



Lafayette College Student Government
Financial Guidelines
Updated May 8, 2025

Lafayette College Student Government
Financial Guidelines

How to Read the Student Government (SG) Financial Guidelines

This cheat sheet is designed to help student organization leaders quickly navigate and understand the May 8, 2025, version of the Lafayette College Student Government Financial Guidelines.

Section 1: Preambles

Covers the mission, nondiscrimination, funding source, spending rules, and amendment process. Start here to understand SG's values and authority.

Section 2: Funding Philosophy

Defines what is 'mission critical' for funding. Pay special attention to the Budget Evaluation Criteria and the DEI commitments—it will help strengthen your request.

Section 3: General Provisions

Explains eligibility, accessibility, use of service providers, and how violations are handled. Important for understanding how your organization qualifies for and maintains funding.

Section 4: The Budget Process

Details when and how to apply for funding (Period A: Summer/Fall; Period B: Winter/Spring). Includes rules for unanticipated requests and reallocation of funds.

Section 5: Information for Organization Treasurers

Outlines the responsibilities of student organization treasurers.

Section 6: Budget Policies

A category-by-category breakdown of what is and isn't funded: Speakers, Guests, Performers, Personnel, Transportation, Membership Fees, Equipment and Uniforms, Apparel/Merch, Promotional Items, Food for Events, Charity and Co-Sponsorships, Gift Cards/Prizes, Personal Items, Formals, Extended Off-Campus Requests, etc. Always check this before submitting a request.

Section 7: Prohibited Expenditures

A quick reference for what SG absolutely will NOT fund.

Tip:

Use CTRL+F (or Command+F) in the PDF version to quickly search for key terms like 'food,' 'uniforms,' or 'off-campus.'

Need Help?

Reach out to the Budget Committee during office hours or email Student Government at stugov@lafayette.edu.

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Section 1: Preambles

A. Mission and Purpose Statement

The Student Government Financial Guidelines function to serve both student organization executives and the Budget Committee. As a whole, this document seeks to ensure an equitable and responsible allocation of student funds. Student Government is committed to empowering recognized student organizations by promoting fiscal accountability, efficiency, and accessibility.

B. Nondiscrimination

All financial decisions made by Student Government and the Budget Committee shall be made in a viewpoint-neutral manner, ensuring that funding allocations and approvals are based solely on objective criteria such as event quality, student engagement, and alignment with student organization and Student Government goals. This standard shall be upheld in accordance with the principles outlined in the Nondiscrimination Policy as stated in the Lafayette College Student Handbook.

C. Student Responsibility

Lafayette College student organizations are platforms where students can engage with each other and learn about cultures and interests, explore a passion, or develop a new hobby. To that end, Student Government has a limited amount of funds to support all student organizations to the best of its ability. Students are encouraged to collect dues from their members or organize fundraisers as needed to supplement additional funds.

D. Exemptions

The Budget Committee reserves the right to provide exemptions to the Student Government Financial Guidelines on a case-by-case basis. The Budget Committee reserves the right to allocate more or less funding to student organizations than specified in the Financial Guidelines, subject to budgetary constraints, the nature of the organization, or the benefit to the student body.

E. Budget Procurement

Funds comprising the Student Government account are provided through the Student Activity Fee. This fee is \$360 per student per year as of *May 2025*. These funds may not be overdrawn, nor be removed, without the consent of the Student Government.

F. The Student Government Account

All Student Government allocations are held in the Student Government account. Every student organization receives a Student Government account upon receiving recognition. Student Government funds are allocated on a rolling basis throughout the year, pursuant to relevant funding periods, and may only be used for items approved through the budget process. A student organization's budget is effective July 1 to June 30. Any remaining money in a student organization's Student Government account will be returned to the Student Government general account at the end of each budget period.

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G. Spending Rule

No funds in the Student Government account may be pledged, appropriated, spent, or otherwise committed for expenditure without the approval of the majority of the Student Government general body.

H. Amendments

This document may be amended by approval of two-thirds of the entire Student Government general body.

Section 2: Funding Philosophy

A. Statement

This funding approach reflects direct student input while adhering to Lafayette College policies and relevant guidelines. Equal opportunity is balanced with equity to help student organizations fulfill their missions. Priority is given to inclusive, community-driven, and sustainable initiatives that enhance the Lafayette experience. All organizations are supported to the fullest extent possible to encourage collaboration, growth, and continuous improvement within the Lafayette community.

B. Mission Critical Philosophy

Identifying what is mission-critical ensures that Student Government funding supports initiatives central to a student organization's purpose:

1. Mission Alignment

- a. Does the request directly support the core purpose of the student organization?
- b. Is it essential to the student organization's founding intent or the primary reason students participate?
- c. For cultural, religious, or identity-based organizations: Does the event or program foster inclusion and highlight a vital aspect of participants' identities?

2. Broad and Equitable Impact

- a. Does the funding have the potential to benefit the wider campus community, even if the programming is centered on specific identities or interests?
- b. Is the initiative accessible and inviting to a broad range of students?

3. Projected Impact

- a. Can the student organization demonstrate likely outcomes through measurable indicators such as expected attendance, engagement hours, or reach?
- b. Is there a clear plan for maximizing participation and value from the requested funds?

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- c. Does the activity present opportunities for the majority of members to benefit from it in some capacity?
- 4. Feasibility
 - a. Does the request reasonably support mission-critical goals without placing undue strain on the student organizations and activities fee?

C. Budget Evaluation Criteria

Non-exhaustive factors considered when evaluating budgets:

1. Current student organization account balance
2. Past program success (not applied to new student organizations)
3. Outside funding history and potential
4. Expected event attendance
5. Event location (on-campus vs. off-campus)
6. Student organization membership size and event involvement
7. Student organization longevity (projected or actual)
8. Meeting frequency and typical attendance
9. Event co-sponsorship
10. Effectiveness of event marketing
11. Requirement of member dues
12. Member-provided materials or equipment
13. Student organization fundraising efforts
14. Research quality and detail of funding request

D. Special Consideration

Bearing in mind that the nature of each student organization's programming is different, exceptions to funding rules may be granted on a case-by-case basis after consultation with the Budget Committee.

E. Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Student Government is committed to fostering an inclusive campus community where all students have equitable access to resources and opportunities. These financial guidelines reflect this commitment through the following principles:

1. Ensure transparent and accessible funding processes that reduce barriers to participation for historically underrepresented and marginalized groups.
2. Allocate funds with careful consideration of how they can advance diversity, equity, and inclusion across all student activities and organizations.
3. Prioritize initiatives that amplify diverse voices, celebrate cultural differences, and foster inclusive environments where all students feel valued and respected.
4. Regularly review our funding decisions through an equity lens, collecting data to identify and address any disparities in resource allocation.
5. Provide additional support and guidance to new and emerging student organizations representing underrepresented communities.

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6. Accommodations that support the full participation of students with disabilities or other accessibility needs will be funded, provided the request aligns with the event or organization's purpose and is appropriately documented.

Section 3: General Provisions

A. Eligibility for Funding

To be eligible for funding, a student organization must meet these requirements:

1. Be officially recognized by Student Government.
2. Attend the Mandatory Budget Information Session each semester.
3. Submit the budget request on time.
4. Fill out the budget request form correctly. See Section 4B for more on how to correctly submit a budget request.

B. Accessibility

All students must be allowed to participate in any activity or event that utilizes Student Government funding.

C. Admittance Fees

Student organizations cannot charge admission fees for campus-wide events that are primarily funded by Student Government.

D. Awareness

A reasonable effort must be made to advertise events and/or student organizations. It is therefore required, in addition to any planned method of advertisement, that any campus-wide program be posted to OurCampus.

E. Service Providers

Student organizations should prioritize using Lafayette College's internal service providers (e.g. Printing/Reprographics and Bulk Mail Department, Design Services, Plant Operations, IT Services) over external vendors.

F. Violations and Confiscation

Lafayette College Student Government may freeze a student organization's funds or require a budget hearing if the organization violates Student Government policies, abuses funds, or violates the Student Handbook. Severe cases may result in loss of recognition. Handbook violations will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

G. Unspent Funds

All unspent funds are returned to the Student Government account to be redistributed for the next budget period.

H. On-Campus First

On-campus events are crucial to building a cohesive and connected community. Therefore, the Budget Committee will prioritize on-campus student organization events over off-campus events due to accessibility.

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I. Alternative Options

Student Government may not fund items when a free alternative is available.

Section 4: The Budget Process

A. Funding Periods

A funding period is the designated time frame during which student organizations can request and use allocated funds for events, activities, or operations. Student Government establishes each funding period, along with specific deadlines for submitting budget requests and completing purchases.

1. Period A:
 - a. Requests are open May 1.
 - b. Requests are due June 1.
 - c. Budgets will be available July 1 to the last day of classes.
2. Period B:
 - a. Requests are open November 15.
 - b. Requests are due December 15.
 - c. Budgets will be available January 15 to the last day of classes.

B. Budget Request Rules

A budget request is a formal proposal submitted by a student organization seeking funding for events, activities, or operational needs. All requests must demonstrate a clear purpose, align with the student organization's mission, and comply with policies established in the Lafayette College Handbook. The budget request must be submitted according to the funding periods outlined above, and in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. All budget requests must include a detailed description of the expected expense. When possible, all budget requests must include quantities and links, estimated attendance, why it is necessary, and how it aligns with the student organization's mission and goals.
2. Expenses must comply with all Lafayette College policies and guidelines, including those related to student conduct, event planning, food policies, and financial procedures.
3. Budget requests should be submitted by the designated student organization representative and approved by the student organization executive board before submission.
4. Student organizations are encouraged to submit budgets early; late requests will not be considered unless they qualify as unanticipated budget requests.
5. The Budget Committee reserves the right to request clarification, deny requests, or partially fund expenses based on available funds, the strength of justification, and fairness to other student organizations.

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6. Student organizations may not request funds for personal items, gifts, alcohol, or any other prohibited expenses as defined by College policy. See section 7 for more information.

C. Unanticipated Requests

An Unanticipated Budget Request is a formal request for funding submitted by a student organization to cover an unexpected expense that could not have been planned for in the original budget request. These requests must include a clear justification for why the cost was unforeseen and why it is now necessary. These requests may be submitted at any time after the original budget funding period has concluded. Examples include expenses for a tournament which could not be planned for earlier in the semester, a reaction to a current event, a broken piece of equipment, etc. Failure to plan ahead or submit budgets on time does not qualify as an unanticipated budget request. Examples that do not qualify include wanting more decorations, forgetting to request funds for a fixed event, booking a caterer, etc.

D. Reallocation Requests

A Reallocation Request is a request made by a student organization to move previously approved funding from one budget category to another. Reallocations toward capped categories, such as speakers, guests, performers, apparel, promotional items, gift cards, and extended off-campus requests, may only be approved up to the established cap. Reallocation requests are the only requests that do not require approval by the Student Government's general body. A reallocation request may be denied if the money being allocated is going towards a category that has already reached its cap.

E. Food Requests

The Food Budget is a separate pool of funds designated specifically for food-related expenses and should not be included in a student organization's regular budget request. Food requests are reviewed and approved on a rolling basis after all other student organization budgets have been allocated for the semester. Student organizations must submit a separate food budget request with clear details and justification for the food expense.

F. Break Funding

Student Government will not fund events/activities when classes are not in session. This includes spring break, fall break, summer break, winter break, and other similar periods of time.

G. Budget Approvals

All Budget requests are allocated by the Budget Committee and approved by the Student Government general body at general body meetings. Reallocation requests only need approval by the Budget Committee.

H. Appeals

Allocation appeals must be done in person by attending Budget Committee office hours, which are held weekly in the Student Government office.

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Section 5: Information for Organization Treasurers

A. OurCampus

OurCampus is the central online platform used to manage all financial matters related to student organizations. All funding requests must be submitted through OurCampus in order to be reviewed and processed by the Budget Committee. Student organization treasurers should verify that they have administrative access to their organization's OurCampus page. They should contact the Office of Student Involvement if they need assistance with access. Treasurers are expected to log in to OurCampus regularly to submit forms, check the status of requests, and respond to any comments or revision notes left by Budget Committee reviewers.

B. Mandatory Information Sessions

Student organization treasurers must attend the Student Government semesterly Mandatory Budget Information Sessions and, if representing an organization under Lafayette recreation services, the SCORE Workshop, in order to request and receive funds.

C. EMS (College Scheduling System)

Student organization officers are encouraged to reserve rooms through EMS for general body meetings, events, formals, etc. All spaces reserved through EMS are free of charge.

D. Enterprise Rental Vehicles

Student organization treasurers can request Enterprise rental vehicles through the Office of Student Involvement via a form on OurCampus.

E. Office Hours

Student organization treasurers are expected to attend the Student Government Budget Committee office hours as needed, which are held weekly in the Student Government office. Student organizations must sign up through a link that will be shared at the beginning of each semester.

F. Purchase Requests

Student organization treasurers must submit purchase requests on OurCampus at least one week prior to when the items are needed and two weeks prior for food requests.

G. Reimbursement

Student organization treasurers must request and be approved for reimbursement from the Office of Student Involvement prior to purchase. No exceptions will be made for purchases made with personal funds without prior authorization.

H. External Bank Accounts

Student organizations are not permitted to hold accounts with outside firms or banks without the expressed permission of the Director of Student Involvement.

I. Restricted Accounts

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Student organizations that engage in fundraising, collect dues, receive donations, or otherwise raise money outside of the Student Government budget allocation process may maintain those funds in a Restricted Account. Student organization treasurers are authorized to access their restricted accounts and should contact the Office of Student Involvement to deposit and utilize those funds.

J. Dues

Student organization treasurers are encouraged to collect dues to help cover the costs of their requests.

Section 6: Budget Policies

A. Speakers/Guests/Performers

1. Speakers/Guests/Performers, including their accommodations, will be funded up to \$800 per semester.
2. Travel will be funded within reason.

B. Personnel

1. All student organizations that choose to contract with an agent, presenter, lecturer, musician, performer, or vendor must have all costs and credentials approved by the Office of Student Involvement.
2. Sports organizations should consult the Sports Club Manual for the proper onboarding process and requirements for hiring and/or rehiring an instructor or coach for their student organization.
3. Students may not sign contracts. All approvals should go through the Office of Student Involvement. All instructors and coaches must have the paperwork (i.e., Forms I-9, W-4, etc.) filed with Lafayette College in order to be paid.
4. Student Government will not fund Lafayette Affiliated Contractors (students and current Lafayette employees) to perform a function (DJs, photographers, videographers, etc) for student organizations.

C. Transportation

1. Lafayette College and Student Government cannot assume liability for students who use their own vehicles.
2. Reimbursement for rental vehicles, gas, tolls, and parking will be provided only if Enterprise rental vehicles are used and student organizations receive prior approval from the Office of Student Involvement.
3. Transportation for speakers, guests, or outside parties working with Lafayette College will be funded within reason.

D. Membership Fees

1. Membership fees must be listed as Lafayette College or under the recognized student organization's name.
2. Membership fees can not be registered under individual names.

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E. Equipment and Uniforms

1. Student organizations must provide proof of inventory when requesting equipment and/or uniforms to ensure a transparent budget allocation process. All equipment and uniforms should be kept in good condition.
2. Student Government will only provide new uniforms every three years, with the exception of performing arts organizations.
3. Equipment and uniforms purchased with Student Government funds are not for individual members to keep beyond the use of student organization activity. Uniforms can only be purchased for and used by current Lafayette students.
4. Sports organizations must receive approval from Recreation Services for all capital equipment purchases and any non-perishable equipment over \$500 due to delivery, storage, and liability considerations.
5. The purchase date for equipment and uniforms should be documented.
6. All designs/logos must abide by Lafayette College's Style Guide, Logo Policy, and Nondiscrimination Policy.

F. Apparel/Merchandise

1. Apparel and merchandise will not be funded by Student Government. If requested, an annual budget of \$100 will be allocated to student organizations as a subsidy. Apparel and merchandise can only be purchased for current Lafayette students.
2. All designs/logos must abide by Lafayette College's Style Guide, Logo Policy, and Nondiscrimination Policy.

G. Promotional Items

1. Promotional items will be funded up to \$75 per year.
2. All stickers, printing, etc. for promotional items must abide by Lafayette College's Style Guide, Logo Policy, and Nondiscrimination Policy.

H. Food

1. Funding for events where food is the sole purpose of the event will only be approved if the food is culturally/religiously significant.
2. Food for general body meetings, board meetings, etc, where it is used as a draw to the event will not be funded.
3. Food for sit-down meals, such as plated meals from restaurants or catered meals, will not be funded.
4. Student Government will only fund food for events with 15 or more people.
5. If a student organization would like to obtain food for an event, they must consult and follow the procedures outlined in the Lafayette College Policy on Food and (Non-Alcoholic) Beverages.

I. Charity/Co-Sponsorships

1. Under no circumstances may Student Government funds be donated directly or indirectly to any organization or charity.

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2. Student organizations may not transfer any funds from Student Government to another organization's or department's event. Only generated revenue or funds from a restricted account may be transferred to co-sponsor another organization's/department's event.

J. Gift Cards/Prizes

1. Gift cards and prizes will be funded up to \$100 per semester.
2. Gift cards may be purchased, but cannot exceed \$25 per individual card. The following must be recorded and submitted to the Office of Student Involvement:
 - a. The first and last name of the recipient.
 - b. The "L-Number" or Lafayette ID of the recipient.
 - c. The vendor and dollar amount of the gift card.

K. Personal Items

1. Personal items that cannot be shared among members and are not stored for future use will not be funded, such as uniforms, subscriptions, memberships, etc.

L. Formals

1. Student Government will only fund formal affiliated costs if it is an on-campus formal. EMS can be used to reserve spaces free of charge.

M. Extended Off-Campus Requests

1. An extended off-campus request is defined as an event that cannot be held on campus and that lasts overnight.
2. The annual cap for all costs that occur during an extended off-campus event may not exceed \$4,000, registration fees not included. Specific breakdown costs associated with an extended off-campus request are as follows:
 - a. Registration Tickets
 - i. Ticket costs that are related to the student organization's mission/purpose will be funded.
 - b. Airfare
 - i. Student Government will only fund coach/economy seating.
 - ii. Student Government will not fund baggage, upgrades, club fees, etc.
 - iii. Airfare to/from the Lafayette College area (Newark Liberty International Airport, Lehigh Valley International Airport, Philadelphia International Airport) will be funded. Airfare to/from an individual's home will not.
 - iv. International travel will not be funded.
 - v. Travelers should schedule departure and return flights to minimize the overall travel cost incurred by Lafayette College. As such, travelers are also permitted to travel a day earlier or stay a day longer when overall travel savings can be realized.

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- vi. Travelers may only use commercial flights and can not serve as a pilot in command or crew member of any aircraft.
- c. Transportation
 - i. Transportation unrelated to the event (transportation to explore) and extravagant options (limos) will not be funded. Student organizations are expected to minimize costs.
- d. Hotels
 - i. Travelers should use reasonably priced, standard accommodations. When traveling to a conference, it is appropriate to stay at the hotel hosting the conference, assuming that the daily rate is not unreasonably expensive relative to other nearby alternatives.
 - ii. Hotel accommodations will be funded for coaches and advisors participating in the trip.
 - iii. Hotels for events that are within a 50-mile radius of Lafayette College will not be funded.
 - iv. Hotel costs will not be funded for events if students are able to travel to and from campus between 8:00 AM and 10:00 PM.
- e. Food
 - i. Any food expenses will not be paid by Student Government and should be covered by the individuals attending the conference.

Section 7: Prohibitions

A. Prohibited Expenditures

While not intended to be an exhaustive list, the following items are prohibited expenditures/reimbursements:

1. Activities that are required by an academic department or that directly support classroom instruction. These activities should be funded by the academic departments.
2. Alcoholic beverages.
3. Enrollment in academic courses, academic requirements, graduate assistantships, lab fees, academic-related travel, required in-class activities, internships, or any other expense related to a student's academic experience at Lafayette College.
4. Events/activities that take place in private residences.
5. Guns and weapons of any kind.
6. Laundry, dry cleaning, and cleaning products/services.
7. Meals for routine meetings that are generally attended by student organization members only.
8. Meals during travel.
9. Personal electronic, computer, and mobile devices.

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10. Sales Tax - The College is exempt from sales taxes on the majority of its purchases. Therefore, faculty, staff, students, and others cannot be reimbursed for any Pennsylvania state sales tax paid when the College would ordinarily be exempt from the tax.
11. Traffic violations, parking tickets, fines, personal vehicle repairs and maintenance.
12. Single-use plastic bottles.
13. Any activities or items banned by Lafayette College.
14. Personal items.

B. Indirect Participants

1. Student Government will not pay for the off-campus transportation, accommodation, food, registration, etc., of those who are not directly involved or participating in the event.

Updated:

May 8, 2025 (PENDING)

April 17, 2025

April 21, 2023

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April 28, 2022

April 23, 2020