The Center for Social Justice (CSJ) is widely regarded as a leading organization for Georgetown students to participate in social justice and service activities with low to no-barriers. The [FY19 Funding Application](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B6EhClCKpzwJbGM2bmJncFdQQlNjSmpPYXdPVFAyRDcxUWhn/view) describes its impact as “fostering student leaders as they develop a passion and commitment to the greater ideals of social justice, through learning and advocacy opportunities, and through the meaningful impact and difference we make in the communities with which we serve.” As a student who has been a DC Reads tutor for two semesters and experienced firsthand the benefits provided to both Georgetown students and the DC community, it is equally important that the funding and allocations are comprehensive to the needs of CSJ. The findings of FY19-FY20 funding applications, budget reports, and the FY18-FY20 audit, are listed below:

In the past few fiscal years, CSJ ABSO has received in [FY19](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ckxcIDDaOuRkDrsmOkSlDjqydBEBwI_l/view?usp=sharing) $179,500.00, [FY20](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RhD5fxWl2vQGC2hNcunhMa2y4i0SPdH4/view?usp=sharing) $156,517.16, and [FY21](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CEM3HTtHGWooFW664H_pGhrEdcl3ISXGSyaenr0RAqY/edit) $128,000.00. In FY20, Senator Moreland cites the large decrease due to CSJ’s high turnover rate and an excess in reserves. In F21, Senator Ziac cites the large decrease due to cancellations of ABP programs, decrease in University enrollment and increase in fund requests from clubs. However, in both years the Senators were confident in CSJ-ABSO’s ability to support their organizations.

[FY19](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B6EhClCKpzwJbGM2bmJncFdQQlNjSmpPYXdPVFAyRDcxUWhn/view) was a year of many successes and challenges. CSJ experienced a significant expansion of programming, and the first surplus in years, starting conversations on equitable fund allocations and tracking programming. CSJ ABSO reflected on voluntourism and social justice values with the cancelled Global Brigades trip and significant ABSO board turnover.

In [FY20](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5oZcgoICITsbWJGQnk4QUFIYzlmTnhFNEItcUJKOTQwWllv/view), ABSO itself continued to develop as a board, with two student advisors resigning and extra responsibilities assigned, leading to the welcoming of three new student advisors. In addition, the internal success of renegotiating van sums, advisor training, and a new liaison on the ABP Board helped solidify the improved relations. The CSJ ABSO programs in restoration faced significant struggles but they are working steadily to get back on track, while its New Club Development programs faced massive successes, especially HoyaTHON raising $40,000 in its first dance marathon. Finally, the addition of mission-based vendors and healthy food incentives, and an eco-friendly policy contributed to increased funding requests.

In [FY21](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UOUdjlFrjhi_q3ylgHiQIQD55zZUafwP?usp=sharing), CSJ ABSO faced student organizations that underspent, signifying a need for funding policies to ensure entire allocation spending. In addition, CSJ ABSO cited lack of support by FinApp liaison in the fall, and the need for a consistent liaison to advocate for the needs of CSJ ABSO. On the other hand, CSJ ABSO celebrated the addition of three new student organizations, board expansion, and purchasing water coolers to promote environmental justice. Future long term concerns involve the increased costs from community partners impact assessments, and developing a regular system of audits to track spending and decrease reserve amounts.

From the funding applications, a few specific recommendations are outlined in regards to FinApp’s funding and allocations process. First, FinApp must take into account New Club Development organizations in application. It would be helpful for the application to specifically ask for the forecasted funding requirement of NCD organization so that FinApp would have a fuller understanding ([FY20](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5oZcgoICITsbWJGQnk4QUFIYzlmTnhFNEItcUJKOTQwWllv/view)). Second, CSJ ABSO has now asked twice for more preparation time for the funding application, which calls into question whether this has been implemented by FinApp. Third, there needs to be more sensitivity towards the perception of CSJ ABSO student organizations. In the past, CSJ ABSO organizations have been misconstrued as “only” work off-campus, which “devalues the contribution to GU students learning and development and NOT "charity" to the community (a comment past GUSA folks have made in the past)” ([FY20](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lEMx0KuAAvbp4B_NcOOofTus7wRmYMCR/view)).

As CSJ ABSO FinApp liaison, I also had the pleasure of meeting with CSJ-ABSO’s advisor Whitney Maddox and CSJ ABSO’s Vice Chair Brianna Rodgers. Due to the lack of FinApp liaison engagement in Fall 2019, CSJ ABSO asks for an attentive, communicative, present, thoughtful liaison that attends meetings, to directly hear the struggles to better serve their committee. However, they cite that the Spring 2020 liaison was excellent at communicating, answering questions, and advocating for CSJ ABSO. Furthermore, CSJ ABSO hopes FinApp clarifies their role and expectations, provides information on what FinApp/GUSA is working on, and notifies CSJ ABSO what to be prepared for to discuss. Finally, FinApp needs to communicate differences between CSJ-ABSO policy and GUSA. For example, during the FY21 Budget Summit, a senator said there cannot be faculty on advisory boards, however the CSJ ABSO constitution allows for that.

CSJ ABSO outlines long term budget concerns over annual expansions of programming and New Club Development organizations, and Student Organization growth. The reports have also shown trends of underspending and surpluses. Further communications with CSJ ABSO is necessary to understand the reason for this trend, however initial recommendations to mitigate this include:

1. Monthly or bi-monthly spending projections to ensure student organizations are on track to use all allocated funds.
2. Mid-semester analysis of spending rates and reallocating resources to initiatives that may benefit from more funds.
3. Annual wish lists for each organization to creatively maximize leftover funds.

The Fall 2019 introduction of DCPS TB testing and background checks for all volunteers entering DCPS Schools has created additional challenges. Although $8,500 was set aside for TB testing, it continues to be a challenge that CSJ ABSO organizations face. CSJ ABSO has asked for suggestions on how to solve this challenge, which can be accessed [here](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NILU3oTz7El34d2YqvXP06RGaU_O8demfwzJIbSH2-c/edit?usp=sharing).

In the funding policies, CSJ ABSO has shown a commendable emphasis of encouraging student organizations to avoid wasteful spending and use creative ways to obtain resources. In [FY20](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5oZcgoICITsZEpLdzM2QTZMMmxfLUJmTVg0cjFjWW1VbjRj/view), there was a change in van fee policy from mileage-based fees to lump-sum fees, introduction of an eco-friendly clause, and the healthy food incentive program. Through the thorough applications for funding and detailed budget records, CSJ ABSO has shown care and dedication towards the allocation process. Implementing the above recommendations will truly reciprocate the commitment CSJ ABSO has shown to appropriate fiscal spending, and to demonstrate FinApp’s commitment to supporting CSJ ABSO and its student organizations.