# : **Budget**

Develop cost and income estimates for all aspects of the meeting. Work closely with the President regarding budget approval and fund-raising.

***General Approach to the Meeting Budget***

There is no set budget for a MAALL meeting. The Local Arrangements Chair develops a budget based on estimated costs and income. The goal should be to have the meeting break even if possible, though some meetings have required subsidies from the MAALL treasury. Any such “deficit spending” should be approved by the President.

***Developing the Budget***

The Local Arrangements Chair should develop an initial budget in the spring before the meeting and have it approved by the President.

**No commitments should be made to caterers, transportation companies, outside speakers, etc. until the preliminary budget has been approved.** A commitment will have to be made earlier to the hotel, when the contract is signed. (*See Hotel chapter.*)

Developing the initial budget is a tricky business, as just about everything at this point is based on estimates. (*See budgeting sections in specific chapters throughout this Manual for budget considerations in particular areas.*)

Especially important is the estimate of attendees, since this has a significant effect on both the income (registration fees) and the expenses (costs for catered meals, etc.). Use registration counts from recent meetings as a guide, though other factors, such as location, joint meeting with another chapter, etc. should also be considered. It is recommended that you develop at least 2 scenarios (budget for 80 attendees, budget for 100 attendees, etc.).

Estimated costs and income should be charted on a spreadsheet or other type of balance sheet. The difference between the two will indicate how much fund-raising is required in order to go forward with all plans! (*See sample at end of chapter.)*

Registration fees

Registration fees should be set based primarily on costs of covered per person expenses (meals, transportation, etc.) Other overall costs, such as registration materials, printing and mailing, and program costs, such as speakers’ fees or transportation, may also be considered. The fee should be kept as low as possible to encourage participation, but not so low as to make it difficult for MAALL to pay the meeting’s expenses!

Note that vendor donations have declined as many vendors have merged, so higher fees may be needed. MAALL remains a bargain compared to many meetings! Any increase in the registration fees over the previous year should be approved by the President.

Higher fees are normally charged for non-members, late registrations, and per day registrations. Lower fees may be offered for students or retirees.

*(See end of chapter for MAALL Board policy on registration refunds.)*

Costs

Each Local Arrangements Committee member who is responsible for a particular area (such as hotel food, transportation, outside caterers, equipment, registration, etc.) should develop a cost estimate.

Also check with the Education Chair regarding any anticipated need to pay for outside speakers. Payment for outside speakers is normally limited to one or two and should be approved by the President. MAALL member speakers are expected to pay their own costs. *(See chapter appendix for MAALL Board policy on payment of speaker costs and honoraria.)*

The budget should also include the cost of travel grants, which are awarded by the Grants Committee.

Tax exemption

**Important!!** A major factor in costs may be whether or not MAALL has to pay sales tax. This can vary by state. Payment of sales tax can significantly increase costs.

MAALL is registered with the IRS as a non-profit corporation, but this does not automatically insure tax exemption.

**Check your state’s laws early!** If MAALL has met in your state in recent years, contact previous Local Arrangements Chair to see if he/she may have any information on this.

It may be necessary to apply for a tax exemption status, which takes time. Work with the MAALL Treasurer to complete the application and locate any necessary documentation.

Even if state tax exemption is available, MAALL still may have to pay other local taxes. Also, liquor may not be tax exempt. Check local regulations.

Note: If MAALL is tax exempt in your state, you will need to present documentation of this status to the hotel, caterers, etc. Some businesses, such as stores where you may buy Hospitality food and drink, may not honor the tax exempt status unless you have an organizational account there. Check ahead for the store’s policies.

Insurance

The hotel and/or special event venues may require liability insurance. MAALL purchases this through AALL. Contact the MAALL Treasurer to request a Certificate of Insurance from the insurer. You will need to provide the name and address of any facility that is to be named as additional-insured and the dates of coverage. Request the Certificate of Insurance as soon as possible after events are decided upon.

***Fund-Raising***

Contributions received from vendors, law firms, law schools, etc. are an important part of the MAALL meeting budget.

Responsibility

A plan for fund-raising should be developed early on between the President and the Local Arrangements Chair. In order to avoid vendor confusion, only one person should be designated to make the vendor contacts. Generally this should be the Local Arrangements Chair, but if someone else on Local Arrangements is handling vendor exhibits, the vendors should be asked to send their responses to that person. This is because the same vendors may need to be asked to consider both donations and purchase of booth space. *(See Exhibits chapter for additional detail.)* Coordination and regular communication are essential. The Local Arrangements Chair, the President, and the Exhibits Leader should discuss this early and determine exactly how such contacts will be handled.

Potential donors

The Local Arrangements Chair should contact major legal publishers and electronic service vendors, law firms and law schools in the meeting area, and other library or law-related organizations or individuals. Contact the Treasurer for current list of contacts.

In addition to asking for cash donations, the Local Arrangements Chair should also request donations of promotional merchandise, such as registration bags, pens, notepads, etc. *It is particularly important to find a vendor that will provide good quality registration bags!*

Receipt of donor checks

Donor checks should be clearly identified as meeting donations and sent to the MAALL Treasurer for deposit. The President should write a thank you letter to each donor, and keep the Local Arrangements Chair informed of donations received.

Sometimes vendors wish to pay the hotel, caterer or other contractor directly for a sponsored event. This is not recommended, but if they insist, be sure to notify the contractor how payment will be handled. Also, keep records of the donations for recognition and for future meeting planning. Note that vendors, if paying directly, are not eligible for any state tax exempt status MAALL may have.

Donor recognition

The President should find out whether a donor wishes to be recognized as a sponsor of a specific event, such as a luncheon, reception, etc. If so, he/she should work with the Local Arrangements Chair to determine the cost of these events and match the amount the vendor is willing to donate with the cost of events.

The President should notify the donor of what event it can sponsor and be sure the donor concurs.

All donors should be recognized in the program, including organizations which donate services, copying, etc. Sponsors of specific events should be recognized both in the program and with signs at the event. The vendor sponsors should also be publicly thanked at the event by the President or the Local Arrangements Chair, and their representatives introduced.

***Receipts and Payments***

Note that all income should be sent to the MAALL Treasurer for deposit.

All bills should be reviewed and approved by the Local Arrangements Chair and then sent to the MAALL Treasurer for payment.

After the meeting, when all bills have been paid, the Treasurer should prepare a detailed meeting report identifying all income and expenditures. Copies should be sent to the Local Arrangements Chair, the President, and the new Local Arrangements Chair.

**Budget Samples**

MAALL Board Annual Meeting Policies

St. Louis Budget estimate as of May 30, 2012

Revenue v. Expenses

St. Louis 2012

Omaha 2013

Sample thank you letter to donor, St. Louis 2001