

YOU CAN HOST **A**

**SERVANT
EVENT**





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Church—Missouri Synod
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Budget and Fundraising



Hosting a Servant Event requires a variety of resources, but it is well worth the investment. As you build your volunteer team and support, you will begin to consider the budget of your event. With some time and effort, it is possible to host a Servant Event at little or no financial cost to the hosting congregation or organization, while youth live out their God-given vocations and share the Gospel.

Budgeting requires event leaders to be good stewards without cutting what is necessary for the event. Participants need a healthy, Christ-centered experience. This means spending appropriate amounts of money on food, housing, and service project materials. But those who come to Servant Events are not usually expecting luxury accommodations or high-end equipment. A budget should be both realistic and balanced to make the event successful.

SERVANT EVENT BUDGETING

Address budgeting regularly as you plan, carry out and follow up on your Servant Event. Event leaders should start with a brief outline of how much they think the event is going to cost before a congregation or organization commits. A general budget from past events, or from other LCMS Servant Events like yours might be helpful.

Once that commitment is made, take time early to develop a plan for funding and managing the budget. Typically, the Event Director will handle the money and budget management, but everyone who is leading the event needs to understand the budget.

As you meet to set the budget, be sure to begin with PRAYER! God will guide and provide for your planning and your event. This meeting should accomplish the following:

- › Discuss the purpose of the Servant Event that you are hosting. What are your goals and hoped for outcomes? Which of these goals is the priority? How will the Servant Event make a difference in the community? Answering these questions will clarify your priorities for spending.
- › Have the leader of each part of the event share a list of the materials needed. Bring estimated amounts of how much things cost. With these numbers, begin to fill out your budget. If possible, do this in a way that allows everyone to see calculations in real time.
- › Create a list of businesses, organizations and individuals who may be able to support your event through monetary donations, or supplies or grants. Church leadership, your LCMS district, or your chamber of commerce can help you find more supporters. When you identify someone who might be able to help offset costs, approach them

first with the vision of your event. Raise friends before raising funds. Put together a letter or flyer that says:

- What you are doing in the community
- What you need
- How the organization/business can help
- How you will publicize the donation/support to others

A sample letter is attached at the end of this resource. Be sure to send thank-you letters to businesses and funding agencies, and include their names in print media coverage of your event.

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

Developing and administering a budget for the Servant Event is one of the major responsibilities of the leadership team. Careful planning will allow you to host the event without overtaxing either your congregation/organization, or your participants. It is important to keep the event affordable for participants, while providing a full experience that completes the service tasks you have planned.

Income

Registration fees are what you collect from each group for every participant. You can determine the registration fee in a few ways, but usually this is the primary source of funding for the event. Be clear when explaining what event expenses your registration fee does and doesn't cover. Let participants know how much additional money they will need to cover the cost of attending (for example, meals on the road).

Revenue from other sources may be available through local LCMS districts, congregations, local and district LWML, local businesses, organizations, individuals, community agencies, grants from foundations and Thrivent

Financial. Looking for revenue from other places is time consuming, but it can result in additional funds. It can also increase connections and support for your group in the community. In addition to requesting funds, consider asking for donations of food, materials, or other important components of the event.

Fundraisers can be helpful in increasing funds for your event. Fundraising takes time, but it also invests the entire congregation/organization in the Servant Event, even if they cannot commit to further support. Ideas for fundraisers are endless. Keep it simple, and look for a fundraiser that will give you the best return on your investment.

If surplus revenue remains when the event is completed, it could be earmarked for another Servant Event the following year, used for similar service after the event, or sent to event participants as a refund. Money collected for registration fees, fundraising, and for many directed donations **cannot** be reallocated for other programs. It must be used in line with how it was collected.

Expenses

Service Project Materials are going to differ depending on the projects included in your servant event. Think comprehensively about the supplies you will need early in your budget process. If you haven't done a similar project before, consult an expert to ensure an accurate estimate of the project materials needed.

- › Construction events may need paint, wood, ladders, flooring, and other building materials. Participants may bring tools, but remember that they are bulky and can be hard to transport. If tools are borrowed, have a plan for returning them to their owner. You may need to budget for tool rental or purchase.
- › Cleaning projects need items like trash bags, gloves, dumpster rental, and cleaning supplies.
- › Human care may require fewer or lighter materials. They may still need items like crafting supplies, paper products, snacks, decorations, etc.
- › Christian education programming may require the purchase of curriculum materials, craft supplies, items for games and more.

Program Materials are the supplies you need for Servant Event activities outside of your service. This could include decorations, signage, paper goods, snacks and drinks, game supplies, items for Bible study crafts, and the like. These items can be borrowed or donated, but this is a line in the budget that can get underestimated. Walk through your proposed event as a team, and keep a list of things that would fall into this category. Then estimate how much these items cost early in your budget process.

Local Transportation is the cost of transportation to and around work sites, housing, and programming during your event. In some cases, participants will be able to provide

their own transportation, but please check with them before making that decision. You will need to reimburse local volunteer drivers who are providing support and supplies. Also consider any need to rent trucks or other large vehicles to transport materials and tools throughout the week.

Recreation is usually specified as bigger activities or off-site events for entertainment during your event. There may be cases where this budget is small, because recreation is decided by each group individually, or because you are limited by location. However, if you plan on an evening outing or a trip to a local attraction for the whole group, it is far easier to put it in the budget and slightly raise the registration fee than it is to have adult participants pay on their own. For example, if you plan to take the whole group bowling one night, have one person on your team make the reservations and payment. Roll the cost of bowling into the registration fee, rather than having multiple adults responsible for costs and arrangements.

Housing and Meal costs depend on the type of housing. The costs of staying at a camp, for example, are different from the costs of staying at a church or school where meals are prepared on-site. Having participants stay with host families is not necessarily free. Determine if host families will be reimbursed, and the number of meals the family will provide.

- › If participants are expected to cover any of their meals or housing, let them know that alongside the registration fee.
- › While simple meals are often best, do not skimp on the amount or quality of the food provided to participants. Participants will not give their best on the service site if they are not adequately fed or don't have access to healthy options.
- › Ensure that there are sufficient bathroom and shower facilities where you will house your participants. This is especially true if you are doing dirty cleaning or construction service.

Administrative Materials are the internal budget items that support the event. These can include:

- › Leadership Team reimbursements include transportation, meals, and lodging expenses incurred by the key members of the team, including the Event Director, Service Director, and Community Life Director. If these leaders are driving personal cars, paying to stay close to the event or covering additional food costs, it is appropriate to reimburse their expenses. Receipts should be kept and submitted. You may also want to consider reimbursing those pastors or musicians on your leadership team who miss worship during the event and who must reimburse a substitute.
- › Postage and printing may be small, but should be accounted for, and considered for reimbursement.

- › Additional Liability Insurance may need to be added to an existing policy to cover any current limitations.
- › Participant shirts or gifts are great mementos for the participants. If you plan to make shirts specific to the event, you have lots of local and online options to get them done relatively inexpensively.
- › Honoraria may include a small stipend for additional special guest speakers or musicians. Leadership team members are volunteers; therefore, honoraria or salaries are not appropriate.
- › Miscellaneous expenses are items that are not accounted for above. When you are starting your budget, it may be helpful to leave some money here for unexpected costs that are not covered by other budget line items.



SAMPLE SERVANT EVENT BUDGET WORKSHEET

Income		Estimated	Actual
_____ Participants @ \$ _____		\$ _____	\$ _____
Fundraisers		_____	_____
Grant		_____	_____
Donations		_____	_____
Other		_____	_____
	Total Income	\$ _____	_____

Expenses		Estimated	Actual
Service project materials		_____	_____
Program materials		_____	_____
Local transportation		_____	_____
Recreation		_____	_____
Other		_____	_____
Housing and Meal Expenses			
Housing (\$ per person per night)		_____	_____
Meals (\$ per person per day)		_____	_____
Administrative Expenses			
Leadership Team reimbursements		_____	_____
Postage		_____	_____
Printing		_____	_____
Additional insurance		_____	_____
Participant shirts or gifts		_____	_____
Honoraria for special guests/speakers		_____	_____
Other _____		_____	_____
Miscellaneous		_____	_____
	Total Expenses	\$ _____	\$ _____
	Balance	\$ _____	\$ _____

SAMPLE SUPPORT REQUEST

February 6, 2023
Mr. Christian Douglas
1212 South Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55417

Dear Christian,

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me on the phone and for your willingness to consider our request for assistance. Here is additional information about the Youth Servant Event that will be held at Christ the Servant Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, June 17–25, 2024.

Servant Events are opportunities for Christian service by young people and adults. They provide a way to take people out of their daily routines, encourage them to practice Christ's unconditional love, serve people in ways that enrich their lives, and share their faith in practical ways.

Youth attending the Servant Event at Christ the Servant will staff a weeklong, half day Vacation Bible School for children in the neighborhood. In the afternoons, the youth will do special work projects with local community agencies. Projects will include painting, landscaping and cleanup around the buildings in the community. The emphasis of the week is on serving others; in this case, the low-income children and families of the Phillips Neighborhood. The youth (a maximum of 20) and supervising adults will be housed at Christ the Servant. The youth pay a registration fee that covers the costs of some meals, special evening events, insurance, and staffing, but there are other expenses for the week of ministry for which we need help.

Listed below are the major items that require outside help to fund, in their order of importance.

- › VBS materials \$500
- › Snack and lunch for VBS children \$300
- › Paint and supplies \$400
- › Shrubs and gardening supplies \$300

Your donation of cash or supplies would assist us in this ministry to the children in the community and the young people and adults serving, and we would greatly appreciate it. If you have additional questions, please call me. I will contact you in early March if I have not heard from you before then. Again, thank you for considering this request.

Together in Christ's service,
Carol Taylor
Director of Youth Ministry



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