourne Beach
Mexico Beach
Miami
Miami Lakes
Miami Shores
Micanopy
Midway
Milton
Minneola
Miramar
Monticello
Montverde
Mount Dora
Mulberry
Neptune Beach
New Port Richey
New Smyrna Beach
Newberry
Niceville
North Bay Village
North Lauderdale
North Miami Beach
North Palm Beach
North Port
Oak Hill
Oakland
Oakland Park
Ocala

Ocean Breeze
Ocean Ridge
Ocoee
Okeechobee
Oldsmar
Opa-locka
Orange City
Orange Park
Orchid
Orlando
Ormond Beach
Otter Creek
Oviedo
Pahokee
Palatka
Palm Beach
  Gardens
Palm Coast
Palm Shores
Palm Springs
Palmetto
Panama City Beach
Parker
Parkland
Paxton
Pembroke Pines
Penney Farms
Pensacola
Perry
Pierson
Pinecrest
Pinellas Park
Plant City
Polk City
Pomona Park
Pompano Beach
Ponce de Leon
Ponce Inlet
Port Orange
Port Richey
Port St. Joe
Port St. Lucie
Punta Gorda
Raiford
Reddick
Redington Beach
Redington Shores
Riviera Beach
Rockledge
Royal Palm Beach
Safety Harbor
San Antonio
Sanford
Sanibel
Sarasota
Satellite Beach
Sea Ranch Lakes
Sebastian
Sebring
Seminole

Sewall's Point
Shalimar
Sneads
Sopchoppy
South Bay
South Daytona
South Miami
South Palm Beach
South Pasadena
Southwest Ranches
Springfield
St. Augustine
St. Augustine Beach
St. Cloud
St. Leo
St. Lucie Village
St. Marks
St. Pete Beach
St. Petersburg
Starke
Stuart
Sunrise
Surfside
Tallahassee
Tarpon Springs
Tavares
Temple Terrace
Tequesta
Titusville
Treasure Island
Trenton
Umatilla
Valparaiso
Venice
Vero Beach
Waldo
Wauchula
Wausau
Webster
Welaka
Wellington
West Melbourne
West Miami
West Palm Beach
West Park
Westlake
Weston
Wewahitchka
Wildwood
Wilton Manors
Windermere
Winter Garden
Winter Haven
Winter Springs
Worthington Springs
Yankeetown
Zephyrhills
Zolfo Springs