



EVENT BUDGETING 101

This event budgeting guide is meant to be a tool for helping your organization to plan a successful event. As a best practice, the information here should be determined before you commit to hosting the event; that way you are less likely to run into challenges or surprises along the way. Ultimately, the more accurate you can be in your budgeting beforehand, the better!

These resources were developed by the Student Activities team, who have over 30 years of combined experience planning all kinds of events—everything from large concerts to conferences to retreats and small group outings! While some items on this budget guide may not apply, we wanted to create a guide that would be helpful no matter the size of event.

PRO TIP: If you are looking at applying for a Student Activity Fee grant for your event, complete this ahead of time and do the math on what you'll need for your event; it makes the application process much easier!

Setting a budget for your event:

It's important to understand your budget before you embark on a program. There are two ways to move forward:

1. Establish a max budget to live within and determine whether the event is feasible with funding available.
2. Build the budget as you go. If costs rise higher, you may need to charge admission.

Should we Charge Admission for our Event?

This is your call. The questions we would ask are... When does the benefit of more revenue from students outweigh the message or activity, because a free event may get more students? Also, how much risk are you and your group willing to take?

What Sources of Funding are Available?

This will depend on what type of organization you are; multicultural and international groups are eligible for funding through the Multicultural Center and the Kearney International Center, while Campus Rec groups receive funding through Campus Recreation. While RSOs do not typically receive a stipend from Student Government, there are grants they can apply for to get funding specifically for events. Otherwise, look at fundraisers and sponsorships as additional options for funding.

How can we fundraise for the event?

Great question! Check out the fundraising guide on the RSO Resources page for suggestions and tips on fundraising.



Anticipated Costs That You Should Plan For

Item	Cost	Notes
Performer/Speaker/Entertainment	\$ _____ . ____	Must contact Student Activities to start the contract at least 4 weeks in advance
Sound and Lighting	\$ _____ . ____	Check with CSU Tech FIRST
Specialty Event Equipment (ex. Photo booth, items rented through outside vendor)	\$ _____ . ____	Contact Student Activities if you're renting anything through outside vendors and paying with MSU, Mankato money in case a contract needs to be developed
Prizes	\$ _____ . ____	Keep detailed records of prizes and who receives them. Try to get donations when possible!
Food/Beverages	\$ _____ . ____	Check Shoestring Catering for best deals on catering orders
Security	\$ _____ . ____	
Vehicles	\$ _____ . ____	
Decorations	\$ _____ . ____	
Giveaways	\$ _____ . ____	
Supplies	\$ _____ . ____	Basic supplies—pens, paper, cups, napkins, markers, paint; think about all of the little things that will be needed to make the event happen.
Posters	\$ _____ . ____	
Sandwich Boards	\$ _____ . ____	\$18/2'x3' poster; sandwich boards are FREE
Facebook/Social Media	\$ _____ . ____	Price ranges based on boost duration, people reached. Default price is \$20.
Other		
	\$ _____ . ____	
	\$ _____ . ____	
	\$ _____ . ____	
	\$ _____ . ____	
	\$ _____ . ____	
	\$ _____ . ____	
	\$ _____ . ____	
	\$ _____ . ____	
Total	\$ _____ . ____	



Cost Estimates and Items to Note:

Food/Catering: RSOs have access to special catering prices through University Dining's Shoestring Catering Menu. The Shoestring Catering Menu must be picked up in person from the Catering Office (CSU 219). Shoestring Catering Orders must be placed at least one week before your event. If you are hosting an event on campus that is open to the public and you would like to have food, University Dining Services/Catering has first rights to any food orders; outside catering must be approved in advance by University Dining Services (first right of refusal). If you have special food preparation needs for an event, we recommend reaching out to University Dining Services well in advance to determine what options are available.

Supplies & Decorations: Before you buy supplies for your event, check to see what can be provided for free versus what would need to be purchased. Additionally, if you will be purchasing something that needs to be stored, develop a plan on where to store it long-term before you purchase the item (as a reminder, the RSO clubhouse is only available during the school year, is only open from 8 AM-6 PM Monday-Friday, and does not take responsibility for lost/stolen items).

Posters: Printing posters on campus can be done through the Wiecking Copy Shop. If you have an on-campus account, one benefit is that you can charge the cost directly to the account, so no re-imbusement is needed. It typically takes about 65 posters to cover every "general use" bulletin board on campus. Here are the costs for on-campus printing:

- Tabloid (11'x17) color poster = \$0.59 each (\$38.35/65 posters)
- Letter Size (8.5"x11") color poster = \$0.39/each (\$25.25/65 posters)

Note: We recommend having someone review your poster design to make sure no typos or changes are needed before printing. Since RSOs are required to follow University Graphic Standards, if you print a poster that does not meet graphic standards, it will not be approved to be hung on campus. RSOs can submit the design to CSU Communications (who approve posters) via Engage for feedback prior to printing. Once you print the posters, you will need to bring them to CSU Administration (CSU 220) to be stamped/approved.

Giveaways/Promotional Items: If you are ordering any kind of giveaway or promotional item that has the Minnesota State University, Mankato logo on it, the order must be placed through university printing services to make sure it meets university graphic standards. Printing services can give you a quote on an order before you decide on whether to make a purchase, and if you provide a competitor's quote you may be able to negotiate a lower price.

Performer: Whenever we execute a contract with a performer, we do "All-inclusive" pricing. This included the performer's travel, lodging, meals, and sound/lighting needs. Some speakers may charge as little as \$100, however performers typically start around \$500 for smaller groups. The bigger/more famous the entertainer, the higher the cost. It is also important to make sure you factor travel and meals in before agreeing to a price for an entertainer, as well as making sure the entertainer agrees to the all-inclusive nature of the contract.

Film Screening: Depending on the film type and the purpose of the film, cost may vary. Films shown under an educational license are not allowed to have admission charged. Netflix films are a gray area; see Student Activities if you have questions. (Note: Film prices are subject to change, depending on vendor; prices listed are what we typically see for films)

- New Release: \$500
- Older Release: \$125
- Educational Film: FREE*

Sound and Lighting: CSU Tech is free!! Extra lighting and sound can range from \$600 to \$12,000.00



Security: If you're hosting a large event or an event that may have a higher level of risk (such as performers or activities that may cause damage to people, persons, or property), you may need to consider security; even if it's just for crowd-control purposes. Security needs may also be determined by scheduling, based on special events checklist.

If on-campus security is available, it is free for RSOs; however, if on-campus security staff are not available to cover the event, it may be required to hire police or ASIA (a private security company). Police presence and ASIA (private security) do require extra cost, and is charged hourly.

Insurance: For performers or activities that may cause damage to people, persons, or property, we must have those people name us additionally insured on their insurance. This can cost typically an additional \$200 per event if they carry the insurance. If they don't carry that amount, it will cost almost \$600-\$1000 per event.

Events that needed insurance:

- inflatables, live animals, race cars, hot air balloons, Hip-Hop or Punk Metal acts, controversial speakers, live lumberjacks, illusionists, etc....

Vehicles: RSOs are able to reserve vehicles from Vehicle Services; however, the drivers must be pre-approved. If you are considering reserving a vehicle, the driver should submit their information for approval at a minimum of 3 weeks in advance. Vehicle Services has the following options for RSOs to reserve:

- Sedans (4-5 passengers): \$55 full day; \$33 half day
- Minivans (7 passengers): \$88 full day; \$53 half day
- Cargo Van (2 passenger with cargo storage space): \$57 full day; \$38 half day

Bus rentals require a contract and must be started at least 4 weeks in advance – coach bus cost: starts at \$750/event