

2026 LiRN Grant Request Package Instructions and Information

LiRN is funded through a levy placed on lawyer licence fees by the Law Society of Ontario and is accountable for ensuring that the funds are used as intended: to provide law library services and programs to lawyers in Ontario. We are also charged with creating guidelines, standards, policies and priorities for the network. To do so, LiRN must have a solid understanding of how grant moneys are spent. This requires both grant applications and regular financial reporting.

Grant Request Package

Your Grant Request Package submission must include the following:

- Signed [2026 Grant Request Form](#)
- Grant Application Supporting Documentation, including:
 - A budget in the [appropriate template](#)
 - Any approved Business Cases / Excess Fund Balance spending proposals in the [appropriate template](#)

Please note: LiRN's funding is not approved until after we submit our budget. It is therefore not possible to guarantee the grant amount requested will be available even if it is supported by the required budget and business cases.

Grant Request Form

The [2026 Grant Request Form](#) is new and should be signed by the Association. It sets out important information up front, giving LiRN an easier and more accurate way to collect and compile the necessary information. It confirms the Association's intent and LiRN's expectation that guidelines, standards, and policies will be followed. And it clarifies LiRN's expectations regarding reallocation of grant funds within the budget.

Submitted budgets propose that grant funds will be spent in the following categories: Collections, Payroll Expenses, Operating Expenses, and Capital Expenses.

Grant funds should generally be spent in these categories as proposed in the budget. However, LiRN recognizes that flexibility is required to operate libraries efficiently and effectively. Associations may re-allocate the higher of 10% or \$1,000 from any one budget category to another. Re-allocations greater than this should be discussed with LiRN in advance.

Budget Template

Grant requests should be supported by a budget in the [appropriate template](#). The budget should reflect all anticipated costs for the upcoming year insofar as possible. (Should an unanticipated expense come up during the year, contact the Managing Director to discuss your request for additional funding and business case.)

The chart below may be helpful in developing your budget. It sets out the budget categories and examples of considerations when budgeting for that category.

Budgets must be submitted using the [appropriate template](#). The [Chart of Accounts](#) is useful in determining which items fall under which categories of the budget. This [2026 Budget Information PowerPoint](#) will walk you through the budget template.

Budget Category	Considerations
Collections	This includes electronic subscriptions, including electronic texts. Take into consideration the OCLA's Core Titles List and the Collection Development and Maintenance Policy .
Payroll Expenses	Consider any planned salary adjustments and upcoming staffing changes.
Operating Expenses	These are expenses required for day-to-day operations – think printer paper and pens, telephone and internet, accounting software, leases on copiers (as opposed to purchased copiers, which fall under capital expenses). Include here any professional development expenses you anticipate for the upcoming year. This memo provides additional detail about PD.
Capital Expenses	These tend to be one-off purchase (although the cost may be amortized over several years. Things such as photocopiers that need to be replaced (check out LiRN's Ricoh all-in-one copier catalogue to budget and purchase/licence).

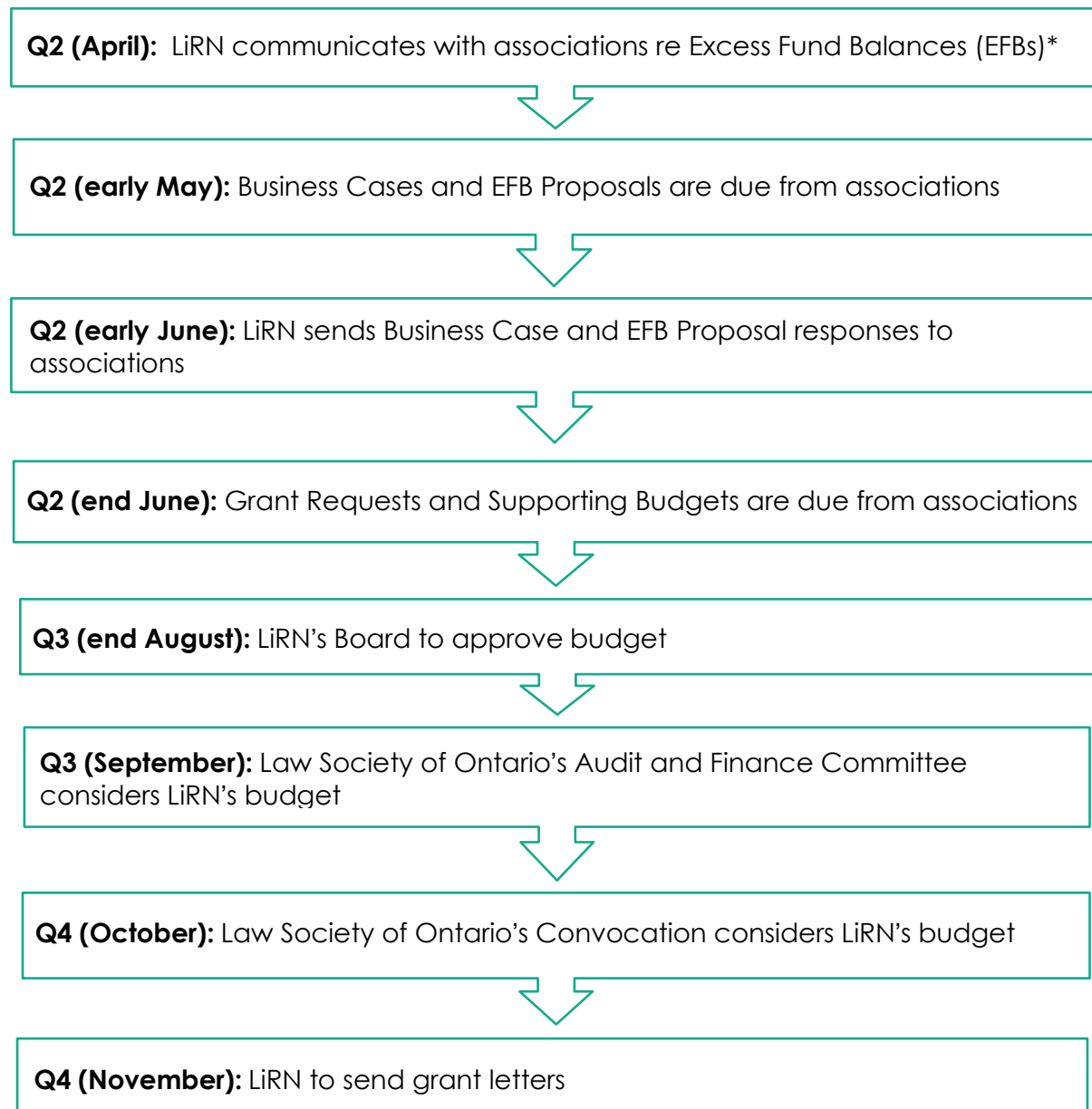
Business Cases

Business cases should be submitted using this [template](#) and are required in the following circumstances:

- Funding for capital expenses
- Library Technician Program Bursaries
- The total grant request has increased by 6% or more from the previous year.
- The Association is making a request to use part or all of their Excess Fund Balance (EFB).

Business cases are due prior to the budget due date to make it easier to adjust the ultimate budget after a decision on the business case is made, if any adjustment is necessary. The Business Case should be signed.

Budget Submission Process



*EFBs are calculated from the required financial reports provided by an Association for the library; delays in receiving financial reports can impact the timing of an Associations EFB notification.

Required Financial Reporting

LiRN's grant from the Law Society of Ontario is a restricted fund that must be used for its purposes as set out in LSO By-Law 13 (including our operations and providing Law Associations funding to pay for the operation of libraries). The grants LiRN provides to Law Associations are also restricted funds that must be used for library purposes.

Law Associations are accountable to LiRN for how grant moneys are spent and LiRN is accountable to the LSO in turn. In accordance with advice from LiRN's Treasurer, our auditor and accounting best practices for non-profits, LiRN requires quarterly financial reports to meet this obligation, as set out in the [Grant Administration Policy](#).

- Trial Balance Reports, in Microsoft Excel and using the most current Chart of Accounts
- Budget to Actual Reports, in Microsoft Excel

Please note that these reports may be combined into one document if your accounting software permits, or submitted separately.

Due dates—and other LiRN events—can be found on the [events page](#) on our website.

Financial Reporting Due Dates

Date	Report
January 28, 2025	Trial Balances for Q4 2024
April 28, 2025	Trial Balances / Budget to Actual for Q1 2025
July 28, 2025	Trial Balances / Budget to Actual for Q2 2025
October 28, 2025	Trial Balances / Budget to Actual for Q3 2025
January 28, 2026	Trial Balances / Budget to Actual for Q4 2025

Additional Information

Accounting Questions

Accounting questions should be directed to accounting@lirn.ca for consideration by LiRN's accountants.

The Chart of Accounts

The [Chart of Accounts \(COA\)](#) sets out the GL (General Ledger) account numbers used in the network library system of accounting. All libraries must use the same standard set of accounts, using the same set of account numbers. Consistency across the network is important for accurate accounting and reporting and allows LiRN to track trends in spending that can help provide data supporting LiRN's budget requests to its funder. The current COA was introduced in 2023. It is our expectation that all Associations use the current COA.

Please note that there is one change to the COA:

4320	Miscellaneous Revenue	Originally: Record special or extraordinary funding received from LiRN. Changed to: This figure reflects funding received from LiRN's Capital Fund, separate and apart from the quarterly grant payments.
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This change is to reflect more specifically the type of special/extraordinary funding LiRN may provide.

Excess Fund Balances (EFBs)

A fund balance develops when grant funding received in a budget year exceeds spending on operating the library. LiRN's Board of Directors approved a [Grant Administration Policy \(GAP\)](#) in 2021 on the advice of its auditor, which caps the amount of fund balance an association can hold for library purposes at 10% of their annual grant from LiRN.

Pre-2022 EFB Recovery

In 2022, LiRN implemented the GAP and put in place a three-year process to recover EFBs accumulated prior to 2022. Associations were given the opportunity to present a proposal and business case for use of the accumulated funds in accordance with the GAP. The EFBs are being recovered over a three-year period using following formula:

- 30% in 2023
- 35% in 2024
- 35% in 2025

Ongoing EFB Recovery

In 2023, LiRN's Board approved an ongoing annual process for recovering EFBs where a fund balance hits the 10% threshold at the end of a given year:

- Identify EFB for the previous year reported in Association financial reports;
- Provide an opportunity for Associations to submit proposals and business cases for use of EFBs; and
- Deduct EFB amounts remaining after approved proposals from the grant.

EFB Calculation

FUND BALANCE (The library's revenue less the library's expenses as reported in the trial balances submitted by Associations. This is a cumulative total.)

MINUS 10% of Current Year's Grant

EQUALS EFB

EFBs that were accumulated prior to 2022 are already subject to the "pre-2022" recovery process described above. 2025 is the final year for that process.

Where a fund balance has gone over the 10% threshold in a fiscal year after 2022, it is subject to the "ongoing" recovery process described above.

If, for example, an Association has a pre-2022 amount in the recovery process and has new accumulations, the existing EFB continues in the pre-2022 process and the new accumulation is subject to the ongoing process.

Proposals for EFB Recovery

Going forward, LiRN will calculate and notify Associations of any EFB by the beginning of the second quarter. Proposals for use of EFBs will be part of the budget process, with business cases for these proposals due at the same time as other business cases required for the budget process.