

LeadingAge[®] Virginia
LeadingAge[®] Kansas

Making Sense of the Budget
**SKILLS FOR LEADERS
AT EVERY LEVEL**

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM CST
FEB 18, MAR 4, MAR 25

4.5 ADMIN CE

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FOUNDER AND MANAGING PARTNER

LeadSpark

About the Series:

Budgeting is part of leadership, and we know it can feel intimidating. But it doesn't have to.

If you want a clearer understanding of how decisions are made, how budgets are built, and how to use your numbers to lead more confidently, this series is for you.

Across three virtual sessions, we'll guide you through understanding your organization's business model, creating a budget grounded in real goals, and managing that budget throughout the year. You'll walk away with practical tools, clearer expectations, and the confidence to participate fully in conversations that shape your organization's future.

Following this series, you will be able to:

- Understand how your organization's business model shapes decisions and expectations, and see clearly how your role fits into that larger picture.
- Translate organizational goals into practical budget needs for your department or area of responsibility.
- Participate confidently in the annual budget process, knowing what's expected at each step and how leaders contribute.
- Use your budget as a year-round leadership tool to monitor performance, understand variances, and make informed decisions.
- Communicate budget needs and results clearly, including when making the case for new resources or changes.

Individual session information is detailed on the following page.

The banner features the LeadingAge Virginia and Kansas logos on the left. The main title is "Making Sense of the Budget SKILLS FOR LEADERS AT EVERY LEVEL". The dates and times are "1:00 PM - 2:30 PM CST FEB 18, MAR 4, MAR 25". A calendar icon is next to the dates. Below the dates is "4.5 ADMIN CE" with a green checkmark icon. On the right is a circular portrait of Susan Rucker, with her name and title "SUSAN RUCKER FOUNDER AND MANAGING PARTNER" below it. The LeadSpark logo is at the bottom right.

SESSION 1:

February 18, 2026 | 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm CST | 1.5 Admin CE

Understanding Business Models and Your Role in Budgeting

Before you try to build or manage a budget, you need to understand the business objectives of your organization. In fact, you need to understand the business goals of the organization and how they impact what you as a leader need to do over the upcoming year. In this session, we will talk about the concept of a business model, how it applies to organizations, and how organizations can run multiple business models that have unique goals and objectives. We will also look at the business models of departments, and how that impacts the budget planning for a leader's area of responsibility. Finally, we will look at the role of the leader in the annual budget process.

SESSION 2:

March 4, 2026 | 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm CST | 1.5 Admin CE

Creating a Budget: It's a Team Sport

Once you understand the goals of the organization, this understanding needs to be translated into the budget needs for the year. We will discuss the budget process, how it is run, and what the expectations of different levels of leadership are in the process. We will also talk about different types of budgets such as operating and capital budgets, and the differences between a budget and a forecast. We will also look at the concept of a business case to help leaders explain the need for funding for new initiatives or budget needs.

SESSION 3:

March 25, 2026 | 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm CDT | 1.5 Admin CE

Managing the Budget: It's a Year-Round Process

Once the budget is built, it should be used to monitor performance. What does that mean, and how should leaders look at their budgets? We will talk about the role of the leader in understanding and reporting on budget variances, discuss some of the tools that will help in monitoring the budget, and discuss how changes or unexpected results in one part of an organization can influence what is expected from other departments or from other leaders. We will conclude this session with a final summary of the annual budgeting process.