

**BURLINGTON COUNTY  
MUNICIPAL  
JOINT INSURANCE FUND**

**ASSESSMENT ALLOCATION STRATEGY**

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# BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

## BUDGET PROCESS

The BURLCO JIF budget process begins in June each year when the RMCs are asked to update their member **exposures** (e.g. insurable property values, vehicle lists, appropriations, payrolls, etc.). This data is required by the Actuary in order to calculate the **loss fund** demands for the new budget year.

In July, all vendors are invited to submit renewal proposals for the coming Fund Year. The Finance Committee reviews these proposals for acceptance, negotiation, and/or other action. The Finance Committee then makes their recommendation regarding contract renewal to the Executive Committee.

## BUDGET COMPONENTS

The budget consists of three major categories that are described below:

- A. **Loss Funds** - Portion of budget developed by an actuarial review based upon the JIF's aggregate exposures, claims history, and risk factors. Takes into account all costs associated with the payment of members' claims on an accrual basis. The JIF fully funds losses to "Ultimate" expected payout.
- B. **Operating Expenses** - Pays all expenses associated with operating the Fund. Includes all contract vendors such as claims adjustment, attorney, safety, actuary, auditor, etc. and contemplates miscellaneous meeting, administrative, and contingency expenses.
- C. **MEL Assessment** – The JIF belongs to the Municipal Excess Liability Joint Insurance Fund (MEL). The MEL provides excess property, liability and workers compensation coverage beyond the JIF SIR and also provides Public Officials/Employment Practices Liability coverage to individual members. This budget item is developed by the MEL and transmitted to the JIF in November.

## ASSESSMENT ALLOCATION STRATEGY

Once the JIF budget is developed, a formula for allocating individual members' shares must be developed. For an assessment allocation formula to be successful it must be easily understood, easy to administer, and perceived as fair and equitable by the members. The Finance Committee meets each year and establishes the formula that will be used.

The JIF currently uses a loss ratio methodology to allocate the annual budget. Each member's expiring assessment is adjusted by a set percentage that correlates to a range of loss ratios. Loss ratio is defined as the ratio that loss dollars incurred bears to the member loss fund contributions. A three-year average loss ratio (excluding the current year), valued as of June 30<sup>th</sup> of the current year, is used in the formula. Members with lower loss ratios will receive a lower percentage increase than members with higher loss ratios. This percentage will vary each year based upon the percentage increase in the JIF budget. Members with less than three years experience may receive an increase equivalent to the overall JIF budget increase. An anomaly loss, which is one loss that accounts for more than 50% of a member's total losses for the three-year period would have their proposed assessment dropped by one category. Members with anomaly losses are usually small members and the reduction of a single category does not have an impact on the assessment strategy.

The following table is indicative of the current strategy:

Loss Ratio		Increase in Premium	Members Affected
ABOVE	175%	14.00%	2
BETWEEN	130% and 175%	12.25%	3
BETWEEN	85% and 130%	10.50%	1
NEW MEMBERS LESS THAN 3 YEARS		8.59%	1
NEW MEMBERS NO EXPERIENCE		6.98%	2
BETWEEN	60% and 85%	8.75%	2
BETWEEN	35% and 60%	7.30%	4
BETWEEN	15% and 35%	5.80%	3
BELOW	15%	4.00%	3

MEL Assessments are calculated by the MEL and are passed through to the members without further adjustment.

Risk Management Consulting Fees are negotiated individually by each member and are added to the member's assessment after the above factors are applied.

The following pages present a history of past Assessment Allocation Strategies.

## THE EARLY YEARS - EQUALIZATION

During its early years, the JIF allocated assessments using a simple formula called "**equalization**". Under this scenario each member's renewal assessment rose by approximately the same amount as the JIF budget regardless of changes in their operations or their claims experience. Many pools use this approach during their formative years and the BURLCOJIF was no exception.

EXPOSURES - In comparing the JIF's membership data over time, however, it became apparent that some members' exposures were changing at a different rate than others. For example a growing municipality may have had to build a new municipal building while another member eliminated their entire police department. The result was that growing members received subsidies at the expense of the other members. This concept is more fully discussed on **pages 6 and 7**.

EXPERIENCE - A review of the members' claims histories also revealed the potential for inequities. One member, for example, may have incurred a relatively low ratio of claims compared to their budgeted assessment while others incurred higher claims ratios. Clearly, the "**Equalization**" strategy offered no inducement to control losses and, in fact, may have rewarded members with poor experience. **Page 8** more fully discusses this topic.

After several years of "**Equalization**" the Finance Committee realized that if this strategy continued, inequities would develop and the JIF could lose members. Unfortunately, the first to leave the JIF would be those members whose good experience was subsidizing the JIF.

## 1993 - COMBINED ALLOCATION STRATEGY

In 1992, after reviewing all of the above facts, the Finance Committee recommended that an Assessment Allocation Strategy be adopted which incorporated both an Exposure Allocation and Experience Rating strategy taking all of the above factors into consideration. This strategy took effect with the 1993 Fund Year.

## 1997 - EXPERIENCE BASED ALLOCATION STRATEGY

In the Fall of 1996, the Finance Committee again examined the relationship between members' assessments and their claims experience. The Committee agreed that the Combined Allocation strategy did not place enough weight upon a members' claims history. The Committee therefore recommended that a more simplified assessment allocation method be adopted in which members' renewal assessments are modified based upon their preceding three full years claims experience. The Finance Committee recommended that the chart, which appears on page 8, be simplified and that members' **overall** three-year claims experience be used in lieu of individual lines of coverage. That is the strategy in effect today.

#### 2006 – MODEL OPERATING EXPENSES

In the fall of 2005, the Finance Committee examined the way JIF Operating Expenses were allocated to the members. While the above "Experience Based Allocation Strategy" appeared equitable, it was recognized that members' share of JIF Operating Expenses should not be affected by their loss ratio. Therefore, in consultation with the Fund Administrator, The Finance Committee adopted an Assessment Allocation Strategy that applies the above "Experience Based Allocation Formula to **LOSS FUNDS ONLY** and proposes that a members' Operating Expenses be allocated more in line with their actual cost to the Fund. Therefore, those expenses that are directly attributable to a member (Direct Expenses) e.g. Optional Safety Budget, EPL Consulting Service, Loss Control Service, etc. will be charged to a member's assessment. Those expenses that can not be directly attributable to a member (Indirect Expenses) such as Actuarial Fees, Claims Audit Fees, Financial Audit Fees, etc. shall be charged to a member's assessment in the same proportion that their Loss Fund Contributions, Property Values, or Payroll figures, whichever bases is most appropriate, bear to the entire JIF. Thus, if a member contributes 5% to the JIF Loss Fund budget, they will receive a 5% share of a specified JIF Indirect Operating Expense.

### EXPOSURE ALLOCATION STRATEGY

An "exposure" unit is a measure of the magnitude of a loss exposure. For example property values are a measure of the risk of fire. The greater a member's property values, the greater the potential loss.

Appropriations, on the other hand, are traditionally viewed as the measure of liability risk for municipalities. The greater the appropriations, the more activities there are and the higher the likelihood of injury and thus the more likely a law suit to develop.

The exposure unit, therefore, serves as a yardstick to measure the cost of risk and can be easily measured and utilized used to allocate assessment contributions.

The JIF self insures four areas of risk:

1. Property
2. Liability
3. Automobile
4. Workers Compensation

Each of these areas of risk is easily measured through the use of exposure units.

## **PROPERTY**

The Finance Committee recommended that total insurable values be used to allocate property insurance costs. Neither the actuary nor the excess carriers differentiate between buildings, contents, equipment, etc. and we have seen no trend in our losses to weight any one item more heavily than the other. The following example describes how the formula actually works.

*Example: If the JIF members have a total of \$100,000,000 in insurable property values and member "A" has \$10,000,000 in insurable values then Member "A" will be allocated 10% of the property loss funds.*

## **LIABILITY**

In allocating liability costs, the Finance Committee elected to use appropriations. Both the actuary and other JIFs rate on this basis. Neither the actuary nor other JIFs charge for any special exposures such as Police, Fire, etc. Our review of liability claims supports this approach.

*Example: If the JIF members have total appropriations of \$100,000,000 and member "A" has appropriations of \$5,000,000 then member "A" will be allocated 5% of the liability loss funds.*

## **AUTOMOBILE**

In this area, vehicle counts were used. Again, neither the actuary nor the excess carriers differentiate between types of vehicles. Our instinct tells us that police cars should have a greater potential for loss, however, further analyses indicates that this affects the potential *value* of the loss not the *frequency*, and is therefore more of an issue for the excess carrier than it is for us.

*Example: If the JIF members own 500 vehicles and member "A" owns 25 vehicles then member "A" will be allocated 5% of the automobile loss funds.*

## **WORKERS COMPENSATION**

Traditionally, workers compensation payrolls have been separated into two categories of employment with different rates for each; "police", "Clerical, etc. Our analyses and recommendation was to support this more traditional approach. The Committee, therefore decided to accept the Workers Compensation Rating bureau "relativities" and assign these weights to the workers compensation assessment allocation formula.

*Example: If the "Manual" Workers Compensation premium for the JIF as a whole is \$2,000,000 and member "A" has a "Manual" Workers Compensation premium of \$200,000 then member "A" will be allocated 10% of the workers compensation loss funds.*

## EXPERIENCE RATING

For any assessment allocation to be successful it must recognize the potential for some members to incur more claims than others relative to their assessments. Addressing this issue can eliminate the problems associated with the perception that the Fund is subsidizing some members' claims experience at the expense of others.

One method, studied by the Fund, is a simplified experience-rating program that does not impose harsh penalties on members but recognizes adverse claims experience over time. This is accomplished through the application of an experience adjustment factor. The experience adjustment factor is determined from a chart that lists the appropriate factor for a given loss ratio in each line of coverage offered by the JIF. The experience adjustment factor is applied to the member's assessment by line of coverage. The chart below illustrates this concept:

Line of Coverage	Assessment	Experience Factor	Modified Assessment
Property	\$ 2,500.00	.90	\$ 2,250.00
Liability	\$15,000.00	.95	\$14,250.00
Automobile	\$12,000.00	.94	\$11,280.00
Workers Comp.	\$20,000.00	1.02	\$20,400.00
Total	\$49,500.00	N/A	\$48,180.00

Since it takes several years for claims to develop to their full potential the committee may decide to defer experience rating on members until they have been in the JIF for three full years.

## OPERATING EXPENSE ALLOCATION

The JIF's operating expenses are broken down into two categories:

- A. Allocated - These expenses can be directly attributed to a specific member's participation in the JIF. An example of this type of expense is the Safety Director who charges a fee based upon the size of the member.
- B. Unallocated - These expenses that can not be directly attributable to a member (Indirect Expenses) shall be charged to a member's assessment in the same proportion that a member's individual exposure relates to the Fund total. Examples of exposure data that are used to distribute unallocated operating expenses across the membership include Loss Fund Contributions, Property Values, and Payroll figures, whichever basis is most appropriate. Thus, if a member has 5% of the total property values for the Fund, this member will pay 5% of the total property appraisal costs for that year.

Under this assessment strategy, the JIF charges allocated operating expenses directly to the members. Unallocated expenses are spread across the membership based upon the individual member's share of the exposure to the total for the Fund.

### Risk Management Consulting Fees

Risk Management Consulting Fees are negotiated individually by each member and are added to the members' assessment after all of the above factors and the Cap Strategy (described on **page 10**) are applied.

## CAP STRATEGY

The Finance Committee realized that one of the major reasons member municipalities formed a JIF was to avoid the harsh cycles associated with the traditional insurance market. Without some type of capping mechanism in place, members' assessments could swing wildly from one year to the next. That is why a capping strategy was developed.

A capping strategy begins with a decision to set an upward percentage limit on the amount of any individual member's assessment increase. Naturally, the imposition of a cap on individual members' assessments will create some compression within the overall assessment allocation strategy. This must be addressed in order for the sum of the members' assessments to equal the budget figure for the JIF. In some cases this could mean that a member whose assessment formula results in a decrease could actually receive a modest increase in their assessment. The trade-off in this scenario is that all members know that they are being protected from large increases should their experience turn sour in a particular year.