

GSG FY 2017-2018 Archived Finance Updates

February 26, 2018

- **REOPENING OF FUNDS:**

- **[Spring 2018 GSG Budget Update](#):** This is the official report of RSO funding distributions to date, as well as a summary of the reallocations.
- **Discretionary Fund will reopen on Friday, March 2nd at 12pm.** As always, funding will be *first come, first served* beginning on the *time of reopening*. All previously denied applications due to lack of funding **MUST REAPPLY**. Deadlines according to our [GSG Funding Deadline Calendar](#) will continue to be enforced. All registered student organizations are still limited to their maximum \$2,500 allocations for the semester.
- **Volunteer Fund will reopen on Friday, March 2nd at 3pm.** All requirements described above also apply to the Volunteer Fund. Please note the difference in the time of reopening. In addition, please be sure your application describes why your event qualifies for the Volunteer Fund. The purpose of this fund and examples of qualifying events can be found under "Funding Sources" on our [GSG Finance Policies page](#).

- **GENERAL REMINDERS**

- **All re-submissions must include the Budget Application numbers of previous submissions.** Please note in the description if you have previously submitted an application for the same event(s). This helps us remove duplicates and review what needed to be fixed.
- **Submit your expense requests on time, or forfeit your funding!** An approved budget application does not guarantee you will receive the approved funds. You must submit the expense requests to secure payments to vendors. If you do not submit expense requests on time, you forfeit your approved funding.
- **Contact information on our online forms should be for the applicant only.** Only provide information regarding the individual who is submitting the forms.
- **Formatting for email inquiries:** Address the subject line to include the related Budget Application, Expense Request, and/or Post Event form numbers, as well as the issue to be addressed ("General Question," "Resubmission," "Follow Up," "Changes," "Cancellation," "Confirmation," "Web Issue," "Meeting," "Appeal," etc.). Only begin the subject line with "URGENT" if your concern is severely time sensitive and cannot wait to be addressed. Improper use of this tag is not appreciated and will lower the priority of your emails.
- **Expect detailed confirmation emails from submissions.** If you did not receive a confirmation email with your submission details, you did not successfully submit your application and should retry. Email gsgfinea@usc.edu immediately following any web issue to ensure you are not penalized for missing deadlines.
- **Smart and Final appointment expectations:** appointments are scheduled according to the availability of our student interns. The appointments are not available based on unchanging schedules and will be somewhat inconsistent.

You must email the interns to schedule appointments. Interns must be called at the time of the appointment once items have been obtained, and the intern will meet you at the location.

- **IMPORTANT END-OF-SEMESTER REMINDERS**

- **There are only FIVE Finance Committee meetings remaining in this school year.** If you are planning events from **4/16 to 6/30**, please be sure to note the submission deadlines listed on the [GSG Funding Deadline Calendar](#) and plan accordingly.
- **All social events taking place during finals period must submit a Department Approval Memo with the Budget Application.** This is primarily enforced in schools and departments that have finals during 4/28-5/10. This memo is simply a signed written letter from the respective department (e.g. academic advisor, department chair, or school dean) approving the event.
- **All events taking place during the summer must:**
 - - submit a Budget Application by **4/8**
 - - submit all Expense Requests by **4/27**
 - - finalize all payments by **6/1** to close out accounts before the end of the fiscal year, 6/30
- **GSG is currently unable to support events taking place between 6/30 and the first day of the fall semester**, so please coordinate with your team and plan events for the first half of the summer. We are working with administrators to make GSG funds available throughout the full calendar year beginning Summer 2019.
- **Get recognized by Campus Activities early to ensure eligibility for GSG funding for events in the fall.** Be out the lookout for an email from stuacts@usc.edu for details regarding the Annual Recognition Meeting. This typically occurs in early April. Please check the Campus Activities website to ensure your organization is recognized, as unrecognized organizations are ineligible to receive funding from GSG.
- **All recognized student organizations and finance directors must re-take the GSG Finance Orientation to be eligible for the 2018-2019 academic year.** Our approved applicant list will be reset at the start of the new fiscal year on 7/1. Once we've reviewed our policies and prepare for the next school year, we will release an updated GSG Finance Orientation and announce it on our [Finance Updates page](#), as well as online and to our past applicants and GSG Senator lists.

January 4, 2017

- **Our [Fall 2017 Finance Report](#) is now available!**
 - Volunteer and Discretionary Funds are officially closed until further notice.
 - We have approved 400 applications and 13 Umbrella Disbursements for a total of \$490,790.44!
- **For Approved Spring Applications:** Events occurring in January that do not have processed Expense Requests are **NOT** guaranteed to be paid by GSG.

- Our fall deadline for spring Expense Requests accounted for the suspension of office operations during winter break.
- Any Expense Requests submitted past the minimum 3 week deadline in respect to the event date will be denied unless given special approval.
- **Intent to Use:** Umbrella Organizations must submit an Intent to Use form (provided on the website) by February 14th to gsgfinea@usc.edu in order to retain use of any remaining organizational funds for spring/summer events. If an Umbrella fails to submit the form by the deadline, the balance of organizational funds may be transferred to a different funding pool.
- **New to See:**
 - A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page has been developed to help applicants understand our policies, especially our deadlines. Please email gsgfinea@usc.edu with any questions you feel should be included!
 - The Budget Application is being updated so that applicants receive copies of their information, as well as a more detailed breakdown of what has been requested versus what we have approved.
 - The Expense Request is being updated to display “requested budget”, “approved budget”, and “approved vendor budget”, so that there is not confusion during our payment process. The language in our funding source definitions are being updated to clarify their purposes with examples.
 - The Funding Source definitions in our Finance Policies have been updated with clarified language and examples. More examples will be listed soon.
 - We are in the process of clarifying instructions for Joint Funding applications, Honorariums, Smart and Final purchases, and form attachments.
- **Survey Says:** The results of our recent survey have given us invaluable feedback on our funding process. We have far reaching future plans to better streamline our online forms and to address the absolute needs of our office in the form of our deadlines.
 - While the 6 week deadline is staying, for now, we will consider greater flexibility between the application and expense request deadlines. We are assessing our end-of-semester deadlines and will most likely shorten those for next year.
 - With the addition of the Finance Education position, we should be able to dedicate more time to questions, office hours, email responses and informative meetings.
 - With our finance reports, we hope to educate our applicants on the use of our funding.
 - We aim to help demonstrate how to fund various aspects of events beyond food, which accounted for 75% of Fall 2017 requests.
 - We hope to educate applicants on other ways to gain funding, including fundraising.
- **Plan Ahead:**
 - Pay close attention to our Calendar of Submission Deadlines which accounts for holidays, spring break, study days and finals.

- **GET RECOGNIZED** – Campus Activities will release information regarding recognition for the 2018-2019 academic year. Workshops take place this semester. Do NOT count on makeup workshops in the fall! You need recognition to receive funding.
- Due to changes to our University accounts, we are restricted to when we can fund events during the summer. There will be a blackout period between June and August during which we cannot fund events. Any events taking place after finals but during this fiscal year (before June 30th) will have to be paid in advance. More details on this deadline and deadlines for the new fiscal year (after July 1st) will be released.

November 5, 2017

- **ERRORS IN THE ONLINE SYSTEM** – For the Budget Application, ignore the requirement for quotes and advertisements. These will be optional fields, not required fields for this year, to encourage more accurate funding requests. Until the requirement is removed from the form, please upload a dummy file. For the Post Event Form, there was a temporary issue preventing submissions, but these should now be corrected. ***Please contact gsgfinea@usc.edu immediately upon experiencing an issue with the online system! Screenshot your information and the error on your screen so that we can provide this information to our IT team.***

October 27, 2017

- **DEADLINES** – only two review days left in the fall semester for applications for events taking place up to February 18th! Submit according to our [calendar](#)! We do not process applications over winter break. If Expense Requests are not submitted within deadlines BEFORE your event, you are not guaranteed your funding and may be penalized for violating any policies regarding payments. ***GSG does not cover overages, late payments, or reimbursements!***
- **ADVERTISING** – all events funded by GSG (except through Organizational funds) MUST be advertised through us and utilizing our logo on promotional materials. See our website for [branding guidelines](#) and for the [submission form](#) for your advertisements.
- **UPDATED VENDOR LIST** – our outdated vendor list just got upgraded! This [new list](#) includes the most frequently used, reliable vendors with their approved locations.
- **SYSTEM UPDATES** – our online application system is continually improving based on your feedback! Updates may take place every two weeks and will focus on improving record keeping (sending all related application information in the confirmation emails!), field options, among other technical aspects.
- **ALTERNATIVE BREAKS** – we are unable to accept requests for alternative break funding at this time. We hope to be able to offer some support in the future.

September 14, 2017

- **The [Post-Event Form](#) is live!** All organizations must formally submit the post-event form for any events that have already taken place this semester. No post-event materials should be sent through email moving forward and should only be submitted through this form.

- **DEADLINES** - This is a friendly reminder to reference the Calendar of Submission Deadlines for all applications. We are STRICTLY enforcing deadlines and have unfortunately denied several late applications. Keep in mind that an approved budget application is NOT a guarantee for funding, and that funding may be LOST if the expense request is not submitted on time, or Smart and Final appointments are not scheduled on time.
- **RECOGNITION** - We are actively checking recognition status of all organizations applying for funding. If you are concerned about your applications, please upload your recognition paperwork to the application or email gsgfinea@usc.edu and gsghscfi@usc.edu indicating that you have completed the requirements for recognition and are waiting for your paperwork to be processed by Campus Activities.
- **Tailgates** - we have been informed that tailgate events are the only exception to the policy prohibiting the purchase of raw food items. Raw food items may be purchased for tailgate events ONLY and all university policies regarding tailgates MUST be followed.
- **New Finance Resources** - Based on student feedback, we are in the process of preparing guides for how to use Joint Funding, how to request Open IRs, and how to enter speakers into the Kuali vendor system (FOR DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATOR USE). Until these new resources are available, please direct any questions to gsgfinea@usc.edu or gsghscfi@usc.edu.

September 8, 2017

- **The Post-Event Form will launch Monday, September 11th.** Our hardworking IT team has completed the form and is now in the testing phase before launching. Please continue to send all necessary post-event materials to gsgfindr@usc.edu until this form is available.
- **The Finance Orientation has been updated!** Based on student feedback, we have corrected confusing language and clarified our policies in the orientation. It is not necessary for students who have already completed the orientation assessment to retake the updated version. Please just familiarize yourself with the minor updates.
- **Recognition Status:** We will now be checking recognition status during the review process. If you are not active on EngageSC, we will not be able to provide you funding. If you have completed recognition requirements, but have not yet received your recognition paperwork, please email gsgfinea@usc.edu and gsghscfi@usc.edu if you are concerned for any recent applications.
- **Office hours and committee meetings:** **Director of Finance E&A Office Hours** on Mondays from 2-3pm in SKS 410; **HSC Director of Finance Office Hours** on Mondays from 12-1pm in Seaver Hall (HSC); **Director of Finance D&R Office Hours** by appointment (gsgfindr@usc.edu) in SKS 410; **Finance Committee** meets Mondays from 3-4pm in SKS 410 (please email gsgfinea@usc.edu if interested).

August 29, 2017

- **The release date for the Post-Event Form has been postponed. Please see the following instructions:** If your event occurs before this form is available, please contact our Director of Finance - Disbursements and Reconciling at gsgfindr@usc.edu with all receipts, final invoices, and memos. Title your email "Post Event Materials for Budget

App#__" and reference your organization name, your event name and date, your budget app# and expense request#(s). At a later date, we may request that you formally submit a Post-Event Form when it is available.

- **Advertise events by following the guidelines for [GSG branding](#) and by following the submission instructions [here](#).** Please disregard broken advertising links in the application and expense request forms, as we are still in the process of updating those.
- **Recognition Status:** all organizations requesting funding must be able to provide their recognition paperwork following the last makeup workshop on Sept. 5th, provided through Campus Activities.

August 18, 2017

- **The GSG office has moved from TCC 224 to SKS 410 (the Campus Activities office).** This is the building between the Student Union and TCC buildings, the same building where the ballrooms, Moreton Fig, and Admissions is located. Take the elevator up to the 4th floor, and the office is on your left. Physical copies of IRs may be picked up at this location. HSC organizations may request to have their IRs transferred to HSC by filling out the [IR Transfer Request Form](#) form provided on the Organizational Funding page.
- **Edits have been made to the Budget Application and Expense Request:** a direct payment option, Internal Billing Requisition (IBR), has been added to both forms as payment to Facilities Management Services (FMS). Keep in mind that quotes from FMS may take time to generate, so you should request a quote as far in advance as possible, so that it is ready for your expense request. All FMS payments must be requested as the FULL AMOUNT; FMS will NOT accept partial payments. This means that we are not offering the payment option of IR to a department as payment for FMS.
- **Minimum requirements for quotes to be accepted:** a good quote includes the vendor name and logo, quote/invoice#, a payable address for the vendor, phone and email if available. If you cannot find a phone or email contact, simply input the GSG email and phone number as place holders. The quote information must be clear and legible. Most vendors, including Express Catering, must be called in order to obtain a formal quote. In the event you cannot obtain a formal quote, include all necessary information in an organized excel file and upload as a PDF.
- **Minor edits to policy language and to the online orientation are still in progress. Please check back later for more updates.**

August 15, 2017

- **Applicants are encouraged to document or screenshot budget applications before submitting.** The new forms do not yet have the capability to send applicants copies. The confirmation message will be updated to include more information in the near future. Decision emails will begin to include more details to compensate.
- Minor language has been updated on the Organizational Funding page for clarification.
- An updated **Calendar of Submission Deadlines** has been provided. ***RSOs are expected to abide by the deadlines outlined in the calendar, which takes into account that the Finance Committee only reviews applications on Mondays. Holidays and breaks are also considered in the Calendar.***

- After receiving some feedback from students and administrators, some edits are in progress to the online Finance Orientation, Budget Application, and Expense Request (minor formatting issues, inclusion of FMS payment). **The updated versions should be available by August 19th.** These updates will not affect past submissions or orientation scores.
- **Minor changes to language in the Finance Policies are in progress and will be available by August 19th.** Changes are only for clarification purposes.

August 9, 2017

- **New online [Expense Request](#) is finally live!** All approved applicants should submit the expense request immediately for any events taking place in the first couple weeks of the semester. ***If you are concerned about placing a vendor order on time, please contact gsgfinea@usc.edu.***
- For any organizations struggling with recognition status, please know we are funding initial requests up until August 29th, regardless of your recognition status. **We expect all organizations to check their 2017-2018 recognition status on EngageSC and follow up with Campus Activities with any issues. All organizations must be recognized to receive funding past August 29th, the makeup date of the recognition workshop.**
- We have received useful feedback from students on our policies, orientation, and applications. We will be working to clarify information and improve the forms in the coming weeks. Please feel free to send any questions, concerns, or comments to gsgfinea@usc.edu. For organizations primarily located at the HSC campus, feel free to contact gsghscfi@usc.edu.

July 24, 2017

- **Finance Update:** based on our incoming Budget Applications, we would like to emphasize that ***you should only use whole numbers in numerical fields***. Do not include decimals or percent symbols.
- The expected graduate student attendance is the number of graduate students, not the percentage of the total attendance.
- If an item cost includes change, simply round to the nearest dollar amount. Remember, you can always spend less than your approved budget, but never more!

July 22, 2017

- **New online [Budget Application](#) is now live!** You should use a laptop or desktop computer to submit applications as smaller devices may not be compatible with all of the application fields.
- See Calendar of Submission Deadlines located under Funding Resources to know when to apply for your events. An exception to the Budget Application and Expense Request deadlines has been made for events taking place during the first two weeks of the fall semester ONLY, as the launch date of our applications occurred later than expected.
- Our new application has been constructed from scratch by our wonderful team in the Provost IT department. ***Please be aware that there may be initial bugs we may need to address.*** Before submitting your application, it is recommended that you screenshot your application for your records. The submission confirmation screen should give you

the number of your application, which you should write down for your convenience, before redirecting your to the Organizational Funding page.

- **If you have any trouble with your submission, please immediately contact the Director of Finance - Education and Approvals at gsgfinea@usc.edu. Feel free aslo to contact the Director to give feedback on the construction of the new form and its usability. We hope you will be patient with us as we continue to improve the GSG funding process.**

July 10, 2017

- **Updated GSG Finance Policies** have been posted to the [Finance Policies page](#)
- **New Online GSG Finance Orientation** available on the [Finance Orientation page](#)
- **Funding Process updated** and **new Funding Resources** added to this, the Organizational Funding page.
- **Umbrella Organizational Funding Distribution Program (OFDP)** agreement available for the 2017-2018 academic year. Agreement provided on this page under Funding Resources - Additional Forms. Email completed agreements to gsgfindr@usc.edu (cc gsgfinea@usc.edu) to receive disbursements.
- **Calendar of Submission Deadlines** now provided on this page under Funding Resources to guide organizations on when to apply for events within the given deadlines.