



## CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND THE FEDERAL BUDGET

### Budget Guide for Researching and Writing Your Fiscal Impact Statement

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#### Letter to E-Congress Representatives:

Dear E-Congress Representative,

The last step in writing your bill is to determine how much it will cost. This is not an easy task, even for members of Congress. The purpose of writing a fiscal impact statement, or budget, for your bill is to determine the hypothetical cost for enacting your legislation. The purpose is not to have you figure out exactly how much money you will need.

This guide will help you determine the budget for your bill. In E-Congress, there are seven possible categories that you can use to decide how much your bill may cost. Using actual numbers and sample bills provided by the United States government, you will examine each category and determine at least three that impact how you will spend money on your legislation. When finished, you can use the subtotals and explanations in each category to complete your Fiscal Impact Statement online. Your teacher may be collecting this handout.

Sincerely,  
*YLI E-Congress Staff*

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#### STEP 1: Examine General Information on the Federal Budget and Criminal Justice

Numbers below from [2024 President's Report](#)

Year	Amount (in trillions)
2022	\$6,273,000,000,000
2023	\$6,372,000,000,000
2024	\$6,883,000,000,000

**Federal Budget Totals** are numbers that show the total amount the federal government spent (or thinks it might spend) in the years 2022, 2023, and 2024. These numbers are in trillions!

**Criminal Justice Issues** totals are numbers that show how much money the federal government spent, or thinks it might spend, in the years 2023 and 2024 for departments that supervise programs related to criminal justice.

Department	Agency	Year	Amount	Website/Resource
Department of Justice		2023	\$37,484,908,000	<a href="#">United States Department of Justice FY 2024 Report</a> pp. 5 & 13
		2024	\$38,920,344,000	
	FBI*	2024	\$11,386,015,000	<a href="#">Federal Bureau of Investigation — FY 2024 Report</a> pp. 4
	DEA*	2024	\$3,282,643,000	<a href="#">Drug Enforcement Agency — FY 2024 Report</a> pp. 3

	ATF*	2024	\$1,875,466,000	<a href="#">Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives — FY 2024 Report</a> pp. 3
	LEP	2024	\$ 2,400,000,000	<a href="#">State/Local Law Enforcement Programs - FY 2024 Report</a> pp. 2
Department of Treasury		2023	\$16,414,297,000	<a href="#">United States Department of Treasury — FY 2024 Report</a> pp. 6
		2024	\$20,373,824,000	
	ONDCP*	2024	\$461,530,000	<a href="#">Office of National Drug Control Policy FY 2024 Report</a> pp. 5
Department of Homeland Security		2023	\$60,684,000,000	<a href="#">Department of Homeland Security FY 2024 Report</a> pp. 1
		2024	\$60,378,624,000	

\* Denotes an agency within a department that receives a specific amount of that department's overall budget. Not all agencies are listed.

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## STEP 2: Consider the General Cost of a Real Piece of Legislation

A good price range for a criminal justice bill is \$3,000,000 to \$10,000,000.

**Bill S. 2389**, "Protecting Consumer Phone Records Act," proposed prohibiting the obtaining or selling of "personal information of telecommunications customers—including phone records—without the customer's consent." The bill also wanted to require telecommunications carriers to take precautions to safeguard customers' personal information and to notify customers whenever there is a breach in the security of their information. As far as marketing for this bill, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) would conduct an outreach campaign to educate consumers of the security issues involving telecommunications information. This bill was estimated to "cost less than \$500,000 in 2006 and about \$10 million over the 2007-2011 period."

To view this bill visit: <http://thomas.loc.gov/> and search for bill number S. 2389.

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## Step 3: Determine the Potential Cost of Your Legislation

### Part 1: Find similar programs that already exist

Conduct a web search by typing key words from your bill into an internet search engine like Google then answer the questions that follow. Find at least three similar government programs (either state or federal) that already exist. Can you find a recent budget for this program online? Can you contact this agency or program to ask what their current budget is?

Name of Program	State/federal (IF STATE, NAME THE STATE)	Budget Amount, Year	Contact Information

Based on your review of the information below, explain which federal department or program might be responsible for carrying out the provisions of your bill.

## Part 2: Determine which fiscal categories best apply to your bill

The Fiscal Impact Statement has seven categories. Each one is related to a cost that may be associated with your bill. Under the description of each category, we have research suggestions to help you come up with an accurate amount. You may also find it helpful to revisit some of the websites you used during the Research Phase of E-Congress. You must determine at least three categories that apply to your bill.

### 1) EQUIPMENT

For this category, think about any specific machinery or electronics that would be necessary to put your bill into action. For example, will the government need to purchase new computers or medical supplies with your legislation? Does it involve a project that uses heavy machinery? How much of this equipment will you need in order to have enough for those affected by your bill?

Research Suggestion: Determine the type of equipment needed and look up the cost of each piece of machinery/technology/medical instrument on-line. Multiply the quantity needed by the cost.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED TO ENACT MY BILL	HOW EQUIPMENT WILL BE USED	ESTIMATED COST	EXPLANATION OF COST

**TOTAL EQUIPMENT COST:** \_\_\_\_\_

## 2) MARKETING

*All legislation must include marketing costs.* Because bills that pass Congress have benefits and penalties associated with them, the government needs to inform the public. For example, if you are creating a penalty for driving without a seat belt, how will you let people know before your bill goes into effect?

Research Suggestion: A marketing campaign for a national audience costs a minimum of \$1,000,000.00. Think about how you will spread information to the states that are impacted by your bill. Will you send flyers? How many? How much do they cost to print? How much would it cost to run a 30 second ad on local television stations around the country? Call local printers, newspapers, and TV stations to ask for help.

MY MARKETING TACTICS	HOW THEY WILL BE EFFECTIVE	ESTIMATED COST	EXPLANATION OF COST

**TOTAL MARKETING COST:** \_\_\_\_\_

## 3) LABOR

For this category, think about the people needed to make your bill a reality. Will the federal government hire new employees to help implement your bill? What types of employees will you need? Will you need professionals, part-time students or volunteers?

Research Suggestion: Determine how many people the federal government will need to hire around the country and multiply that by their estimated salaries. You may also want to try the Salary Wizard tool at [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com)

TYPE OF STAFF NEEDED TO ENACT MY BILL	NUMBER OF STAFF MEMBERS NEEDED	ESTIMATED ANNUAL SALARY	EXPLANATION OF SALARY

**TOTAL LABOR COST:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4) ENERGY

For this category, consider the extra energy costs of putting your bill into action. For example, will you need fuel to operate heavy machinery? Do you need some other form of power or energy resources for additional facilities or equipment in order to accomplish the goals in your bill?

Research Suggestion: Research the price of the fuel that you will use and multiply that cost by the amount that you think the government will need to complete the job.

ENERGY NEED FOR MY BILL	EXPLANATION OF ENERGY NEED	ESTIMATED ENERGY EXPENSE	EXPLANATION OF ENERGY EXPENSE

**TOTAL ENERGY COST:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### 5) TRANSPORTATION

Do you need to purchase new vehicles in order to accomplish your goals? Do employees need to travel around the country to conduct seminars?

Research Suggestion: Consider the types and quantity of vehicles you will need to purchase as well as the frequency of travel when estimating this cost.

TRANSPORTATION NECESSARY FOR MY BILL	EXPLANATION OF TRANSPORTATION NEED	ESTIMATED TRANSPORTATION EXPENSE	EXPLANATION OF TRANSPORTATION EXPENSE

**TOTAL TRANSPORTATION COST:** \_\_\_\_\_

## 6) EDUCATION

Remember that the passage of a new bill means that a lot of people will probably need special training to be able to enforce it. Does your bill involve workshops or seminars around the country? Do you need to educate a pool of workers about the program before they begin managing it? Do people need to take college classes in order to implement your goals?

Research Suggestion: Find out how much it costs to take a class at your local community college.

EDUCATION NECESSARY FOR MY BILL	EXPLANATION OF EDUCATION NEED	ESTIMATED COST OF EDUCATION	EXPLANATION OF EDUCATIONAL COST

**TOTAL EDUCATION COST:** \_\_\_\_\_

## 7) LEGAL

You need to consider the potential legal costs associated with your bill, especially if it is possible that your bill could face a challenge to its constitutionality. For example, in a California lawsuit over abortion (*Bernardo v. Planned Parenthood*), the legal costs incurred by just one side reached \$130,000.00. This was a case heard in state court – had this been in federal court, the costs would have been much higher! Though this was a case between two private parties and did not involve a government agency, costs involving the government are comparable. It is especially likely that bills on the following topics *could* face legal challenges: civil liberties, civil rights, gun control, reproductive and personal rights, and values and American society.

Research Suggestion: According to [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com), the median annual salary for an associate general counsel (a high ranking lawyer) in Washington, DC, is \$240,540. How much do others in the legal field, such as lawyers and paralegals, earn? Given that a court case can take years to resolve and involve a team of lawyers, estimate the potential cost of defending your bill.

TYPES OF LEGAL PROFESSIONALS NEEDED	DESCRIPTION OF TYPICAL DUTIES	ESTIMATED ANNUAL SALARY	EXPLANATION OF SALARY

**TOTAL LEGAL COST:** \_\_\_\_\_

**8) OTHER**

This category is for unique legislation that has financial needs in addition to the ones mentioned above. Be specific in your description of these costs in order to provide a more accurate total.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS NEEDED FOR MY BILL	EXPLANATION OF ITEM	ESTIMATED COST OF ITEM	EXPLANATION OF COST

**TOTAL ADDITIONAL COSTS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL ESTIMATED COST OF LEGISLATION:**

**\$** \_\_\_\_\_

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Step 4: Transfer your information to your bill online. When finished, submit it to your teacher for review. Don't forget to remind your teacher that your bill is ready to review!