

Sample Oxford House Budget

Here are some friendly suggestions for determining your House Budget. Hopefully you will follow these guidelines so you won't have to learn the hard way like some of us did. Let's say this budget below is for a 7 bedroom, 2 bath house. After estimating the monthly expenses, you'll need to determine how many members, and at what equal expense share you will need in order to make ends meet. In this case your expenses total nearly \$3,000 so an easy figure to determine would be 10 members at \$300 each. That means 3 of the rooms would have to be shared. Perhaps you can only share two rooms; you would need \$333 per member to meet that \$3,000 mark; \$375 with 8 members and nearly \$430 to have single rooms all around.

- With any House Budget it is better to be safe than sorry.
- Always estimate your monthly bills on the high end and add a substantial cushion to your budget just in case.
- Once the house has gone through the high-usage months an actual budget may be derived by adding up all the actual bills and equal expense shares or expenditures may be adjusted accordingly. Just don't sell yourselves short.
- If you find that your expenses

Expense or Utility	Monthly cost (Estimated for high-usage months)
Rent	1,500
Loan	170
Electricity	200
Water/Sewer	150
Natural Gas	200
Oil	N/A
Trash	40
Phone	60
Cable	100
Internet	50
Supplies	120
Dues (Chapter)	80
Contribution (National)	50
Newspaper	25
Cushion	300
Total:	\$3,042

- are greater than your income (or perhaps just too close for comfort) you must increase your equal expense share or make room for another member to share in the expenses. This may mean sharing the biggest room (or rooms) in the house, which may not be a popular move with the person occupying that room, but you have to do what is best for the house, not the individual.
- As a rule of thumb, the cushion should at least be equal to one member's monthly share of expenses.
- Always take escalator clauses of the lease into consideration when preparing a budget. Either increase your cushion to cover all expenses at the end of the lease's term, or figure in a step increase in equal expense shares of the members and document it very clearly so it gets implemented in years two, three, etc.
- Always plan ahead for potential vacancies. Your house should be financially viable even with one vacancy, but in the case of two or more vacancies you will need to either have a lot of money in savings or increase the monthly equal expense share per member to at least cover all expenses.
- Never let vacancies deplete your checking or savings accounts. Dig deep into your pockets to pay the house bills without operating at a deficit. This is the real world, and when you lose a roommate the others have to pitch in a little more money each month until they find a new one.

Good luck and remember... The needs of the many always outweigh the needs of the few, and self-supporting sometimes means being selfless in the face of sacrifice.