# **TOOLS FOR DEVELOPING A PROPOSAL BUDGET**

The proposal budget is a key component of every grant application. An effective proposal budget outlines a proposed project in fiscal terms and helps reviewers determine how the project will be conducted. Budget information about activities planned and personnel who will serve on the project provides reviewers with an in-depth picture of how the project will be structured and managed. Budget details usually reveal whether a proposed project has been carefully planned and may ultimately be feasible.

* Sponsoring agencies generally include budget development guidelines in the Request for Proposal (RFP) or funding announcement. Depending on the guidelines, a proposal budget may be a simple one-page statement of projected expenses, or an entire spreadsheet including projected support, cost match and revenue and a detailed narrative explaining the various budget components.
* The proposal budget should be complete, including all the costs of any personnel, fringe benefits, supplies, travel, equipment and activities required by the project. The project activities and the budget must be in alignment. If major cost areas are omitted or underestimated, the project, as proposed, will not be considered feasible.
* The proposal budget should be reasonable and based on actual costs when possible. Reviewers are often familiar with costs that are common to many projects, such as computers, special equipment, travel, postage, etc. As a result, cost items in the budget do not need to be calculated using formal price quotes; however, they should be based on available price information.
* To assist in the development of proposal budgets, the Business Operations Budget & Grant Accounting Division provides an on-line Excel proposal budget worksheet capable of creating up to a 5-year budget plan. The proposal budget worksheet can be found under the Links section.

The proposal budget worksheet provides pages for the input of personnel, travel, supplies, equipment contracts, construction and other, allowing for the calculation of fringe benefits, indirect costs and cost share information. The worksheet offers program director’s a starting point for calculating program costs. As such, it may need to be revised to meet the specific budget requirements of the funder. Costs collected on each itemized component feed to a Summary worksheet to provide total project costs by item and by year for up to a 5-year period.

For assistance in the development of your proposal budget and budget narrative, contact Nicole Harris at (678) 466-5497 or NicoleHarris@clayton.edu or CSU East, Woodlands Hall.

<http://www.clayton.edu/Grant-Contract-Programs/Links>