



# Workshops

## Morning Workshops

### **The Budget Agreement: What Did It Do? Where Are We Now?**

**Rooms 317 & 318**

This year has been like no other. The Legislature passed, and the Governor signed, the 2009-10 budget in February. The recent budget agreement reduced current year's spending, included a significant tax increase, and sent six measures to a May special election ballot. What's next? Come to this workshop to hear top Republican and Democratic staffers discuss the budget deal passed in February and offer their perspectives on how the Legislature will address the state's ongoing budget challenges.

**Speakers:** **Christian Griffith**, chief consultant, Assembly Budget Committee  
**Seren Taylor**, staff director, Senate Republican Fiscal Office

### **Federal and State Health Care Policy in a New Era**

**Room 319**

The results of the November election have heightened expectations that significant changes to the nation's health care system are within reach. The recent reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) provides states, including California, with additional federal funds to cover millions of uninsured children. Meanwhile, President Obama has called for a comprehensive overhaul of the nation's health care system, and although details have been scarce, Congress may deliver a major health care reform bill to the President this year. While new federal CHIP funds will help California extend health coverage to more children, the state's perpetual budget crisis raises concerns about the state's ability to expand health programs, let alone maintain gains that have been made over the past decade. Given this backdrop, this workshop will discuss the prospects for health policy at the state and federal levels in 2009 and beyond.

**Speakers:** **Edwin Park**, senior fellow, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities  
**Anthony Wright**, executive director, Health Access California

**Housing After the Bubble Burst: The Impact on California’s Low- and Middle-Income Families**

**Room 205**

The story of California’s housing market in recent years has been one of both dramatic change and fundamental continuity. The housing downturn that began in late 2005 – coupled with the widespread promotion of risky home loans – helped to trigger a rising wave of foreclosures and has increased the risk that additional families will lose their homes. Renters, too, continue to face some of the most expensive housing in the nation. This workshop will highlight policies that can help stem the tide of foreclosures, as well as review the outlook for developing more housing that is affordable to low- and middle-income families.

**Speakers:** **Paul Leonard**, director, California office, Center for Responsible Lending  
**Matt Schwartz**, president and CEO, California Housing Partnership Corporation

**Stretched Thin: The Impact of State Budget Cuts on California’s Health and Human Services Programs**

**Room 103**

Efforts to balance past state budgets, including the recently enacted 2009-10 Budget, have targeted programs that counties operate on the state’s behalf and that provide critical services to California’s children, families, and seniors. Policymakers generally have not eliminated services or tightened eligibility requirements in these programs. Instead, the state has left counties in a bind by failing to provide funding for increases in counties’ basic operating costs, in essence asking them to do more with less. Multiple years of cuts add up to a funding shortfall that exceeds \$1 billion per year when forgone federal funds are taken into account. This workshop will examine what this funding squeeze means for vulnerable children, families, and seniors based on a 13-county survey developed by the California Budget Project and the County Welfare Directors Association of California.

**Speakers:** **Cathi Grams**, director, Butte County Department of Social Services  
**Cathy Senderling-McDonald**, senior legislative advocate, County Welfare Directors Association of California  
**Scott Graves**, senior policy analyst, California Budget Project

**What’s Going On in the Economy, What’s Being Done About It, and Why There Is Hope**

**Room 316**

Both the state and nation are in what many economists expect to be the deepest recession in the post-World War II era. The recession, which began in late 2007, has led to substantial job losses, a sharp rise in unemployment, and a drop in consumer spending. Economic policy decisions have an enormous impact on peoples’ lives; however, debates over economic policy can often be confusing for non-economists. What is happening with the economy? What impact might the federal economic recovery package have? What does the current downturn mean for the future and is there hope? Come to hear a national economic policy expert provide the answers to these and many other questions in language that everyone can understand.

**Speaker:** **Michael Ettlinger**, vice president for economic policy, Center for American Progress

## Afternoon Workshops

### **The Changing Federal Budget Landscape: Opportunities and Challenges**

**Room 319**

The new federal budget landscape presents new opportunities in such areas as health care and climate change, and in improvement of the overall long-term fiscal outlook, but many daunting challenges remain. This workshop will explore some of the challenges the new administration faces but also the opportunities that exist to improve the quality of life for low- and middle-income Americans.

**Speaker:** **Edwin Park**, senior fellow, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

### **How School Districts Receive and Spend Their Money and What the Recent Budget Agreement Means for Schools**

**Room 103**

How do California's schools receive and spend their money and why do revenues and expenditures vary from district to district? What are revenue limit and categorical funds? After examining these and other basic topics in school finance, the workshop will address current education issues including how the state's budget agreement and the federal recovery package will affect education funding, as well as how the May ballot could change the future of education finance.

**Speakers:** **Jonathan Kaplan**, policy analyst, California Budget Project  
**Dale F. Shimasaki, Ph.D.**, chief executive officer, Strategic Education Services

### **How Bad Is It? What the Latest Employment, Wage, and Income Trends Mean for California**

**Room 205**

California's economy weakened substantially during the past two years as the contraction in the housing market spread to the rest of the economy. The state's unemployment rate now stands at 10.1 percent – its highest level in more than two decades and higher than the rates of all but three states. This workshop will provide a data-driven overview of the downturn, from the roots of the housing bust to today. The presentation will highlight the most recent housing, employment, wage, income, and poverty trends and will focus, in particular, on who has been most affected by the recession and how this downturn compares to those of the past.

**Speaker:** **Alissa Anderson**, deputy director, California Budget Project

### **Uncharted Waters: Navigating the Recently Signed Budget Agreement**

**Rooms 317 & 318**

What is in the final budget agreement and what might it mean for California's future? The recently enacted budget contained not only spending cuts and tax increases, but also an array of tax cuts and six measures that will appear on a May 19 special election ballot. Come hear the executive director of the California Budget Project offer her perspectives on the recent budget agreement.

**Speaker:** **Jean Ross**, executive director, California Budget Project

**What's Going On in the Economy, What's Being Done About It, and Why There Is Hope**

**Room 316**

Both the state and nation are in what many economists expect to be the deepest recession in the post- World War II era. The recession, which began in late 2007, has led to substantial job losses, a sharp rise in unemployment, and a drop in consumer spending. Economic policy decisions have an enormous impact on peoples' lives; however, debates over economic policy can often be confusing for non-economists. What is happening with the economy? What impact might the federal economic recovery package have on the economy? What does the current downturn mean for the future and is there hope? Come to hear a national economic policy expert provide the answers to these and many other questions in language that everyone can understand.

**Speaker:**        **Michael Ettlinger**, vice president for economic policy, Center for American Progress