

# Fiscal Notes

What is a fiscal note?

A fiscal note is an objective estimate of the fiscal impact a bill would have to Western if it becomes law to help legislators, legislative staff, lobbyists, journalists, and the public evaluate a bill.

Where do requests come from?

When a bill is scheduled for a hearing, the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) in Olympia sends fiscal note requests to Western's Budget Office. Most fiscal note requests are made during the WA state legislative session which starts the second Monday of January and is 60 days long in even-numbered years and 105 days long in odd-numbered years.

What is the process for completing a fiscal note?

The Budget Office (tBO) has primary responsibility for responding to a fiscal note. Once a request is received, tBO has 72 hours to respond. This tight turnaround is to ensure that OFM has time to review the fiscal note prior to distributing it to legislative aides.

tBO staff analyze the proposed bill to determine which areas of campus would be affected if it were passed into law. While staff in tBO complete a fiscal note, they often need information from subject matter experts across campus. They will reach out to people in offices across campus to collect specifics needed for them to fill out the fiscal note.

When you receive a request for information here are a few things to keep in mind:

- **Fast** – Western has only 72 hours to respond to OFM, which means Budget Office staff need details from subject matter experts well before that deadline so they have time to compile all the data they receive back, make any additional calculations, and submit before the deadline. Please make note of the deadline from tBO when you receive a request for information.
- **Objective** – Fiscal notes do not look at the merits of a bill. The goal is to clearly and objectively state what the costs and revenues would be if the bill were passed into law – nothing else.
- **Brief** – Given the narrow scope of a fiscal note and the limited time available fiscal notes are short.
- **Comprehensive** - When thinking about the possible fiscal impact of a bill be sure to consider all program costs including staff salary and benefits, equipment, space, revenue streams, and other long-term costs.
- **Estimate** – Fiscal notes are not expected to be absolutely precise, but they do need to be the best estimate of revenue and costs.

If you have questions about any fiscal note request for information you can reach out to the Budget Office staff person who sent you the request – they will be happy to help clarify so you can quickly respond.

More information, including a staff list and contact info is available here: <https://budgetoffice.wvu.edu/>