# Instructions for committees preparing a 2024 budget request

These are instructions for completing the 2024 budget request form and using the Committees Spending History chart to gauge a reasonable total amount for your budget request.

The **budget request form** has been simplified from prior years. It is shorter and most committees only need to complete three sections.

1. **Committee OPERATIONS expenses**: These are expenses primarily related to the running of your committee and the chair's participation at Area meetings. Examples of operations expenses include the costs of committee meetings (e.g., rent, copies) and the chair's mileage to attend ACM's, Area assemblies, and events like a preconference workshop or committee chair trainings. For many committees that meet virtually, their only operations expenses are the chair's mileage to Area meetings and trainings.
2. **Committee PROGRAM expenses.** These are expenses related to the committee's purpose and work. Program expenses are generally the largest part of a committee's budget. Examples of program expenses include costs for: providing interpretation, literature, or information; outreach to the fellowship; preserving archives; bringing meetings to active military members; outreach to outside professionals and organizations; hosting workshops, and more. Note: Program expenses for committees like Finance, IT, Policy, and Translation relate to the support they provide to the Area.
3. **Outside events.** The Area may pay part of the expenses for a chair (or sometimes the chair's designee) to attend an event such as PRAASA.
4. **Committee-specific line items:** This section is only for the Archives, Grapevine/ La Viña, Information Technology and Literature committees.

The form is in Excel and is designed to calculate the totals for you.

There are **3 additional worksheets**, which you can access by selecting the tabs at the bottom of the main budget worksheet:

- **Mileage**  This worksheet is required for all chairs and officers. There are 2 sections to the mileage worksheet – mileage for committee operation and mileage for committee program work. Just follow the directions on completing the form and the mileage expenses per trip and total mileage will be calculated for you. Some helpful information:
    - There are 5 assemblies a year. Calculate the mileage from your home zip code to a zip code in the north, south, east, a central and northeast areas of the San Diego county. Sample zip codes are on the mileage worksheet. (If the Area votes to hold an assembly in Imperial County in 2024, mileage budgets can be increased.) Budget for those assemblies you plan to attend in person.
    - There are 4 in-person ACMs held at the Electrician's Hall (zip code 92123). Budget mileage for the number of meetings you estimate you will attend in person.  (Zip code information is on the worksheet.)
    - Reduce the number of trips if you plan to carpool.
- **Equipment** Complete this worksheet only if your committee is requesting equipment, e.g., a table for information booths or literature sales, translation headsets, tech needs. etc. Include a cost estimate with attachments or weblinks to information on the equipment and its price. NOTE: Sometimes the Area may have equipment in storage that a committee can use.
- **Workshops/Events** This worksheet is optional. It is provided as a tool to help committees plan expenses for hosting a workshop or event. It includes information on estimating translation costs.

Committees are encouraged to consider co-sponsoring a workshop or event with a District or another committee and to take a 7th tradition. This can promote collaboration and fellowship, increase the pool of volunteers, and help share the costs.

*CONTACT US IF YOU HAVE ANY TROUBLE ACCESSING OR USING THE EXCEL FILES. If you are a Mac user and use Numbers software, we can try to convert the Budget Request Form for you. If you have difficulty accessing the worksheet tabs, we can walk you through the process or send you separate files for each worksheet.*

The **Committees Spending History chart** shows each committee's year-by-year spending history from 2017 to 2022, plus its 2023 budgeted amount. For many committees, the chart shows a pattern for your committee's spending. Examples:

- Most committees' spending dropped during the peak of COVID (2020-2021). In 2022, spending rose but remained below pre-COVID levels because most committees continued to meet virtually.
- Unusually high or unusually low spending in a year is often due to something unusual (e.g., a one-time expense like an equipment purchase). These types of years are not usually considered part of a committee's typical spending.
- Contact either Lynn or Rob if you want to talk about the spending history of your committee.

**It's unlikely that the Area will see a significant increase in contributions in 2024, so we encourage committees to submit a budget request that is in line with what your committee typically spends.** (See the FAQs if your committee wishes to request a budget increase.)

The Archives, Grapevine/ La Viña, Information Technology and Literature committees will find spending history for their committee-specific budget items on the second page.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**Can't our committee just ask for the same amount as last year?**
That is not recommended. Last year, total budget requests from all the officers and committee chairs were almost 20% over what was affordable. As a result, most budget requests had to be trimmed back. Secondly, by the end of 2022, standing committees only spent 68% of their budgets. So, it is more realistic to use the <u>actual spending</u> of the committee as a gauge for creating its budget.

**Why isn't our committee's budget back to pre-COVID amounts?**
Area spending dropped for 2020 and 2021 during the peak of COVID. Some committees continued to have lower spending in 2022 and 2023 – generally because changing to virtual committee meetings and workshops eliminated or reduced expenses for space rental, mileage, and copies.

**How can our committee get a budget increase?**
If the committee is asking for a budget increase of over 5%, <u>attach a written explanation</u> for the increase. Some reasons could be an increased costs for certain items (e.g. an increase of $3/book for AA literature); a one-time purchase of equipment (e.g., a display table, chair and cart to bring information tables to community events); a change or expansion in the way the committee does its work (e.g., bringing a new AA meeting to a remote area of Camp Pendleton). <u>Include information on what the benefit is to any change or expansion of the committee's work and why the change is important.</u>

**Submitting your budget**

**Committee chairs and officers should target May 1 by noon for submitting their budget requests, with a backup deadline of May 17 for those who need more time.**

Lots of assistance is available.

1. The budget workshop on April 22nd for Area chairs and officers.
   **Put a Bow on That Budget!**
   **Sat, April 22nd 10:30 to noon**
   This virtual workshop will cover an overview of the process, estimating expenses and completing the budget request form. Bring your questions and challenges. If you do advance work on your budget before the workshop, it's possible to finish your budget request (or be close to it) by the end of the workshop.
   **Zoom meeting ID:  562 6898 7584**
   **Passcode: 964243**

2. **Personal assistance.** Call with questions or schedule a time for more in depth, one-on-one assistance. We have 3 people available to help:
   a. Lynn, Area Treasurer – treasurer@area8aa.org   619-301-1953
   b. Rob, Area Alt Treasurer – alt_treasurer@area8aa.org   619-247-0484
   c. Teressa, Finance Committee Chair – finance@area8aa.org   248-890-1630

   Note: Please don't call Rob or Teressa Monday through Friday during work hours.

3. **Talk to a past chair and review committee files.** You may get helpful information for budgeting and planning – e.g., the costs for the committee's annual workshop.


**Submitting your budget:** Save your budget in Excel and email it as an attachment to Teressa, Lynn and Rob. Do not send it as a PDF file as we have to check the calculations. Do not embed the document in the text of an email.  **Budgets are due May 7th by noon, with a final drop date of May 17th**. Contact us if you need a time extension.

**What happens next:**  The Finance Committee reviews each proposed budget. You may be asked to schedule a 10-15 minute slot at a Finance Committee meeting to discuss your proposed budget. A complete 2024 budget timeline is attached to the email.

We look forward to working with you!