

THE STUDENT BAR ASSOCIATION

Budget Committee Guidelines And Allocation Procedures

Penn State Law

Revised: April 2019

I. Purposes of the Budget Guidelines

- A. To provide guidelines, subject to modification by the Board, by which the Budget Committee (the Committee) shall make a determination in formulating a proposed annual/semester budget and any subsequent allocation/reallocation in the amount of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) or less.
- B. To provide a process by which all Student Bar Association (SBA) funds, whether allocated by the Committee or by the Board, may be reimbursed or recaptured.
- C. Compliance with these guidelines and procedures is mandatory for all business conducted by the Committee.
- D. For purposes of the SBA Constitution (Constitution), these guidelines shall be considered the Committee bylaws.

II. Goals of the Budget Committee

- A. To create a budget that allocates the SBA funds to the student groups, organizations, and SBA Committees of Penn State Law
- B. To allocate money in a fair and consistent manner that will benefit the greatest number of students at Penn State Law
- C. To allocate money in a way that will allow student groups and SBA Committees to contribute to the overall law school experience of Penn State Law students.
- D. To provide a resource for student groups, organizations, and SBA Committees which lists ideas of cost-effective vendors and locations, to supply events within their given budgets.
- E. To promote unity and cooperation between all the students of Penn State Law

III. Definitions and Explanations

- A. *Group*: Refers to groups of students that have been chartered by the SBA.
- B. *Budget Committee Voting Representative (BCVRs)*: Refers to the members of the committee who have been given a voting role on issues of contention. Voting members will be assigned to assist student organization(s) in drafting budgets and assisting the treasurer in recording data/determining budgets. The number of voting members according to the SBA Bylaws as of April 22, 2019 is four (4). This number may be altered by means of amending the Penn State Law SBA Bylaws.
- C. *Budget Committee Representative (BCR)*: Refers to a budget committee member who

is assigned to assist student organization(s) in drafting budgets and assisting the treasurer in recording data/determining budgets. The number of Representatives is within the discretion of the Treasurer.

- D. *SBA Committee*: Refers to both standing and ad hoc committees established by the SBA.
- E. *Organization*: Includes both groups and SBA Committees.
- F. *Committee Composition*: The SBA Budget Committee shall be comprised of the five (5) voting members as laid out in Article III, Section 6 of the SBA Constitution, in addition to any non-voting members appointed by the SBA President and approved by the SBA Board. Where possible, appointments of both voting and non-voting members should reflect symmetry between second-year and third-year law students. As stated *supra* section III.C., the number of voting members is based on the restrictions set forth in the SBA Bylaws. The number of voting members is not limited by this document, and as such the number of voting members will be reflective of the SBA Bylaws only.
- G. *Committee Decisions*: All decisions by the Committee shall be by a majority of those voting members present as stipulated by Article III, Section 6 of the SBA Constitution, unless otherwise indicated.
- H. *Committee Meetings*: The Committee shall meet as often as necessary to fulfill the requirements of the SBA Constitution and these guidelines according to a schedule determined by the Treasurer. The Committee shall not be required to meet in-person unless in-person hearings are required at the request of an organization. However, if the Treasurer chooses to meet in-person or in some forum other than in-person, the meeting must be announced to all members of the Committee in a reasonable amount of time before such a meeting.
- I. All words and phrases are as defined in the SBA Constitution unless expressly defined otherwise.

IV. Annual/Semester Budget

A. Budget Process

1. The SBA Treasurer (Treasurer) shall determine the date(s) by which all organizations shall submit a “Budget Request Form” (budget proposal).
2. At least one week before the date determined in Section IV(A)(1), these guidelines must be published and available to all SBA members.
3. All organizations submitting a budget proposal must either adopt the SBA Model Constitution or create their own constitution. If the organization chooses to create its own constitution it must be presented to the SBA Budget Committee

and approved by simple majority vote of the Committee. If the constitution does not pass a simple majority vote the organization will have the ability to appeal to the entire voting board of the SBA.

4. Organizations will be able to access the budget proposal form through their budget committee representative. The budget proposal shall be completed in its entirety, even if the organization is not requesting any funds at this time.
5. After the date determined in Section IV(A)(1), the SBA Budget Committee shall develop, in accordance with the guidelines set forth in IV(B), an annual/semester budget in sufficient detail to enable a reader to determine the basis of the allocation for each event or other allocation requests presented by the organizations.
6. All organizations are entitled to an in-person hearing before the Committee in order to explain their budget proposal, but such a hearing shall not be mandatory.
7. The Committee's proposed annual/semester budget is to be presented, by way of the Treasurer, to the SBA President (President), who may approve or veto the proposed annual/semester budget. Upon veto, the proposed annual/semester budget returns to the SBA Budget Committee for revision and continues in this process until receiving approval by the President. Upon approval by the President, the proposed annual/semester budget shall be presented at a meeting of the SBA Executive Board for final approval.
8. At least forty-eight (48) hours before the meeting where the Board will approve the proposed annual/semester budget, the Treasurer shall submit it to all Board members and organization leaders.
9. Upon final approval by the Board, the annual/semester budget shall take immediate effect and the funds shall be made available to all approved events.
10. **All funding may be rescinded** for student organizations that do not send either the President, Vice President or Treasurer to mandatory training events.
 - a. Exceptions can be made should the student organization send an email at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance to the SBA Treasurer or their budget committee representative.
 - b. An appeal can be filed wherein a unanimous vote of the budget committee is required **OR** the SBA Executive Board may make an executive decision.

B. Guidelines for Formulating a Proposed Annual/Semester Budget

1. The SBA Budget Committee may consider and decide to give weight to the following factors:¹

- a. *Attendance*: Has the organization attended SBA meetings and events?
- b. *Specificity and Validity*: Does the allocation request provide sufficient detail and itemization and are educated estimates provided? Are these costs rationally in line with the costs of prior/similar events?
- c. *Benefit to Law School Student Body*: Will a significant number of Penn State Law students benefit from the activities of the organization?
- d. *History*: Has the organization efficiently used allocated resources in the past?
- e. *Sources of Income*: Are there outside sources of income other than the SBA funding, including, but not limited to, dues, ticket sales, the University Park Allocation Committee (UPAC), and the Graduate Students Association (GSA)?
- f. *Uniqueness*: Does the event duplicate or repeat an event put on by another organization?
- g. *Adherence to Budget Guidelines*: Has the organization previously adhered to the procedures outlined in these Guidelines?
- h. *Overuse of Mass E-mails*: Has the organization previously overwhelmed the student body with redundant and excessive e-mails promoting its events?
- i. *Date and time*: Is the event directly competing with the students and resources of another event?

2. The SBA Budget Committee may determine if an event furthers the goal of the SBA as evidenced by:

- a. *Non-exclusivity*: All SBA funded events shall be open to all Penn State Law students.
- b. *Viability*: The likelihood of a significant number of students benefiting, indicated by, among other things, location and accessibility of the event.
- c. *Event History*: Success of the event if held in previous years.

¹ This listing is designed to be illustrative and not complete or determinative. Other circumstances and discretion may be afforded.

- d. *Impact on the SBA Budget:* Inhibitive effect the event will have on future events, which affect the student body.
- e. *Co-sponsoring:* The event is likely to have better student turnout when there is cooperation between multiple student organizations.

3. **General Limitations for Items Which Shall Not Be Funded**

- a. *Common Items:* Those items which students may already have, such as board games, playing cards, towels, markers, etc.
- b. *General Body Meetings:* The SBA Budget Committee shall not allocate funding for more than one (1) general body meeting per organization per semester.
- c. *Student Services:* Compensation for a student's performance of a duty or service.
- d. *Speakers:* Honorariums for speakers are handled by the Speaker's Trust Fund and shall not be paid for by SBA funds.
- e. *Travel Expenses:* All charges incurred including transportation, parking, gas, lodging, etc.
- f. Tips in excess of 20%.
- g. Fees, Dues, Political Contributions, Donations, etc.

4. **Requirements for Organizational Budget Proposals**

- a. Timely, fully, and accurately complete a budget proposal.
- b. *Date of Event:* All proposed events and requests shall include at least a predicted month in which the event shall occur.
- c. *Description:* Provide sufficient detail of the event so that the Committee can evaluate the event according to Section IV(B).
- d. *Itemization:* To the best of the organization's ability, provide and itemization of costs that shall be incurred in order to ensure the event's success.
- e. *Estimated attendance:* Provide a good-faith best guess on the anticipated attendance of the proposed function.
- f. *Proof of Cost:* To the best of the organization's ability, proof of predictive cost will be required to go along with the itemized list. Proof of cost can include a print screen

of a grocery store webpage, picture of a menu, webpage shopping cart, or any other proof that includes item with its predictive cost. If a proof of cost cannot be given at this time, please indicate this in your itemized list.

5. Exceptions

- a. Through a unanimous vote of the budget committee and the President of the Student Bar Association, funds may be allocated for events/conferences that would benefit the student body.
 - Examples: ABA conference, events with other graduate programs, etc.

V. Allocation/Reallocation Requests

A. Allocation/Reallocation Process

1. Organizations may access the online “Budget Allocation/Reallocation Request Form” (allocation/reallocation form) throughout the academic school year and request funds as needed. The allocation/reallocation form shall be filled out in its entirety with as much detail as the organization can provide. Once completed, the form will be submitted through the same channels as a standard budget request form.
2. Within two weeks of receiving an allocation/reallocation form the SBA Budget Committee shall convene and come to a decision with regard to any allocation/reallocation form in the amount of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) or less.
3. Organizations are entitled to an in-person hearing before the SBA Budget Committee in order to be present while the Committee comes to a final determination with regard to their allocation/reallocation form, however, such an in-person hearing shall not be mandatory.
4. All decisions, which shall be in accordance with the Guidelines set for in Section V(B), shall be delivered to the organization that made such request accompanied by a brief explanation of the Committee’s ruling. Decisions will also be published and reflected in the budget presented to the SBA, as well as the publicly available budget committee minutes subject to the discretion of the committee.
5. At each meeting of the Executive Board a report shall be given, by way of the Treasurer, in which all allocations/reallocations requested and granted shall be reported. Organizations may inquire for further information and detailed explanation of the Committee’s ruling by way of a Board member.

B. Guidelines for Allocation/Reallocation of Funds

1. **The SBA Budget Committee will be bound by the same determinations**

guidelines as established *supra* in sections IV. B. 1-5.

2. Requirements for Allocation/Reallocation Requests by Organizations

- a. A timely, fully, and accurately complete a budget proposal.
- b. *Date of Event*: All proposed events and requests shall include at least a predicted month in which the event shall occur.
- c. *Description*: Provide sufficient detail of the event so that the Committee can evaluate the event according to Section IV(B).
- d. *Itemization*: To the best of the organization's ability, provide a detailed itemization of costs that shall be incurred in order to ensure the event's success.
- e. *Estimated attendance*: Provide a good-faith best guess on the anticipated attendance of the proposed function.
- f. *Proof of Cost*: To the best of the organization's ability, proof of predictive cost will be required to go along with the itemized list. Proof of cost can include a print screen of a grocery store webpage, picture of a menu, webpage shopping cart, or any other proof that includes item with its predictive cost. If a proof of cost cannot be given, please indicate in your itemized list.

VI. Alterations to an Allocation

- A. Any alteration to an allocation, including amount allocated, description, itemization, etc., must be requested by the organization through use of the allocation/reallocation form and is subject to a decision by the SBA Budget Committee, if for five hundred dollars (\$500.00) or less, or the Board, if for more than five hundred dollars (\$500.00).
- B. At the request of the organization, the Treasurer shall have the discretion to alter the date of the allocated event.
- C. It is the Treasurer's responsibility to ensure that the organization's allocation reflects any alteration approved by the Treasurer, the Committee, or by the Board.

VII. Dispersal of Funds

A. Reimbursement Process

1. Organizations (and member thereof) may access the "SBA Fund Reimbursement Form" (reimbursement form) on the SBA website, or in the Student Services office. This form shall be completed in its entirety.

2. Itemized receipts that attest to the actual amount of funds that were spent and which are to be reimbursed shall accompany all reimbursement forms. **No reimbursement shall be awarded without an itemized receipt that is signed by an executive board member of the organization.**
3. The completed reimbursement form and all receipts that accompany the form are to be delivered to the Treasurer's school mail folder within five (5) business days of the event or run the risk of not having the funds reimbursed.
4. The Treasurer shall deliver the reimbursement form to the appropriate administrative agent.

B. Penn State Law Purchase Card Process

1. Organizations (and members thereof) may request use of the Penn State Law purchase card during the allocation/reallocation process.
2. All expenses incurred on the Penn State Law purchase card must be in accordance with the funds allocated in the SBA budget.
3. Itemized receipts are required for any and all expenses incurred on the Penn State Law purchase card and are to be delivered, within five (5) business days of the event, to the administrative official through whom the card is used, with a copy of the receipts also forwarded to the SBA Treasurer.
4. Prior to authorization granting use of the purchase card, the organization shall make arrangements with the vendor(s) such that the administrative official possessing the purchase card shall solely need to submit the card number to the vendor(s). Organizations will not take actual possession of any purchase card.
5. Prior to authorization granting use of the purchase card, the organization shall make arrangements to use the purchase card with the administrative official possessing the purchase card at least two (2) weeks prior to said use, unless the planned use falls within two (2) weeks after the annual budget is finalized or the use is a supplementary request not in the initial annual budget.
6. Authorization for use of the purchase card shall be granted by the Treasurer upon compliance with VII(B)(4) and VII(B)(5).
7. Failure to adhere to the allocations granted or to the process set forth in this section may result in the organization's assumption of liability for the expenses incurred on the purchase card.

VIII. SBA Event Participation Reporting

- A. Any and all events that are allocated SBA funds in the budget is subject to mandatory event participation reporting, to allow accurate records of the event's history of success to aid the future budgeting of the SBA Budget Committee.
- B. A leader or other representative of the organization hosting an event must print out a "SBA Event Participation Form" (event participation form), found on the SBA website, and bring said form to the event.
- C. The organization leader or other representative has the responsibility to have all event attendees and participants present at the event sign their names to the event participation form.
- D. The event participation form is required to be delivered within five (5) business days of the event to the Treasurer's student mail folder, and can be attached to the reimbursement form and itemized receipts of the event.
- E. If an organization fails to return the event participation form within the given time, the organization may be subject to recapture as outlined in Section IX(B).
- F. If an organization fails to have event attendees and participants sign an event participation form, the organization leader or other representative can submit in writing an approximation of the event participation, as well as an explanation for the lack of an event participation form. This must occur within five (5) business days of the event.
- G. Exceptions:
 - 1. *Events with Ticket Sales*: For any organization's event in which tickets are sold (*ex*: Barrister's Ball, Spring Soiree, etc.) this requirement is waived. In lieu of the event participation form, the organization leader or representative may submit its list of ticket sales to the Treasurer's student mail folder, within five (5) business days of the event.
 - 2. *Infeasibility*: If an organization's event has an anticipated attendance so large that it would be infeasible for all attendees and participants to sign an event participation form (*ex*: Senior Picnic, Welcome Back Parties, etc.), this requirement is may be waived with prior approval of the Treasurer. With a minimum of one week prior to the event, the organization leader must contact the Treasurer to make him/her aware of such infeasibility. In lieu of the form, the organization leader or other representative may submit in writing to the Treasurer's student mail folder an approximation of the event participation within the five (5) business days of the event.

IX. Recapture of Funds

- A. Unused allocated funds for a specific event will be placed back into the SBA general fund if the funds are not reallocated through the reallocation process.
- B. The Treasurer shall exercise this recapture provision if the organization has failed to submit the appropriate reimbursement, reallocation, and event participation forms within five (5) business days after the event's scheduled date. If the scheduled date is only the month in which the event was to be held, the Treasurer shall exercise this recapture provision only after five (5) business days of the last day of that month.
- C. The recapture provision shall be exercised after the time allotted in Section IX(B) by notifying the organization of the recapture of the funds. The organization shall have no more than five (5) business days after receiving notice to file a grievance with the Committee.
- D. If no grievance is filed pursuant to IX(C) or the grievance is denied, the funds shall be recaptured and returned to the general SBA unallocated budget.

X. Emergency Funding

- A. In the event of an emergency, the Treasurer plus one other member of the SBA Budget Committee shall have the power to allocate up to two hundred dollars (\$200.00) to alleviate such an emergency.
- B. Once such an allocation is made, the Treasurer and a representative of the organization that received the allocation shall promptly inform the Executive Board of the circumstances surrounding such an allocation.

XI. Amendment

- A. These guidelines shall be amended by a majority vote of the SBA Board.

XII. Budget Committee Representative

- A. Budget Committee Representatives (BCRs) will be assigned to the student organizations they are to assist and record.
- B. BCRs may have roles as officers in other student organizations, provided that they (1) disclose all conflicts of interest, and (2) act in the best interest of the SBA by abstaining when in a potential conflict.
- C. BCRs are responsible for keeping student organizations up to date on evolving budget issues and guidelines.