



## BUDGET 101

One of my favorite moments as executive director so far happened on one of my first days in the office. And believe it or not, it happened at a budget meeting.

I was sitting with the State Bar of Texas Board of Director's Budget Committee on December 7 in the Texas Law Center's boardroom. One by one, our department heads came before the committee to justify their spending plans and revenue projections for 2018-2019.

The staff had spent months carefully preparing their budgets and subjecting them to the scrutiny of our finance division just to get to this point. Now it was the budget committee's turn to ask questions.

Presenting in this room can be intimidating, but the staff was prepared, knowledgeable, and passionate about their jobs—whether it's providing direct services to members through TexasBarCLE or the Law Practice Resources Division, expanding access to justice through the Legal Access Division, or protecting the public through the Office of Chief Disciplinary Counsel.

Then the moment came: When the presentations concluded, President Tom Vick said he wished every Texas lawyer could have been in the room to witness our staff's professionalism and dedication. For an executive director only a week into his job, I found these words reassuring.

The result of all this effort is the proposed 2018-2019 State Bar budget, which is presented on Pages 182-184 of this month's *Texas Bar Journal*. As President Vick has reported, the proposed general fund budget would reduce overall spending by 5 percent compared to this year while adding money to our reserves—all without affecting member services or cutting existing staff. This was made possible by the hard work of our employees and the board's Budget Committee, led this year by President-elect Joe K. Longley. I applaud their work.

The State Bar budget is directly tied to our strategic plan and mission. Activities supporting two of our core functions—service to members and protection of the public—make up approximately 70 percent of our budget expenditures. To view a breakdown of the budget by strategic plan areas, go to [texasbar.com/budget](http://texasbar.com/budget).

In the interest of transparency, this year we have listed the number of "FTEs"—full-time equivalent positions—next to each department on Page 183 to give you a clearer look at where our staff resources are concentrated. (Please note, though, that the number beside each department on Page 183 represents the department's total budgeted expenses, not just salaries.)

You'll notice there are three budgets listed on Page 182—General Fund, Law Practice Resources Fund, and Special Revenue & Capital Projects Funds—along with a Total Combined Proposed Budget. The general fund is our operating fund, where about 87 percent of our revenues are deposited and from which about 87 percent of our expenditures are paid. The other funds are enterprise and governmental funds, which are separate from the general fund to account for the specific purpose of that fund.

Now, it's your turn to grade our work. You're invited to a public hearing on the proposed budget at 9 a.m. April 3 at the Texas Law Center in Austin. Or you can send questions and comments to Finance Division Director Tracy Jarratt at [tjarratt@texasbar.com](mailto:tjarratt@texasbar.com) or (800) 204-2222, ext. 1481. We welcome your feedback.

### Staff Excellence Award: Karen Peck

As executive director, it's my honor to present the Staff Excellence Award at our quarterly board meetings. At our January meeting, the award went to Accounts Payable Manager Karen Peck. Karen has dedicated her professional life to the State Bar of Texas. This July, she will have worked here for 42 years, which makes her the longest-serving member currently on staff. Even more important: Karen is a standard-setter. Everyone who works with her is inspired to match her quality of work. In this way, she ensures that we consistently follow policy and procedures when paying our bills. Bravo, Karen.

### A Final Word

Although my column this month focuses mostly on staff, the work of the State Bar of Texas could not get done without our dedicated members, who volunteer their time and expertise to the boards, sections, and committees that are this organization's engine. On behalf of the staff, I thank you all for your service.

Sincerely,

### TREY APFFEL

Executive Director, State Bar of Texas  
Editor-in-Chief, *Texas Bar Journal*  
(512) 427-1500  
@ApffelT on Twitter

*Have a question for Trey? Email it to [trey.apffel@texasbar.com](mailto:trey.apffel@texasbar.com) and he may answer it in a future column.*