

NOTE: Kasich and his appointees have managed Medicaid costs well. Counting both state and federal funds, Ohio fiscal-year-to-date Medicaid spending was \$6.2 billion. That's only \$87 million (1.4 percent) over the comparable 2011 period.

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Ohio is living within its budget -- Medicaid and all: editorial

www.cleveland.com/opinion/index.ssf/2013/01/ohio_is_living_within_its_budg.html

Midway through this fiscal year, Ohio's General Revenue Fund -- its checking account -- appears to be in good shape. And that matters to taxpayers, because the performance of Ohio's current budget will offer a base, or at least a framework, for the next two-year budget, which Gov. John Kasich will propose soon.

In the first five months of this fiscal year (July 1-Nov. 30), tax receipts were running \$724 million ahead of where they were at the same point in 2011, a gain of 9.8 percent, according to the state Office of Budget and Management. Pacing the increase: a \$292 million period-over-period rise in income tax collections and a \$154 million rise in sales tax collections. Total state spending also rose but far less steeply than the rise in tax receipts. Over the five months, spending was \$365 million greater than for the comparable 2011 period. That's an increase of 2.9 percent.

All in all, according to the budget office, Ohio should have an ending fund balance June 30, the end of the fiscal year, of \$552 million. That's not the same as a surplus, and it's only about \$48 per Ohioan. But the contrast with congressional budget antics is stark. It helps Ohioans that the state constitution requires a balanced budget.

As always, state spending on the federal-state Medicaid program is a key factor in the status of Ohio's cash box. Kasich and his appointees have managed Medicaid costs well...

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