

GPSS Funding Policies

(Organization, Discretionary, Volunteer, Joint Programming, & Conference Travel)

I. Different Types of Funds Available

A. Organization Fund

This fund contains allocations for different departments and is allocated based on enrollment numbers. Half of the allocation is for the Fall term, while the remaining half is for the Spring term. Requests for these funds must follow the request process as outlined in Section VI, Part B. There is no formal approval process for using these funds, and organizations are responsible for managing their use of these funds.

B. Joint Programming Fund

This fund promotes inter-school and campus-wide academic and social events. To qualify an event for this fund, at least two **different** organizations must co-sponsor the event with their own organization funds. For additional information, please refer to Part II, Section D. Requests for these funds must follow the request process as outlined in Section VI, Part A. The request will be approved according to the approval process as outlined in Section VII.

C. Discretionary Fund

This fund promotes and funds non-GPSS events. To qualify for funds, the relevance to graduate and professional students must be justified. Requests for these funds must follow the request process as outlined in Section VI, Part A. The request will be approved according to the approval process as outlined in Section VII.

D. Volunteer Fund

This fund promotes and funds community-oriented, volunteer, and philanthropic events and programs for both individuals and organizations. **These funds are not meant to be used as a contribution to a fundraising campaign or event.** Requests for these funds must follow the request process as outlined in Section VI, Part A. The request will be approved according to the approval process as outlined in Section VII.

E. Conference Travel Fund*

This fund promotes and funds graduate students who present original work at professional conferences. This is the only fund operating in a reimbursement manner. There is a maximum reimbursement amount of \$500/year which cannot exceed a maximum amount of \$1500 per individual during their lifetime at USC. Please refer to the Travel Grant Form available in the GPSS office.

II. Eligibility

Please refer to the GPSS website at www.usc.edu/org/gpss/ for further explanation of the recognition process and financing approval.

A. Recognized Groups

1. **Student Organizations:** USC Recognition only
 - An example of a Student Organization is the Society of Women Engineers
2. **Graduate Umbrella Organizations (organizations with Full Board representation):** USC Recognition and GPSS Financing Approval
 - An example of a Graduate Umbrella Organization is the Engineering Graduate Student Association

B. Eligible Events

1. Conferences, seminars, retreats, workshops, recognition, social events, philanthropic events, and networking events are at the discretion of the GPSS Executive Board or GPSS Full Board.
2. Only planned programs with detailed cost breakdowns and vendor quotes will be considered.
3. Only USC approved vendors can be used. Please contact Purchasing for USC approved vendors.
4. Fundraising events are prohibited.
5. Charging admission to a GPSS funded event is prohibited unless admission is used to defray event costs. Also, partners and children of USC graduate students must be treated with USC graduate student standing for admission charging purposes, i.e. if the event is free for USC graduate students, it must also be free for their partners and children.

C. Support

1. Full or partial funding is never guaranteed. Requestors are expected to research and apply for additional funding sources.
2. Funds run out as the year progresses, so it is in your best interest to apply for funds as early as possible.
3. No reimbursements will be accepted or supported except in the case of Conference Travel Funding. Please refer to the Travel Grant Form available in the GPSS office.
4. The maximum amount that can be approved is \$2500 per event. We require that you document that you are seeking additional funding in order to qualify for GPSS funding from discretionary, joint programming, and volunteer accounts. An example of additional funding is funding from your Graduate Umbrella Organization, Department, or School.
5. Funding requests over \$1000 will not be accepted after the deadline prior to the last Full Board meeting of the year. Funding requests less than \$1000 will not be accepted after the deadline prior to the last Executive Board meeting of the year. Meeting schedules can be found on the GPSS website.

D. Co-sponsorship

1. Graduate Umbrella Organizations (organizations with Full Board representation) requesting funding from discretionary, volunteer, or joint programming accounts, must also co-sponsor the event using their own organization funds. The co-sponsorship must be a minimum of \$25.

E. Items that will not be funded

1. Alcoholic beverages
2. T-shirts – unless vital to the event
3. Any miscellaneous amounts
4. Reimbursements

III. Obligations of the Graduate Umbrella Organization/ Student Organizations and Funding Source

A. Graduate Umbrella Organization/ Student Organizations

1. Communicate all pertinent information between the GPSS Full or Executive Board and the organization and/or other applicants.
2. Collect and disseminate all paperwork, methods of payment, and any other important materials for the organization or applicants.
3. Support and promote your event by having a student representative from the organization applying for funds attend the Full Board meeting when the proposal will be discussed (only for requests > \$1,000). This person must have prior approval from the Finance Chair to speak at the meeting. Persons who show up at a meeting without an appointment will be denied the opportunity to speak. **If a representative is not present, the funding request will not be considered.**

4. Ensure that the logos of all funding sources are prominently displayed on all publications and promotional materials printed after the funding is approved. Also, one copy of advertising materials must be submitted to both the Public Relations Chair and the Communication Chair
5. Advertise admission charges for events clearly. The admission amount must be clearly advertised on all publication and promotional materials.
6. Submit all receipts and invoices no later than 2 weeks after the event occurs. Receipts and invoices received after this deadline may not be funded.
7. Return any unused funds to the funding source for a particular event. Unused funds may not be carried forward by the organization for use in future events and must be returned to the funding source(s).
8. Adhere to funding guidelines. If guidelines are not followed, funding may be withheld.
9. Document that you are seeking additional funding in order to qualify for GPSS funding from discretionary, joint programming, and volunteer accounts. An example of additional funding is funding from your Graduate Umbrella Organization, Department, or School.
10. Remit total funding amount to GPSS if guidelines set forth by the Full Board or the Executive Board are not adhered to by Graduate Umbrella Organizations or Student Organizations.

B. GPSS Finance Committee

1. Communicate with the Graduate Umbrella Organizations/ Student Organizations in a timely manner.
2. Make the student Graduate Umbrella Organization/ Student Organization aware of its funding status as well as any conditional requirements as soon as possible.
3. Complete all necessary paperwork on time and in accordance with University Policies.
4. Finance committee will not judge the validity of a program solely based on its size or number of people that could realistically be expected to attend the program.
5. The finance committee reserves the right to reject, fully fund, or partially fund any application.

IV. Timeline

A. For Full Board Proposals

1. Allow at least 5 weeks for the approval process and generation of funds.

B. For Executive Board Proposals

1. Allow at least 3 weeks for the approval process and generation of funds.

V. Required Documentation

A. Before Approval:

1. Completed budget proposal.
2. Complete a total line item budget with proposed GPSS Funded items identified.
3. Obtain vendor quotes including vendor codes.
4. Complete and return the Student Activities Expense Request (SAER) Form.

B. After Approval:

1. If funding is in the form of a purchase order, pick up the purchase order from the GPSS office.
2. Collect and submit all original invoices and receipts from all vendors.
3. E-mail Communications Chair, Public Relations Chair, Social Programming Chair, and Community Service Chair (whichever is/are appropriate) details of the event to be added to GPSS website and advertisements.

VI. How to Request Funds:

A. For Discretionary, Volunteer, Joint Programming Funds:

1. Completely fill out the **GPSS Budget Proposal Form** for the appropriate year and the **Student Activities Expense Report (SAER)**.
2. Submit these forms to the GPSS office (STU 106) on or before the appropriate deadline.
3. Upon approval, a confirmation email will be sent to the requestor by the Finance Chair detailing the amount of funding approved.

B. For Organization Funds:

1. Completely fill out the **GPSS Budget Proposal Form** for the appropriate year and the **Student Activities Expense Report (SAER)**.
2. Submit both forms to the GPSS office (STU 106) at least 3 weeks prior to the event for Executive Board voting and 5 weeks prior to the event for Full Board voting..

VII. Fund Approval Process for Discretionary, Volunteer, Joint Programming Funds:

A. For fund requests that are LESS THAN \$1,000:

1. The Finance Committee will review requests and advise the Executive Board of their recommendation.
2. The Executive Board will review the requests and vote based on a simple majority. Decisions are made at each meeting of the Executive Board.

B. For fund requests of \$1,000 or MORE:

1. The Finance Committee will review requests and advise the Full Board of their recommendation.
2. The Full Board will vote on these requests based on a simple majority. Decisions are only made once per month at the Full Board meeting.

**The guidelines outlined in this policy do not apply to the Conference Travel Fund. Please refer to the Conference Travel Application for information regarding this funding source.*