

Filling Out the Budget Application—Tricks of the Trade

- **Start early.**

Many organization leaders find that it's helpful to start filling out their budget requests and end-of-year reports early in the summer when most students don't have classes and the campus is quieter. If you spend some extra time working on your budget request, it's more likely to reflect the actual needs of your organization and you will probably be more confident about your requests—which means that you'll be better equipped to answer the questions of committee members during your presentation and more likely to get the level of funding you want. Don't wait until one or two weeks before the application is due! Your organization is counting on you!

- **Get a rough draft of the End-of-Year Report (EOY) done first.**

By filling out the EOY report before the budget request, you'll have created a summary of the past year that will help you start thinking about the future needs of the organization.

- **Become familiar with SSFC and University funding policies.**

SSFC: For certain line-items, such as salaries, the committee has written policies to guide them in determining how much funding each organization will receive. You can find these policies on the SSFC website or by contacting the SSFC Chair or the SSFC Advisor. Make sure that your budget request follows these policies.

UW: <http://www.asm.wisc.edu/financial/segfees.html> has a list of important UW System Student Fee Policies. "Segregated Fee Expenditures – FPP20" will probably be most helpful for you when creating your budget.

- **Know your state maximums for travel expenses!**

All GSSF allocations must follow Wisconsin state policies, which includes "state maximums." This simply means that there is a maximum amount of money for which an organization can be reimbursed for travel-related expenses. This applies for any person or group receiving state funds, including GSSF groups.

To make sure your budget request complies with the state maximums, go to the UW accounting services website (<http://www.bussvc.wisc.edu/acct/travel/welcome.html>). Clicking on any of the items on the list on the right hand side of the screen under "Claims for Reimbursement" will give you a more detailed explanation.

Three of the most common state maximums to know are for lodging, food and fleet vehicles. Go to the following sites for those specific items:

Lodging: <http://www.uwsa.edu/fadmin/fppp/fppp36d.htm>

Meals: <http://www.bussvc.wisc.edu/acct/policy/travel/meals.html>

Fleet Vehicles: <http://www.bussvc.wisc.edu/acct/policy/travel/fleetveh.html>

(There are some travel expenses that are not reimbursable. Go to <http://www.bussvc.wisc.edu/acct/policy/travel/non-reimbursable.html> for more information.)

- **Triple check ALL your numbers!**

It's incredibly helpful for everyone (and to your advantage) if the numbers in your budget add up correctly. Probably the most common adding error occurs in "Program Supplies." Please make sure that all the numbers in your program justifications add together to equal the total number listed in the "Program Supplies" line item. If all your numbers add up, it saves everyone a lot of time and confusion.

- **Use your resources.**

Before submitting your application, your organization is required to meet with Connie Wilson, the ODOS Budget and Personnel Director, about your budget application. She will review the application to determine if your request complies with University policies.

If you're feeling at all unsure about your application, whether it's the wording of your answers or the amount of money you're asking for, the SSFC Advisor, Jena Olson, is also available to review your budget application and offer appropriate suggestions. Keep in mind, however, that the final decision about your organization's budget lies with the SSFC. Connie Wilson and Jena Olson can only offer suggestions.