



Tips for Preparing the Budget

Most funders request at minimum, the total cost of the project or program. The only way to accurately identify this figure is by creating a budget. Here are some tips for creating a project budget and tips for presenting that budget in your proposal.

- If provided, always use funder-specified forms and follow directions carefully.
- Complete a budget narrative, if requested, that includes formulas for calculation of line items.
- Use common line item names that obviously explain associated costs.
- Group smaller line items together to make the budget fit on no more than one page (Excel or Word table).
- Make sure the budget tells the same story as the narrative!
- Make sure it is realistic and includes cost estimates based on:
 - o Past experience;
 - o Research; and,
 - o Up-to-date government regulations.
- Include costs required to *operate* the program based on percentages of time—institute fund accounting in your organization.
- Footnote everything that may raise a question.
- Include other funders of the program in the revenue portion.
- Create a table to demonstrate other sources of funding, note their status:
 - o Planned;
 - o Pending; or,
 - o Committed.
- Combine smaller line items to create a one-page budget that is easy to read.
- Provide enough detail to paint a fiscal picture of your organization.
- Should be based on the board-approved organizational budget.