



Wabash Center for Teaching & Learning in Theology & Religion Grant Budget & Expense Guidelines

Creating a realistic and transparent budget is a crucial part of a successful grant proposal. Use this guide to develop your budget in alignment with your proposed project goals, activities, and timeline.

Building a Budget

1. Tie Budget Items to Specific Activities

- Start by listing all project activities that require funding support.
- Make sure each expense clearly supports a defined element of your project plan.
- Be realistic about what will happen, when, and who is involved.

2. Coordinate with Your Institution’s Financial Office

- Discuss your project early with the appropriate financial officer.
- Ask:
 - How will different expense types (stipends, travel, etc.) be processed?
 - What documentation will be needed for reimbursement?
 - Who will be generating the grant’s financial report, and how often?
- This step helps prevent surprises during implementation.

3. Estimate Expenses with Specificity

- Research realistic cost estimates in advance. For example:
 - Hotel near campus: $\$145/\text{night} \times 10 \text{ participants} \times 2 \text{ nights} = \$2,900$
 - Catering: $\$20/\text{person lunch} \times 15 \text{ people} = \300
- Avoid using vague “miscellaneous” lines. Budget for what you know now; you may request a budget revision later if needed.

4. Present Your Budget Clearly

- Provide a line-item budget broken down by:
 - Project year
 - Specific activities
 - Type of expense (e.g., stipends, meals, travel)
- Include a Narrative Budget explaining your calculations and reasoning behind each line.

Estimating Common Expenses

1. Stipends & Honoraria

- **External consultants** (experts, facilitators, etc.):
 - Wabash Center standard: **\$500 per half-day**, plus travel (covers prep + travel time)
- **Internal collaborators (same institution):**
 - \$100–\$250 depending on engagement:
 - \$100 for a couple hours of input
 - \$250/day for participation without leadership
 - More if leading/coordinating an event
 - Note: Fringe benefits may apply—confirm with your financial office.
- **Routine departmental meetings:** No stipends—consider covering meal costs instead.

2. Project Director Compensation

- Modest, appropriate stipends allowed:
 - **Course release:** \$2,500–\$3,000 per semester + benefits (paid to institution)
 - **Overload/summer:** \$2,500–\$3,000 (paid to individual)
 - Link compensation to clearly defined deliverables or benchmarks.
 - For **small grants**, the expectation is for money to be spent primarily on programming or project costs rather than stipends.

3. Student Assistants

- Typically paid hourly wages set by your institution.
- Include number of hours/week and duration.

Common Budget Categories

1. Travel

- **Airfare:** Estimate **\$600/person** for economy airfare + related costs (parking, meals)
- **Car mileage:** Use your institution's rate (typically IRS standard rate)

2. Meals

- Standard projection: **\$75/day**
 - \$15 breakfast, \$20 lunch, \$40 dinner
- You may budget for wine/beer at group dinners or receptions

3. Books & Resources

- Be realistic—many resources are freely available online.
- Purchase only what is essential and not otherwise accessible.

4. Surveys & Assessments

- Costs vary by tool and scope. Consider:
 - Using institutional survey services (may be free)
 - Who will administer and analyze the survey?

5. Institutional Indirect Costs (Large Grants Only)

- Up to **10% of expended funds** may go to your institution as indirect costs.
 - This is **not 10% of the total grant**, but of what is actually spent (e.g., \$2,700 for \$27,000 spent).
- **No indirect costs** are allowed for small grants.

Restrictions & Funding Boundaries

- **Conference travel to present grant findings:** Rarely funded; requires strong justification directly tied to project outcomes.
- **International travel: Not funded.**
- **Technology purchases:** Must be essential and justified (e.g., recording equipment for a pedagogical study).