**Budget Justification Guidelines and Template**

A budget justification, also known as a budget narrative, is used to explain and justify the expenses required to complete the proposed project. Some sponsors request dollar amounts be included in the justification, and these must match the submitted budget, but sponsor guidelines should be checked to determine if this is a requirement or not. Categories in the justification should be ordered the same as the budget, so adjust the template provided accordingly. Below are descriptions of the general sections included a budget justification.

**1. Personnel**

*A. Key/Senior Personnel*

The Principal Investigator, along with any Co-Principal Investigator(s) should be included with their name, title, amount of time that will be allocated to the project, and a brief summary of their primary accomplishments/contributions.

*B. Other Personnel*

Other personnel will include research technicians, lab managers, research assistants, students, and any other personnel being paid using funds from the grant. If the person can be named at the time of submission include their name, otherwise state that the position is yet to be filled. Following the name or TBD include the amount of time they will devote to the project and a brief summary of their primary role/contributions.

**2. Fringe Benefits**

Benefit rates vary depending on the designation of the personnel, but benefits must be calculated and included for all personnel who will be paid using funds from the proposed budget. If you are unsure how to calculate this amount feel free to email [chsresearch@vcu.edu](mailto:chsresearch@vcu.edu) and ask for assistance.

**3. Travel**

Any travel expenses need to be explained, specifically highlighting how the travel will support or benefit the proposed aims or objectives of the project. Include a breakdown of expenses (airfare, hotel, per diem, and mileage reimbursement, etc.). Funds may be requested for field work, attendance at meetings and conferences, and other travel associated with the proposed work. Attendance at meetings or conferences must be necessary to accomplish proposal objectives or disseminate results. Please read the sponsor guidelines carefully to ensure any required travel has been included, for instance for the Principal Investigator to travel to sponsored events relevant to the project. Domestic and international travel should be justified separately. Note that some sponsors may have restrictions on funding international travel.

*A. Domestic Travel*

*B. International Travel*

**4. Equipment**

If equipment is to be purchased, explain the necessity of the equipment to the project. The cost of the equipment must exceed $5,000 and be useable beyond the span of one year. Provide the model name and number, and price quotes received from reputable vendors.

**5. Participant/Trainee Support Costs**

Participant/Trainee Support Costs are expenses associated with participant participation in program-sponsored conferences and/or workshops. A participant is defined as an educational participant, someone who is not bound by a contract in the way an employee is to produce a specific product. Typically the participant is participating in an educational capacity and benefits from the project’s educational goals. Expenses related to conference or workshop presenters should not be included in this section. Note that a section for travel is included. Although travel expenses are included in section 3 above, that section is devoted strictly to project personnel.

*A. Stipend*

*B. Travel*

*C. Meals*

*D. Other*

**6. Patient Care Costs**

If the proposed project is enrolling human subjects in a research protocol then patient care costs may be applicable. For further guidance on how the National Institutes of Health defines patient care costs please click [here](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/nihgps/html5/section_19/19_research_patient_care_costs.htm).

**7. Alterations and Renovations**

If your proposed project includes plans for remodeling or renovation please contact [chsresearch@vcu.edu](mailto:chsresearch@vcu.edu) for guidance.

**8. Other Direct Costs**

*A. Supplies*

Supplies are non-durable goods, for example office supplies, lab consumables, and animal purchase and care. Items included in this category should cost less than $5,000 and not be considered equipment.

*B. Contractual/Consulting Services*

For some projects outside experts are needed to assist with a portion of the project. If you will be including funds in your budget for a collaborator (known as a sub-award) or a consultant please make the CHS Sponsored Programs Office aware as soon as possible and provide contact information, so staff can facilitate the necessary administrative process. A letter of intent, budget, budget justification, bio-sketches or CVs for key personnel, and a statement of work is required from all collaborators and consultants. In this section provide the name and affiliation of the collaborator/consultant and briefly describe the contributions they will make to the proposed project.

*C. Publication Costs*

Funds requested for the publication of results and preparation of presentations and posters.

*D. Computer Services*

A prorated share of the cost of project-specific use of a variety of high performance computers, networking operations, copying, printing, and computer facilities support, etc. If additional software is needed for the proposed project it should be included here.

*E. Other*

This section may include miscellaneous project specific costs such as, tuition costs for research assistants, honoraria, long distance phone charges, express mail charges, maintenance contract fees, payments to human subjects involved in the research, and other costs that do not fit in the categories mentioned above.

**9. Indirect Costs**

Federal grants generally include indirect costs unless the sponsor guidelines specify otherwise. Some federal agencies may cap the indirect costs or require that they do not exceed a certain percentage of the overall budget. State agencies and private grantors may or may not allow indirect costs to be charged to a grant, so it is important to thoroughly review proposal guidelines. If you have questions about indirect costs please email [chsresearch@vcu.edu](mailto:chsresearch@vcu.edu).

**Template without guidelines starts on the following page.**

**Budget Justification**

**1. Personnel**

*A. Key/Senior Personnel*

*B. Other Personnel*

**2. Fringe Benefits**

**3. Travel**

*A. Domestic Travel*

*B. International Travel*

**4. Equipment**

**5. Participant/Trainee Support Costs**

*A. Stipend*

*B. Travel*

*C. Meals*

*D. Other*

**6. Patient Care Costs**

**7. Alterations and Renovations**

**8. Other Direct Costs**

*A. Supplies*

*B. Contractual/Consulting Services*

*C. Publication Costs*

*D. Computer Services*

*E. Other*

**9. Indirect Costs**