

EVENT BUDGETING GUIDE

This event budgeting guide is meant to be a tool to help your RSO in planning 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 in 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 RSO you are; RSOs associated with either the Multicultural Center or the Kearney International Center are eligible for funding through their respective center, while Sport Clubs receive funding through Campus Recreation. Purple RSOs (defined by SAC as Independent) are eligible to apply for RSO Program Funds. Other options for all RSOs include fundraisers and sponsorships.

How can we fundraise for the event?

Great question! Check out the fundraising guide in the RSO Handbook for suggestions and tips on fundraising. On-campus fundraisers must have prior approval. The Fundraising Request Form is due at least 5 business days prior to the start of the event.

Anticipated Costs That You Should Plan For

Item	Cost	Notes
Performer/Speaker/Entertainment	\$_____.	Start the contract process 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 MNSU, 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 Square Tomato Catering for best deals on catering orders
Security	\$_____.	
Vehicles	\$_____.	
Decorations	\$_____.	
Giveaways	\$_____.	
Supplies	\$_____.	Basic supplies—pens, paper, cups, napkins, markers, paint; think about all the little things that will be needed to make the event happen.
Posters	\$_____.	Tabloid (11"x17") color poster = \$0.60 each (\$39/65 posters) Letter Size (8.5"x11") color poster = \$0.40/each (\$26/65 posters)
Sandwich Boards	\$_____.	\$15-18/2'x3' poster; sandwich boards are FREE
Facebook/social media	\$_____.	Price ranges based on boost duration / people reached.
Other		
	\$_____.	
	\$_____.	
	\$_____.	
	\$_____.	
	\$_____.	
	\$_____.	
	\$_____.	
	\$_____.	
Total	\$_____.	

Cost Estimates and Items to Note

Food/Catering: RSOs have access to special catering prices through University Dining's Square Tomato Catering Menu, and 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 the University Dining Services Catering Office (CSU 219) 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 open from 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. Monday-Friday and does not take responsibility for lost/stolen items).

Posters: Printing posters on campus can be done through Creative Production. If you have an on-campus account, one benefit is that you can charge the cost directly to the account, so no re-imbursement 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 = \$0.60 each (\$39/65 posters)
- Letter Size (8.5"x11") color poster = \$0.40/each (\$26/65 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. Prior to printing, RSOs can stop by CSU 220 to ensure graphic standards are met. Once you print the posters, you will need to bring them to CSU Administration (CSU 220) to be stamped/approved.

Giveaways/Promotional Items: Giveaways or promotional items that use the Minnesota State University, Mankato logo must be ordered through Creative Production to ensure it meets university brand standards. Creative Production 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 (must be licensed vendor for university logos and wordmarks) you may be able to negotiate a lower price. A minimum order for T-shirts is typically 12 or 24. Certain promo items (like pens) have limited print space available. Call 507.389.1181 to discuss options with the Creative Production team to discuss options.

Performer: Whenever we execute a [contract with a performer](#), we do "all-inclusive" pricing. This includes 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 charges. 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: \$250, Older Release: \$150, Educational Film: FREE*

*Contact the Public Access Librarian in the [MNSU Memorial Library](#) for information on getting documentaries for free through the library.

Sound and Lighting: basic 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 \$500-\$1000 per event and [you'll need to purchase it](#).

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. For more information visit [Vehicle Reservation Information](#) and [Vehicle Use](#).

Bus rentals require a contract and must be started at least 4 weeks in advance – a coach bus cost starts at \$900/event.