Starting a JGS: BUILDING A BUDGET
By Susan Weinberg Minnesota Jewish Genealogical Society (2022)

Building a Starting Budget

Revenue
How do you build a budget for a JGS before you know what you'll have as revenue? We need to make some assumptions for starters. Many JGSes have an individual membership around $25 and household memberships around $35. Let's assume you get 25 members initially and of those 5 are households so account for 10 of your members if you allot 2 members to a household membership. When we do the math, we have $725 to work with.

Over time your membership will grow. If your meetings are open to non-members, you may want to ask them for a contribution of $5 for each meeting they attend. That will also generate additional revenue and if they like what they see, they may become members. You may have benefactors who donate $100 or more. Let's assume two people do that so you have $925 of revenue in total.

Expenses
So what expenses are you likely to have?

Zoom and Websites
In recent years, JGS's have evolved to doing more of their activities on-line. You will want a Zoom Pro account and a website. Having a website means you will need a web address ("URL") and website hosting. Some hosting companies provide tools with which you can build your own website, or you may draw on a volunteer to build it.

Keep in mind that a budget is typically just for one year, but you can get better pricing on some of your expenditures for your website and URL by paying for several years. That means you will not have a recurring expense the next year, but you may need to pay more cash up front.

Program Expenses /Speakers
Zoom is the most affordable way to bring speakers in. For a local speaker you may still want a space and perhaps choose to do a hybrid meeting or record the session to make available later for those who could not attend in person. Many spaces are available for free. Libraries generally will provide space for meetings. Synagogues or JCCs might be willing to make space available and elder facilities are also an option. If you have a Jewish elder facility you may want to arrange that their residents can attend for free.

Speakers are critical to your programming. Generally, honorariums are around $100, although some may request more. Initially you will want to find speakers among people in your community. Some may offer a presentation for free. Perhaps some of your founding members would have interest in presenting. If you want to do more meetings without incurring additional cost, you can make them informal gatherings of your members to share what they are working on.

Other Expenses
There will be other expenses as well. For example, IAJGS dues which are $0.50 per member with a minimum of $18. Your JGS may need printed materials, postage, and other office supplies as well. Don't forget, on many of your expenses, you may be able to get taxes waived as a non-profit organization.

See the sample budget below as a guide.

Sample Annual Budget
This is a starting budget for a new JGS with 25 members. As you mature you may add more paid speakers, charge a small fee for non-members, and perhaps seek more benefactor contributions. Some JGSes make use of management software and its associated costs. The budget is not static over time but represents your programming decisions.

REVENUE	Number	Ave	Income
Individual memberships	15	$25	$375
Household memberships	10	$35	$350
Contributions / Donations	2	$100	$200
Total Revenue			$925
EXPENSES			
Zoom Pro			$150
Domain name registration			$15
Website hosting			$90
Printing			$200
Supplies			$100
Speakers *	3 paid	100	$300
IAJGS Dues			$18
Total Expense			$873
Net Revenue less Expense			$52

*This assumes you have four speakers who are contributing their time in addition to three paid speakers at $100 each. To expand your programming while managing your budget, you may choose to offer a smaller honorarium or turn some of your meetings into brick wall discussions drawing on your more experienced members without a fee. Some groups meet monthly, others less frequently. You need to consider your programming in order to budget appropriately.