



A7510 — The Historian's Budget

While most municipalities include annual funding for the Historian's Department, some don't. Adequate funding is necessary to do the State mandated job of historian for your municipality.

First, look at your muni's budget for the current year to find whether the Historian's department (A7510) is included and the amount allocated for each line item (highlighted in yellow on sample on page 2.). Then look at previous years to know what line items and amounts have remained consistent, increased, or decreased and the reason.

If the former historian had a budget, look it over carefully to see whether a salary has been paid, the amount, and if there have been increases. Look at the line items; are they sufficient for the operation of the office?

Examples of Common Line Items:

- ◆ Salary
- ◆ Office Supplies
- ◆ Education and Travel
- ◆ Memberships and Books
- ◆ Telephone
- ◆ Equipment Maintenance

Typically, preliminary budgets are submitted for review by the governing board in the August-September time frame and are approved for the next calendar year in November.

As soon as possible, and before August, meet with your muni's comptroller or business office to discuss your department's budget. You need to understand:

- ◆ What line items are in the existing budget
- ◆ The rules for spending the funds allocated in each line item
- ◆ How to prepare vouchers to pay for items purchased
- ◆ Whether the muni uses credit cards for purchases
- ◆ When you must prepare your budget for next year and what the process is.

You will be asked to itemize and justify your budget request for the coming year which will then be reviewed by the comptroller and governing board.

Important:

Budget responsibly! Ask for what you need and use it all by mid-December. Remember, monies left in line items at the end of the year **DO NOT** rollover unless you've encumber them.

Depending on the financial solvency of the muni, you may be asked to reduce your budget request. Before submitting your preliminary budget request, know where you could economize if asked to. Final muni budgets are adopted by the end of November for the next calendar year.

Note: When the next year’s budget process begins you may be asked to submit whether you will use all of the funds allocated to each line item in the current budget. If you have planned carefully, you will need the balance in each line item. If you really don’t need all the funds, you can notify the comptroller in the last quarter of the year. In some cases it may be possible to transfer funds from one line item to another so that you can use the balance more efficiently.

Remember the old adage, “use it or lose it”. If you consistently ask for more money than you need, your budget will be reduced.

Example of Historian’s Budget with Common Line Items

11/20/2015 13:27 | TOWN OF VESTAL
nangeline | NEXT YEAR / CURRENT YEAR BUDGET ANALYSIS | P 12
bgnyrpts

PROJECTION: 20161 2016 BUDGET | FOR PERIOD 99

ACCOUNTS FOR:

General Fund	2014 ACTUAL	2015 ORIG BUD	2015 REVISED BUD	2015 ACTUAL	2015 PROJECTION	2016 FINAL	PCT CHANGE
A7510 Historian							
A7510 1030 PT Labor	2,891.20	2,891.00	2,891.00	2,557.37	2,891.00	3,000.00	3.8%
A7510 2100 Operationa	.00	.00	4,308.00	4,308.00	3,308.00	.00	.0%
A7510 4010 Off./Oper.	371.75	1,000.00	1,000.00	939.68	1,000.00	650.00	-35.0%
A7510 4030 Edu & Trav	624.60	625.00	625.00	597.25	625.00	625.00	.0%
A7510 4050 Telephone	158.36	180.00	180.00	132.42	180.00	180.00	.0%
A7510 4440 Machine Ma	28.60	172.00	172.00	.00	.00	.00	-100.0%
A7510 4490 Books Dues	628.35	700.00	700.00	588.30	700.00	700.00	.0%
TOTAL Historian	4,702.86	5,568.00	9,876.00	9,123.02	8,704.00	5,155.00	-7.4%

- ◆ **Salary** (based on hours or as an annual lump sum)
- ◆ **Office Supplies** (paper, pens, printer ink, toner, small office equipment)
- ◆ **Education and Travel** (APHNYS conference, online education, travel expenses, mileage.)
- ◆ **Memberships and Books** (APHNYS, genealogical and historical societies, subscriptions such as Ancestry.com, books for your office.)
- ◆ **Telephone** (charges for your office phone)
- ◆ **Machine Maintenance** (maintenance contracts for office equipment)

You may be asked to provide details substantiating the need for the amount requested. For example if the current budget provides \$750 for office supplies and you request \$1000 for office supplies you could be asked what the additional money will be used for. Be prepared to explain your request by listing what you plan to purchase with the extra amount.

Note: If your municipality does not pay a salary or provide a budget to the Historian’s office, you should ask where you can obtain the necessary items to perform your job. See “Suggestions for Establishing a Budget”.

Suggestions for Establishing a Budget

In munis that do not include a budget for the Historian's Department consider:

- ◆ Do they pay any type of salary?
- ◆ What does the muni provide? An office, supplies, access to a copier?
- ◆ Do they pay for a separate phone?
- ◆ Do they pay your APHNYS Dues?
- ◆ Will they pay for your business cards?
- ◆ Will they provide travel money or conference fees? And to what amount?
- ◆ What area of the muni's budget provides for these expenses?

A lack of funding can be due to a number of reasons; for example:

- ◆ The muni's fiscal solvency
- ◆ They have never been asked to fund the department
- ◆ They don't recognize your needs or the value of the Historian's department.

To be funded you need to identify what the department expenses are. Be reasonable if you are new to the position. Inventory what needs to be done and what supplies you already have to complete the required tasks.

If your muni provides office supplies and equipment and, depending on the work you are expected to do, other expenses might include:

- ◆ APHNYS Dues (they range from \$25/year to \$50/year based on the population of your muni—\$40 is for a 12,001 to 100,000 size muni)
- ◆ Approximately \$25 per year for your Regional Meeting
- ◆ Approximately \$25 per year for mileage to meetings, presentations, etc.
- ◆ Approximately \$250 for specific office supplies such as archival quality paper and protective sleeves.
- ◆ Approximately \$600 per year to attend the APHNYS Conference.

The above items total approximately \$340 plus \$600 for the conference or \$1000 when rounded.

Salary is a separate item that should be discussed with your appointing supervisor or mayor. Learn what historians are paid in comparable size municipalities and what they are expected to do so you are ready to justify your request and respond to questions.

Tip: You can view the budgets of other municipalities by going to their web site and locating the Comptroller or Business Office page. In most instances you will be able to view the current and past budgets. Look for the Historian's budget under the General Fund at A7510.

Preliminary Budget Sample

This is an example of a preliminary budget submitted to the Comptroller In August or September.

2016 Projection and 2017 Budget Request w/Explanations

Line Item	Description & Explanation	2016 Budget	Actual 2016	2016 Projection	2017 Request
A7510-1030	Part-time Labor	\$3000.00		\$3000.00	\$3000.00
A7510-2100	Operations (Grants Received) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WGP Foundation Grants for 3 Historical Markers 	\$3000.00	\$2000.00	\$3000.00	Will apply for 2 or 3 in 2017
A7510-4010	Office Supplies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was unable to locate an unused 3-drawer lateral file within the town and need to purchase one from Upstate office next year. Staples, Archival supplies, Dataflow, Upstate Office, and other various vendors. 	\$650.00	\$384.14	\$650.00	\$850.00
A7510-4021	Donations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This money was donated for a small oval historical plaque which has been ordered. 	\$710.17	0	\$710.17	N/A
A7510-4030	Education & Travel Covers 1 Regional and 1 State-wide Conference. This year the hotel and mileage for the State-wide Public Historians conference totals \$368.40, which is \$57 more than the remaining balance.	\$625.00	\$314.00	\$625.00	\$700.00
A7510-4050	Telephone Operating Expense	\$180.00	\$81.18	\$180.00	\$180.00
A7510-4490	Membership Dues, Books & Periodicals Ancestry.com subscription. Memberships: APHNYS, Southern Tier Genealogical Society, Archives Partnership, Broome County Historical Society, Susquehanna County Historical Society, Tioga County Historical Society, PAST, and NYS Historical Society. Vestal yearbook and other source books for office.	\$700.00	\$513.95	\$700.00	\$700.00
Totals		\$8865.17		\$8865.17	\$5430.00

Capital Needs: My Biz-Hub copier that was purchased in 2005 was projected for replacement in the 2017 capital plan.

Budget Strategy

If you find there is no current budget and the response to your requests for a department budget are not showing promise, consider asking:

- ◆ What would justify a department budget?
- ◆ Would they agree to providing funds on a project by project basis?
- ◆ Are there other sources to fund your projects?
- ◆ Will they pay for your APHNYS expenses?

When it Comes to Justifying a Budget

Most munis rely on the Historian to tell them what they've accomplished. Don't be shy! Use that to your advantage by reporting what you do and how much time it takes.

- ◆ Keep a daily log of what you do; one sentence per item. The log can be used to prepare a simple monthly or quarterly report to your appointing officer. It can then be used again in preparing your annual report. For example: "Presented *One Room Schools* to 64 fourth graders." "Wrote newspaper article about Maples Stock farm"
- ◆ Track the number of hours you work at the office, giving presentations, working with students, and researching outside the office.
- ◆ Take pictures of displays and activities and ask someone to take a photo of you during a presentation or beside a display.
- ◆ If possible, have your presentations or school interaction videoed.
- ◆ Keep a binder of articles you've written.
- ◆ Keep track of the number of people at every presentation you give
- ◆ Keep all thank-you notes and emails.
- ◆ Document your goals and accomplishments.
- ◆ Keep a visitor's log to show how many people visit your office and for what purpose.

Use this information to demonstrate what you have done; the thank you notes show how you are appreciated. This type of information will help you justify a budget in the next budget cycle.

Note: See the **Reports** topic for examples of Monthly and Annual Reports.

Encumbrances

Unused money in your budget at the end of the fiscal year does **not** automatically roll to the next year. If you don't use it, you lose it! If you make a purchase at the end of the year that won't be billed until the next year, you need to encumber the money.

For example, you have \$500 in your current budget to purchase a file cabinet that was ordered in the middle of December 2017. The item and the bill may not be received until January of 2018. To carry that \$500 into the next fiscal year, you need to "encumber" it which is done by filling out a form. If you have this situation, work with your comptroller to fill out the paperwork before the end of December.

Remember: If you do not encumber the 2017 funds before the end of December, that money will go back into the general fund and the bill will be paid from funds in your 2018 budget.