

Budget Basics

A clear, realistic budget is a critical part of any grant proposal. It helps funders understand how you plan to use the requested funds and whether your organization is prepared to manage the project effectively. Below are key tips to guide you in preparing your grant budget.

- 1. Match Your Budget to Your Narrative**
 - Make sure every line in your budget connects directly to your proposal.
 - If you describe a program component or expense in your narrative, it should appear in your budget.
- 2. Be Detailed But Understandable**
 - Use simple categories like Personnel, Supplies, Equipment, Travel, and Contract Services.
 - Include brief notes if line items may not be self-explanatory.
- 3. Use Real Numbers, Not Estimates**
 - Use actual cost quotes or historical data when possible.
 - Avoid rounding large numbers, precision builds credibility.
- 4. Include Other Sources of Support**
 - Show how the project will be funded beyond the grant request (if applicable).
 - Include in-kind contributions such as donated space, volunteer time, or materials.
- 5. Clarify What You're Asking CFL to Fund**
 - Identify which expenses the grant request will cover vs. what will be covered by other sources.
 - If your request is for part of a larger project, be specific about what part CFL funding would support.
- 6. Review for Consistency and Accuracy**
 - Ensure all math is correct and totals match between budget and narrative
 - Have someone else review your budget before submitting it.

Understanding the Budget Table in the Portal

The “Item Description” column is pre-filled with examples of expenses that might be part of your overall project, even if you’re not asking us to fund them.

For example, salary expenses are listed at the top of the table. While salaries might be part of your total project cost, CFL only funds salaries for new positions tied to new projects or programs. So, in most cases, you’ll list the full cost under “Total Cost” but leave the “Amount Requested from CFL” blank (or enter \$0) if it doesn’t meet our funding criteria.

Think of it this way:

- “Total Cost” = the full cost of that part of your project
- “Amount Requested from CFL” = the portion you’re asking us to fund

This helps us see your full project picture — even if we’re only funding a piece of it.

Project Budget

Enter your project budget in this table:

- Enter the total project cost in the first column.
- Enter the Amount requested in this grant in the second column.

*We want to see the total project cost. We generally do not fund Operating Costs.

Item Description	Total Project Cost per Item	Amount Requested from CFL
Salary Expense	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Benefits	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Consultant Fees	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Facility Costs	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Office Expense and Technology Costs	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Office Supplies	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Materials	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>

Please note – If you have costs that are not included in the line items, you can add them to the row labeled “Other Costs specific to the Project”. There is a text box that you can explain that portion of the grant budget it. You can also upload an additional list of costs in that section.