The problem with this legislation is that it treats all set-asides identically—deficit, revenue-driven or having a trigger that can be pulled when the city faces a budget crisis. Other set-asides, like the Children's Fund and Prop H, are for police and fire, which as minimum staffing requirements do not adjust in bad times. Some set-asides are extremely rigid, like funds, serve very different purposes, include very different mechanisms, and but not fairly. In reality, each of the city's 15+ voter-mandated set-asides in the city:

The current 'set-aside reform' legislation proposes significant alterations to set-asides, meeting the following criteria: asides, meeting the following criteria: asides, meeting the following criteria: asides, meeting the following criteria:

1. The legislation proposes to cap all set-asides at their current 2008-2009 levels;
2. If the city faces a deficit of $100 million or more, the Board of Supervisors could reduce any or all set-asides up to 25% ;
3. If the city is facing a time of 'emergency', the Board of Supervisors could suspend any set-asides, in part or in whole, for that fiscal year.

The problem with this legislation is that it treats all set-asides identically—but not fairly. In reality, each of the city's 15+ voter-mandated set-aside funds, serve very different purposes, include very different mechanisms, and serve very different populations. Some set-asides are extremely rigid, like police and fire, which as minimum staffing requirements do not adjust in bad budget times. Other set-asides, like the Children's Fund and Prop H, are flexible and include responsible mechanisms, such as a sunset clause, being revenue-driven or having a trigger that can be pulled when the city faces a deficit.

RESPONSIBLE SET-ASIDE REFORM: AN ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL

We have developed an alternative set-aside reform proposal that is fair and impacts all set-asides, but is more reasonable than the current proposal. We encourage the Board of Supervisors to rewrite the set-aside reform legislation to ensure that each set-aside in San Francisco conforms to a common city policy on flexible, fair, safety-net set-asides, meeting the following criteria:

1. Revenue-driven, increasing or decreasing each year in proportion to overall city revenues
2. Have sunset provisions
3. Have accountability measures so funding is linked with outcomes
4. Have allocation/spending plans approved by the Board of Supervisors
5. Limit annual growth of set-aside so that in best of years city has flexibility to use new resources for rainy day fund or other priorities
6. No set aside can be more than 5% of general fund
7. No set aside can dictate and lock-in a specific expenditure or specific staffing level, regardless of cost
8. Majority of funding should go to politically, physically or economically vulnerable populations in need of a protected safety-net.

This is the time for structural budget and set-aside reform, but reform that is reasonable and doesn't abandon our children and families during a time of crisis. For more info, contact Chelsea at 239-0161 x19.