

## Tips for Reducing Budget Costs

### VENUE

If you are able to secure a donated space for your forum that will greatly reduce your costs. Community institutions usually welcome an opportunity to partner with associations conducting a positive activity. Check with the Chamber of Commerce, the City, local colleges and other anchor institutions to see if there is space available for free or at a highly discounted rate. Also, inviting the institution's director to speak or participate in the forum can help. If parking is not free, find out if you can negotiate vouchers.

### SPEAKERS

Decide at the beginning whether you will offer honoraria for speakers. If so, include those costs in your budget. If you include speakers from out of town you will probably have to cover their travel and hotel expenses. Be very clear with your speakers which costs are covered. For example, predetermine with your speaker if there are handouts and the quantity needed. Due to budget constraints, you might need to make them available electronically or just offer them to attendees who are interested in receiving them.

### CATERING

Catering will be one of the most expensive costs in your budget. If you are working with a limited budget and are finding it difficult to make ends meet there are a few compromises that you can make.

- Breakfast meetings are usually less expensive than lunch meetings.

- A buffet lunch will always be more cost effective than a seated lunch. Select the items carefully, e.g. a wholesome lasagna and potato will be both filling and cost effective. Or in some cases, a box lunch that attendees can just pick up is the best option.
- Consider if packed (boxed) lunches might be acceptable or offer a brown bag lunch option if it is appropriate for the tone of your event or your venue.
- Check whether you will be charged a meeting room rate for the use of a separate lunch room. Often if you are having catering there will be no charge for this, however this is not always the case and it is an area that may be open to negotiation.

### ADMINISTRATION

Even if you receive donations for some administrative costs (printing, mailing, conference calls, etc.) staffing resources are still needed. Work with your planning committee to recruit volunteers from their organizations so you can divide the work and the staff time and costs among several partners. It is important that you determine who is responsible for what duties (managing funds, writing checks, following up with sponsors, etc.) and who ultimately is leading the planning effort, if you divide tasks among partners.