

Developing a Budget

Why develop a budget?

As recognized student groups on campus, Feminist Majority Leadership Alliances may be entitled to receive campus funding! Petition Student Government, Student Activities, or other bodies that grant money for recognized student groups. Funding allows FMLAs to be active and visible on campus. To receive donations from departments and other groups, including student government, you must know how much your event is going to cost. Making a budget is the first step.

What goes in a budget?

Start with your expected income. Think about what you might receive from your college or university, individual donations, donations-in-kind, revenue from fundraising events, your campus lecture fund, etc. If you are using a program like Excel, you might want to juxtapose your previous year's budget and actual expenses. Once you have an idea of how much money you have to spend, you can start planning how many events you can have and how you will prioritize your resources.

How to write a budget proposal:

Step 1: First, find out what body or bodies at your school provide funding for student organizations. Ask what information they need or find helpful when reviewing proposals. Use those guidelines as a starting point for writing your proposal and be mindful of any deadlines. Tell the funders you speak to what you are trying to do – making personal connections with people in those offices can only help you!

Step 2: Brainstorm **all** types of events, campaigns, or projects that your group would like to do that would require funding. Be creative and *think big*. Your group should always ask for anything and everything you might need for programming. Remember that the only limiting factor for how much money you receive should be the funding body, rather than a lack of demonstrated energy or need on your part.

Step 3: Begin to write your budget proposal. Develop a solid proposal that provides the following information and be prepared to answer questions regarding this information. Remember that a professional presentation is essential.

- Explain the purpose and mission of the FMLA.
- Thoroughly describe your proposed activities and objectives.
- State the amount of money requested and how it will be used.
- Itemize your budget. Break down each project by cost for publicity materials and/or printing costs, materials for the event, travel, hotel, speaker or performance fees, security, rental space, food, misc. (For guidance on itemization, see Sample Annual Budget). Include with each project your target audience, expected attendance, and possible cosponsoring bodies.
- Explain how the FMLA and its activities benefit the student body, faculty, staff, community, and university as a whole. If you held a successful event this past year, write about it!
- Describe how the proposed activities appeal to or benefit specific audiences within the larger student body.
- Explain how the FMLA and its projects differ from what is already available on campus.
- Demonstrate as much depth and breadth of projects and events as possible. Show that the money will be used in ways that span a range of issues: global programs, local campaigns, conference participation, civic engagement, etc.
- Document what fundraising activities the group has done on its own and how much was raised.
- List support, contributions, or funds raised from outside sources.
- Include other types of activities the FMLA has sponsored in the past and describe the result/turnout. In addition, list any campaigns or events hosted in coalition with other student organizations, campus departments, or community organizations.

Step 4: Submit your budget proposal prior to the deadline and confirm that it is received. Include your contact information so that they can contact you with any questions or problems, and ask when you can expect to hear from them.

Tips:

- Work with FMF's Campus Team for help with the budgeting process.
- Start early and be aware of the deadlines for requesting funds.
- Again, estimate costs as generously as possible – student groups usually receive only a portion of what is requested.
- Demonstrate an effort to find the most economical accommodations and items for the FMLA.
- Spend all that is given – the FMLA may be given less next year if all funds are not used. If you need ideas as to how use your entire budget, contact your Campus Organizer.
- Keep a record of amounts requested, received, and spent. Keep all of your receipts, and track your expenses over the semester and year to make sure you are not spending more money than you have or plan on receiving
- Err on the side of caution. Don't plan on spending all the money you plan on getting in your first draft of the budget – your estimates might be too low, you may want to organize an unexpected event, etc.. You can always find ways to spend that money at the end of the year, but you never want to owe anyone money!

Sample Spring 2009 Budget Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance

Summary:

The FMLA is requesting \$5500 from the Student Association. We have organized many successful programs that benefit the entire campus community, and continually aim to expand the depth and breadth of our programming. The FMLA has demonstrated a commitment to collaborating with broad coalitions of campus groups, office, and community organizations, and we offer unique services that educate and empower students to engage with the local, national, and global community.

We work prodigiously to fundraise, cosponsor events, and solicit external sources of income, but these inflows are never guaranteed. Consequently, it is imperative the Student Association shows a strong commitment toward serving students and honor our funding request. Without full funding, the FMLA cannot continue to meet the needs of students or provide the same level of quality programming the campus community has come to expect. Thank you very much for your time and consideration, and we look forward to working with you for a productive year.

INCOME

Student Activities Funds	\$5,500
Revenue from Rock the Vote fundraising	<u>2,900</u>
	<u>8,400</u>
External income (tentative)	
Student Programs co-sponsor for Rock for Choice Concert	500
Women Studies Department Sponsorship	500
Alumni association donation for Rock the Vote	500
	<u>1,500</u>
Total Potential Revenue	\$9,900

EXPENSES

Campus Education Projects: 1 event each session

Project 1: Voter registration and education	
Publicity: 50 fliers @ \$0.40 each	\$20
Materials: Balloons, candy for table, Vote stickers	25
Project 2: Get Out Her Vote poll worker training (expected participants: 75)	
Publicity: 50 fliers @ \$0.40 each	20
Food: drinks, snacks, napkins, plates, cups	50
Project 3: Campaign for Afghan Women Open Mic (expected participants: 50)	
Publicity: 50 fliers @ \$0.40 each	20
Food: drinks, snacks	50
Misc: microphone rental	<u>100</u>
Total: Education Projects	<u>\$285</u>

Rock the Vote Concert (expected audience: 500)

Publicity: 100 fliers @ \$0.50 each	\$50
1 radio spot @ \$100 each	100
1 campus newspaper ad	50
1 banner @ \$50 each	50
Materials: tape, scissors, cardstock for tickets	20
Travel: 500 miles gas reimbursement @ \$0.585/mile	300
Hotel: 2 rooms @ \$100 each	200

Dinner for band	100
Appearance fee	2000
T-shirt fundraiser: 75 Vote shirts at \$10 each	750
Water for sale, ice, cooler	35
Food: soda and snacks for volunteers	25
Security: 1 guard for 5 hours @ \$20/hour	100
Labor: set-up, break-down	75
Space rental: multipurpose room in Student Center	475
Other: 1 stage and 500 chairs	<u>1000</u>
Total: Rock for Choice Concert	<u>\$5330</u>

**Annual Women of Color Conference –
Delegation of 5 to Greenboro, NC**

Travel: Gas money	\$950
Subway fare: \$5/day/person for 2 days	100
Food: \$25/day/person for 2 days	500
Housing: \$32/person/day for 2 days	640
Conference Registration: \$50/10 people	500
Total: Conference	\$2,690

General Expenses	
Office supplies	50
Speakers gifts – university mugs	50
Meeting and tabling materials – Student Involvement Fair, voter registration tables	35
Total: General operating	\$135

Total Expected Expenses **\$8,440**

Finding Alternative Sources of Funding

All Feminist Majority Leadership Alliances are encouraged to seek as much funding from the budgetary bodies at their schools as possible. However, sometimes groups are either denied funding, or only given a small portion of what they needed.

What do we do if we don't get enough money from our school?

Whether your school denies you funding or funds you at a lower level than you need, you should ask about an appeal process. If one exists, ask for information about it and pursue it. If there is no appeals process, seek out an appointment with the chair of the budgetary body. If you are granted a meeting, spend some time preparing talking points. Explain what your group has done in the past on campus and what new programs you've developed for this year. Demonstrate that your group brings something unique to the campus community that would be detrimental to lose. Explain in real terms what the lack of funding will do to your programming (ex: this awareness campaign will only reach half of our target audience, we will be forced to cut two of our three globally-focused events, only two of our executive board members will be able to attend a leadership training conference, etc.).

You can also try to find out what organizations DID receive funding from that same body. If they are organizations that cater to only certain sectors of the student body, you can ask directly why the funding body gave money to support organizations that are involved with specific demographics of the student body and not to yours.

If your appeal attempt is unsuccessful or still does not meet your full financial need, you'll have to pursue funding through other means. Refer to the fundraising section that follows for ideas on how to raise funds, gather donations in-kind, and request co-sponsorships.

A general note about fundraising from outside sources:

Anytime you are using creative means for fundraising outside of the budget given to you by your school, it is important to remember to keep your faculty or student activities advisor informed about what you are doing. Your advisors, in addition to being a helpful and knowledgeable source of information and potential donors, will also help to make sure that you meet any requirements for outside fundraising and donation collecting placed upon you by your school.

Fundraising

FMLA groups or affiliates should apply for university or student government funding. In order to supplement that funding and increase the likelihood that university funding is awarded again, the FMLA will need to raise additional funds. FMLA fundraising takes two major forms: direct co-sponsorship or in-kind donations, and FMLA fundraising events or actions.

Co-Sponsorship

Other progressive student groups and departments may be willing to co-sponsor events by contributing to the cost. These donations quickly add up to a significant amount of money, and having the support of co-sponsors strengthens publicity and impact as well as increases attendance.

- Begin early, soliciting funds several months or weeks before a major event. Some organizations only meet monthly or less frequently and must have sufficient time to discuss the proposal and vote on it.
- Develop a well-organized written proposal that describes the nature of your request, a tentative budget for the event, and its benefits for the campus community.
- Target supportive groups, departments, and organizations with the project proposal. Make an appointment to present at a meeting. Send a copy ahead of time and take several additional copies to the meeting.
- Make appointments with the directors of various departments to inquire about their willingness to sponsor speeches or educational programming. Departments can be a good source of money, as well as a vehicle to publicize the event. However, we encourage you to approach multiple and varied departments, not just Women's Studies. Also try approaching graduate student groups and faculty.

Sources of Co-Sponsorship

- Student government
- Women's student organizations
- Women's and Gender Studies Department
- Other relevant academic departments (e.g., Ethnic Studies, International Affairs, Political Science)
- University President, Vice President, and Deans
- Sororities and theme houses
- Women's Centers and Cultural Centers
- Graduate, Medical, and Law school clubs
- Offices of Residential Life and Student Life
- Women's alumnae organizations
- University Catering or Dining Services

Donations In-Kind

An often-forgotten method of finding funding is to solicit in-kind donations. In-kind donations are simply donations of goods or services rather than cash. Soliciting these donations is very similar to the co-sponsorship process, but if the department or organization is unable to make a monetary donation, you can ask if they would be willing to make an in-kind donation. Common types of in-kind donations include: free copies on the departmental copy machine, usage of technology (projectors, computers with publication-design software, etc.), food or beverages from local restaurants or businesses, donations of goods or services for an auction or sale, informational materials or relevant items as giveaways (stickers, tshirts, safe sex kits, pins, keychains, etc.), or art supplies for publicity efforts.

If you have any connections to departments through friendly faculty (or your faculty advisor!) don't hesitate to ask them if they have access or know of any materials you might be able to use. The same goes for local businesses or restaurants; ask to speak with the manager, explain what it is your group is doing and what you need. Merchants are frequently more than willing to donate to a good cause, especially if their name can be included on a program or mentioned in the closing thank-you's. If you are proactive in seeking them out, in-kind donations can go a long way toward covering a good deal of the largest costs related to event planning (publicity, refreshments, technology usage, etc.), so don't be shy!

More Fundraising Ideas

Apply for a Grant: Foundations and Student Activities Committees are always looking for fresh, innovative ideas. If your group can think of an effective and groundbreaking project that would require a large sum of money, do some research on how to write a grant proposal (your campus organizer would be happy to help), research local and national foundations that might be interested in your project, and apply. At the same time, you will learn valuable skills and gain insight into the non-profit development sector.

FMF Product Sales: The Feminist Majority has a variety of products that FMLAs can use to raise funds, including Ms. memberships, and long-sleeve and short sleeve sweatshop-free t-shirts. Contact a Campus Organizer for information about FMF product sales. You can also be creative yourselves: design and create everything from buttons to tampon cases to hats to jewelry.

The Jar: Have a jar at every meeting and event. Decorate and personalize the jar to make it recognizable. Pass it around at every chance and watch the change add up.

Car Wash: Organize a car wash with a local gas station. Suggest a \$10 donation from car owners.

Rock for Choice Concert: Organize a concert with local pro-choice bands. Sell tickets in advance and at the door. Allow your group at least two months to plan this event, and be prepared to make a significant initial investment. Visit www.feministcampus.org/act/rock4choice/ for more information and tips on getting organized.

Pay Equity Bake Sale: Put a feminist twist on the traditional bake sale! Advertise prices for baked goods at \$0.76 and \$1.00 for men. Include facts about pay equity at the table or on the baked goods packaging. Visit www.feministcampus.org/fmla/program-materials/default.asp for FMF pay equity fact sheets.

Silent Auction: Hold an auction where instead of bidding vocally, participants bid silently by writing down the amount of their bid. Solicit creative donations: ask friends and faculty to offer services, such as dinner for two or free laundry for a month. Be sure to state the minimum starting bid and the increment by which each bid must increase. The highest bidder at the end of the day wins. These events tend to be geared towards older audiences, so aim to raise large amounts of money.

Adopt-a-Feminist: FMLA members volunteer their time to faculty, staff, alumnae, or local community organizations in exchange for donations. Members could rake leaves, paint rooms, shovel snow, or stuff envelopes.

Drag Show: Raise money and have fun! Find a dynamic M.C., participants, a venue, and prizes. Ask performers for their music beforehand and do a run-through of the show the night before to make sure everything runs smoothly.

Tournaments: Host a game or sports tournament where individuals or teams pay an entry fee to participate: card playing tournaments (spades, euchre, hearts, uno), sporting tournaments (basketball, darts, volleyball), and board game tournaments (chess, checkers).

International Women's Day Cards: Design a special card that students and faculty can buy and personalize with their own special message. Include appropriate facts or figures to give the cards an educational, feminist flair. Offer to mail the card for them.

Host a Movie Screening: The Feminist Majority Foundation has an entire library of films that FMLA groups can borrow. Find a comfortable venue and ask people to bring their own snacks. Advertise the screening and ask for \$5 (half the price of a regular movie theatre!) at the door. Ask your campus organizer for good, relevant films.

Find Community Sponsors: Local businesses are often an untapped resource for funding. Approach a business with some information about your group and a letter explaining why you need money. Offer to put their company name or logo on materials that you will widely distribute; ask them to allow you to place a donation jar at their counter; or suggest products (paper, snacks, etc) that you would appreciate as in-kind donations.

Poetry Slam, Open Mic, Coffeehouse, Art Show: Charge admission and/or sell beverages and pastries at these types of events. Solicit donations throughout the event. You can also approach local business/restaurants/bars about hosting an event for free or allowing you to charge a cover that the group can use as a donation.