

Putting Your Money Where Your Mouth Is

By: Dr. Jill Bella

Note: This resource is part of a self-reflection series called “Points to Ponder.” Read the rest of the series [here](#).

According to Google, the phrase *put your money where your mouth is* means “to take action in support of one’s statement or opinions.” If you talk about the importance continuous learning, have *you* put your program’s money where your mouth is and demonstrated that within your policies and budgeting practices? It has been said that a budget is a reflection of a program’s values and priorities—if you truly value professional development, it will be reflected in the budget (as well as your policies).

Item 5 in the [Program Administration Scale](#) (PAS), considers professional development as a benefit. At the good and excellent levels an “employer provides [a specific dollar amount or more] per year to all employees to pay for or reimburse professional development expenses.” This “professional development benefit gives employees financial support to access professional development of their own choosing. Supervisor approval may be required.” The specific dollar amount is \$100 at the good (5) level and \$200 at the excellent (7) level. Like most benefits, guaranteeing professional development funds to each employee is costly and means determining priorities and making financial decisions that impact your bottom line. However, assigning a specific dollar amount to each staff member demonstrates transparency and fairness. A policy stating the specific dollar amount ensures that funds are allocated for this benefit and indicates that professional development is valued.

Points to Ponder

Do you value professional development in your program? If so, take a look at your budget and consider whether it reflects professional development as a value. If you do offer a specific dollar amount to each employee, is there any limitation or restriction (e.g., must work for the program for at least one year, only available to full-time staff, or only for conferences)? Restrictions such as requiring supervisor approval help ensure professional development is appropriate or aligns with individual goals. If there is a restriction(s), reflect on the purpose and whether or not is necessary.

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