



Budget Guide

Getting Started

A good budget has expected expenses and tracks actual costs. Your budget should reflect every cost coming in or out and every anticipated expense related to the campaign. Make sure to include your fundraising goal and how you will achieve this goal. Here are some tips to get you started:

- **Develop a budget with real numbers** on a spreadsheet and track expenses in real time.
- **Link your budget to your cash flow** from fundraising. Your fundraising and budget plans should work together.
- **Manage expectations** – seek to prevent disappointment by establishing in advance what can realistically be achieved or delivered by a project, undertaking or course of action.
- **Spend on what matters** – ask the question: “Does this activity change a voter’s behavior?” of every line item.
- **Plan from Election Day** back and ramp up the closer you get to Election Day.
- **Budget must be realigned consistently** as the campaign progresses; monthly, weekly, daily.
- **Prioritize spending** on correct and efficient activities that make sense given your strategy, targets and fundraising.

Budget

Here are some items you might find in a campaign’s budget:

- **Staffing** – campaign manager, field staff, finance staff, etc.
- **Voter contact/field** – literature such as flyers, signs, stickers, shirts
- **Paid media/online** – TV/cable/radio ads, social media ads, mailers
- **Overhead costs** – rent, phone lines, website, burner phones
- **Events** – supplies, location, food
- **Miscellaneous** – voter file, election files, filing fees

