

Deeper Dive: Budget Planning

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High-level details for 2027 and key dates

Budget templates are available now for Regional Treasurers via the Vena Platform. Full guidance will be shared with Regional Treasurers by early July 2026. Affinity Groups will be shared drafts of budgets to review directly.

FINAL 2027 budget drafts for each Region are due via Vena by 28 August 2026

Overview

Budget planning is the annual process of developing a financial plan for the upcoming year across all HBA components. This includes building chapter and regional budgets, which together form a full regional P&L and ultimately roll up into the overall organizational budget.

This process is managed centrally through **Vena**, an Excel-based budgeting platform that enables more streamlined input, visibility, and consolidation of financial data.

Why Budget Planning Matters

Effective budget planning is critical to leadership success and organizational sustainability. It:

- Enables informed decision-making and resource allocation
- Ensures financial accountability across chapters, regions, and HBA overall
- Aligns programming plans with realistic revenue and expense expectations
- Supports long-term financial health and growth

Who does what?

Regional Treasurer (Process Driver)

- Leads the budget planning process within the region
- Manages the budget in Vena
- Coordinates across chapters, regional leadership, and HBA Central
- Consolidates and submits final regional budgets

Regional EC & Functional Leads

- Define regional initiatives, programming, and investment priorities
- Provide input on budget assumptions and spend

Chapter Leaders

- Build chapter-level budgets based on programming plans
- Estimate revenue and expenses for local activities

HBA Central Finance Team

- Provides templates, guidance, and platform support
- Reviews and consolidates all budgets
- Manages iteration and prepares budgets for Finance & Audit Committee and Global Board approval

Affinity Group global leadership will have the opportunity to review and comment on developed budgets.

HBA Financial And Budgeting Guidance

Every volunteer must understand how the HBA operates, as our volunteers are key to the success of the organization and the furthering of our mission. The HBA is registered as a 501(c)6 organization in the United States, which means that no part of our net earnings go to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual. Some refer to 501(c)6 organizations as 'not-for-profits' or nonprofit membership/professional organizations, though we are not a charity. We are a professional membership organization, an association of people with a common business interest that enhances the conditions of the business and not its profits.

That said, the HBA is still an organization – an organization that needs to make revenue to fund its infrastructure and plan for future growth to further our mission. The key, however, as a 501(c)6, is that any profit made is used to fund activities and initiatives to advance the HBA mission and serve our members.

As a volunteer leader for the HBA, we need you to bring your business acumen to your role. When making decisions about programs, engagement, or membership value, we ask that you question yourself or your team to see if you would make that decision if this were your personal organization or if you worked for a larger organization.

This especially comes into play each year with the annual budgeting process. Our components (i.e. Chapters, Regions and affinity Groups) play a large part in the HBA's finances and, therefore, the organization's overall financial wellness. Each year, HBA Central Finance will develop budget templates, and volunteers with fiduciary responsibilities (i.e., regional treasurers, etc) will be asked to review and adjust according to their plans. The budget will need to include all planned revenue and expenses for the year. These numbers will then be revised/approved by the HBA's Finance and Audit Committee, approved by the HBA Global Board, and reforecasted mid-year as necessary.

Other important items to note:

- **Please be sure to refer to HBA's Financial Policies for acceptable/unacceptable use of HBA funds**
- Remember, all budgets must aim for approx 30% overall profitability
- Whenever possible, please work with your CR team to secure sponsorship from companies (cash or in-kind)

- The HBA recommends that all chapters (including those newly established) aim to secure a minimum of \$3,000 minimum sponsorship
- For 2027 budgeted expenses, Regional Treasurers will be provided a Ramp card with the total approved amount for all regional expenses. These funds can be divvy'd up and given to the Chapters at the start of the year or on an ad hoc basis. This will prevent administrative burdens related to personal expense reporting and delays with financial processing.

Key Dependencies

Budget planning is interconnected across teams and workstreams:

- **Programming plans** → drive revenue and expense assumptions
- **Regional strategy** → defines investment priorities
- **Chapter inputs** → roll up into regional budgets
- **Finance team** → ensures structure, consistency, and final consolidation

Alignment across these areas is essential for a successful and accurate budget.

Budget Planning Process

At a high level, the process follows five core steps:

1. **Export budget template from Vena**
2. **Distribute templates** to chapters and regional teams
3. **Build budgets** based on programming plans
4. **Collect and consolidate inputs** at the regional level
5. **Enter into Vena and submit final budget**

Reminder: All budgets are expected to be **net profitable**, with a target of approximately **30% profitability** to support the financial health of the organization.

Step-by-Step Guidance

Step 1: Access Vena

Regional Treasurers:

- Log into **Vena.io**
- Access assigned budget templates from the task pane
- Download Excel template using the **“Input Data”** function

Key Tips:

- Always access templates through Vena to ensure system connection
 - Data must be saved back to Vena to be stored
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Step 2: Export & Distribute

- Export the Excel budget template
- Share with:
 - Chapter leaders
 - Regional programming and functional teams

Purpose:

To gather inputs aligned with the upcoming year's programming plans

Key Tip:

Clearly communicate deadlines for input submission to allow sufficient time for review and consolidation.

Step 3: Build Budgets

Each group develops their budget based on planned activities.

Revenue Includes:

- Events
- Sponsorships
- Other income streams

Expenses Include:

- Program delivery
- Marketing
- Operational costs

Guidance:

- Build budgets directly from programming plans
 - Align revenue and expenses by activity
 - Ensure all expenses comply with HBA financial policies
 - Aim for **30% net profitability**
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Step 4: Consolidate

Regional Treasurer:

- Collects all chapter budgets
 - Reviews for:
 - Completeness
 - Strategic alignment
 - Financial balance and profitability
 - Adds regional-level revenue and expense items
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Step 5: Input into Vena

- Enter the consolidated budget into the Vena template
- Input data into designated areas (e.g., blue cells)
- Save using **“Save Data to Vena”**

Important Notes:

- Excel formulas can be used, but **only final values are stored**
 - Supporting calculations should be tracked separately (e.g., scratchpad or local files)
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Step 6: Submit Final Budget

- Ensure all data is complete and reviewed
- Submit through Vena by the stated deadline

Key Deadline: Late August (exact date communicated annually)

Best Practices

What Experienced Leaders Recommend

- Start with your **programming plan**, not financial targets
 - Build budgets **bottom-up** (by event or activity)
 - Engage chapter leaders early
 - Keep assumptions simple and transparent
 - Communicate clearly and proactively throughout the process
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Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- Waiting too long to begin
 - Estimating numbers without clear programming alignment
 - Missing or late chapter submissions
 - Forgetting to save data into Vena
 - Overcomplicating budgets with unnecessary detail
 - Misalignment with financial policies or profitability expectations
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Key Resources

Guides & Training

- Deeper Dive: Budget Planning (this article)
- Vena Platform Guide (*link*)
- Program Planning Resources (*link*)

Policies

- Financial Policies for Volunteers and HBA Components
 - <https://hbavolunteer.knowledgeowl.com/help/hba-central-finance-department-policies>
 - <https://hbavolunteer.knowledgeowl.com/help/hba-expenses>
 - <https://hbavolunteer.knowledgeowl.com/help/programming-and-events-policies>
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Need Support?

For questions or assistance at any stage of the process: **finance@hbanet.org**

Closing

Budget planning is more than a financial exercise—it is how we translate our programming vision into reality. By aligning plans, collaborating across teams, and leveraging Vena for consistency and visibility, we set ourselves up for stronger programs, better decisions, and greater impact across the HBA.
