

Event Finances

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Running a dance or music event or group can involve a bit of budgeting and keeping track of money.

If you are running a smaller event or group, an event that is free to the public, one where performers are offering their services for free, or where you can find a space to use for free, you may not need to worry about money at all. Fantastic! If you are charging for the event, paying rent, and/or paying performers, you'll need to do some simple budgeting, accounting and record keeping. Here is a bit of information about types of expenses to plan for and potential sources of income to help cover expenses.

EXPENSES

- **Rent:** rents for halls vary widely by region, urban vs. rural area, the type of building, how supportive the owners are of the event, the length of the rental, the size of the event, etc. In rural New England rents vary from free or by donation for small community buildings or Granges rented to members, to the \$100-200 range for medium sized halls, to \$300-\$400 for large halls and extra-picky landlords. Urban rents are often higher.
- **Sound:** are you paying performers to bring and operate sound gear? Are you renting the gear and running it yourself? Are you hiring a professional sound person with their own gear? More information about sound costs and procedures is [here](#).
- **Performers:** more information about different systems for paying performers is included in the [band and caller relations page](#).
- **Publicity:** do you have printing or other publicity costs to reimburse?
- **CDSS Membership dues:** consider making your group or series a CDSS Affiliate, and put aside a small amount of money from each event to cover the cost.
- **Insurance:** does your event or group carry insurance (through CDSS or some other kind) that you need to pay for on a per-event or yearly basis?
- **Other:** snacks, drinks, misc. supplies, etc.

INCOME

- **Admission at the door:** consider your pricing structure in comparison to other traditional dance/music events in the area, the price of other live music or artistic events, the price of a movie, the cost of a double caramel pumpkin spiced cappuccino, etc. Will you offer a student price and/or a senior price (highly recommended)? A youth price? A low/fixed income price? Some events have a fixed admission price and someone sitting at the door collecting money; others request a contribution in a certain range and allow people to drop money in a fiddle case. Both approaches work in certain situations; you just need to decide what will be best for your situation. It is helpful for a new event to keep track of how many people attend and which price they pay so you can start to develop a sense of average attendance and predict how much money you are going to take in. At the very least record your gross receipts for each event.
- **Organizations:** If admission at the door is not enough to cover your expenses, consider seeking out co-sponsoring organizations who might be able to help out. You'll probably need to figure out what you can offer them in return, such as free or reduced admission for their constituents/members. Some possibilities include: schools, town/state arts programs, town/county recreation departments, established dance studios or groups, etc.
- **Grants from CDSS:** CDSS has outreach grants available to help support new events, new groups, new ideas, youth outreach, leadership development, and other initiatives. [Learn more about our grants.](#)
- **Grants from other groups:** Some other regional/national traditional dance and music organizations — such as the New England Folk Festival Association (MA), the Old Farmers Ball (NC), or your local CDSS Affiliate - might offer grants or non-financial assistance (sound gear, advice, volunteers, etc.). Just make sure when you approach groups such as these that your event doesn't conflict or compete with something they already organize.
- **Barter:** See if you can get free or reduced rent in exchange for sweat equity or a free dance you run for your landlord's group.
- **Individual sponsors:** some groups or series that aren't able to meet their expenses receive generous sponsorship from individuals in the community who are dedicated to seeing the event continue. This can be a wonderful way for someone to support something they love and ensure that others are able to share that activity, and it doesn't have to amount to a

tremendous amount of money. In order to make donations such as these tax deductible, you can become a non-profit entity through CDSS.

Make yourself a simple budget incorporating these expenses and sources of funds to help in figuring out how much you can afford to pay performers and for sound. If you have a surplus at any given event, consider keeping a portion as a rainy day fund (or more accurately, a fund for snowy days when everyone but the band stays home). It's also great to share your profits with the performers to the extent that you are able.

It is important that your financial practices are transparent and accountable, whether you are an individual running a small event or a large committee with a treasurer and a large budget. You may have legal obligations to report your payments to performers and to file 1099s. For more information, contact CDSS.