

APHL
Lab Director Transitions Guide
Online Toolkit

[Headline]
Budget Checklist

Steps to working with your lab's budget

Fiscal management is a challenge no matter how experienced a leader. Lab directors must be familiar with the lab's funding sources, from state and local revenue streams to federal funding to other earned income. Budgeting within a public health laboratory is a subject of great complexity—and with today's focus on public accountability, of greater scrutiny.

- Study the current fiscal year budget to learn how much money is available for laboratory operations and where it comes from.
- Become familiar with systems for tracking expenditures and monitoring budgets, the various budget and expenditure reports available, cost accounting systems and the fiscal calendar.
- Find out if the laboratory has legal authority to charge fees for services. If so, what's the process for doing so?
- Research how payments for services provided to federally funded categorical programs are negotiated or otherwise charged (if your lab provides such services).
- Get to know the parent organization's budget director—especially important if the lab budget is rolled into the parent budget.
- Always prepare a budget backed by sound, complete fiscal data that fully captures all laboratory expenses.
- In case your laboratory budget is not fully funded, prepare for possible funding shortfalls by exploring alternative funding options and developing a contingency plan to prioritize services.
- Develop a wish list of items for your lab in case the lab is asked to help programs spend unobligated funds at the end of the fiscal year.
- Explore federal grant opportunities to fund projects affecting community health that might not otherwise be funded.