

RLI-NE Site Cost Estimates



Establishing a reasonable estimate of the cost of a RLI site is very important so that surprise overruns are avoided in both commercial and other (educational or religious) sites. As RLI leaders and officers, we have responsibility to both our Rotarian participants and to the RLI organization to plan and manage the site finances as well as to supply quality facilitation and venue setups. This task is typically accomplished by the RVC with the assistance of the Site Chair(s), but may be done by either.

To establish a reasonable cost estimate for a RLI site, the following information must be considered. *It is understood that many of these must be “best guess”; however, it is amazing how much specific data can be discovered, if requested. Referring to, and adjusting for, the past year’s data is often a good way of getting close estimates of currently unknown figures.*

1. Estimated attendees (students)
2. Numbers of faculty and other’s who will be attending.
3. Food costs (breakfast, lunch & break(s))
4. Service charges (against food and other)
5. Facility costs (room, setup and maintenance)
6. Taxes, if applicable
7. AV and/or other equipment
8. Faculty dinner
9. RVC expenses
10. Any other expenses not included in the above, but show up in the “fine print” at times.
11. Keep in mind there is a fixed pro-rata cost per attendee of \$15. *This amount may change from year to year.*

To work these numbers to a point where the cost-per-participant is known is as follows.

1. Expand all costs for meals and breaks by; service charges and the number of folks eating (paid and unpaid folks)
2. Expand all other costs by; service charges and the quantity used
3. Estimate the Faculty dinner expense
4. Estimate the Officer expenses
5. Subtotal the above expenses
6. Apply sales and/or other taxes to the above subtotal
7. Subtotal plus taxes = Total site costs
8. Dividing the Total site costs by the number of paying attendees = Sub total of cost per participant
9. Adding the pro-rata charge to the above = Full site cost per participant

Auto/Interactive Calculation - These calculations can be carried out in many ways. However, using the **Site Cost Estimate** form which can be downloaded from the Toolbox screen, located on the RLI-NE website makes the task of the calculation easy and interactive. It is accomplished as follows:

Download the **Site [Cost Estimate](http://www.rlinea.com/ToolBox.htm)** form from the Toolbox at: <http://www.rlinea.com/ToolBox.htm>

Open the downloaded file in **MS Excel**, follow the instruction below:

1. The sheet is made of color-coded cells; “**blue**” for user entry, and “**yellow**” for auto-calculation. Do not enter data into the yellow cells, as they contain formulas that are used in the process.

2. At the top, there are cells to enter the site name, event date and date of the estimate you are making.
3. Next, are the estimated number of **participants** (fee paying) are entered, and below the estimate number of **faculty and other individuals** who are not fee paying participants. Enter your *best-guess* in these cells use past and current information.
4. As you work your way down the sheet, you can enter the various cost elements, i.e **Breakfast, Lunch, Breaks** etc. To the right of each enter the Service charge percentage, if applicable, as a whole number (22% is entered as 22). *Note that the yellow cells to the right will automatically updated as cost data is entered. Also, the Qty for the various meals is the sum of the Participants and the others, since we will be paying to feed all attending (entered in 3 above)*
5. There are a few rows that contain a "blue" cell in the **Qty** column, as they are not predicated upon the number of attendees. For example; Facility, if the cost of room is \$120, then that number is entered in the **Facilities/Cost per** cell. Next the **service charge**, if applicable, is entered in the next cell to the right. The fourth cell over is where the **Qty** of number of rooms; and magically the cost of a room is expanded by the service charge and the by the number of rooms, which appears in the **Net** column.
6. The **Faculty dinner** cost and **Officer expenses** are typically estimated and supplied by the RVC or Site officer.
7. **Equipment** and **Other** cells work in the same manner.
8. Enter the **State Tax** as a whole number. Example; 6% tax would be entered as the number 6. This will expand the **Sub-total** from the row above to show amount of tax, and the **Total Site cost** appears in the cell below.
9. The **Total Site cost** is automatically divided by the number you entered in the **Est Participants** (fee paying folks) resulting in the **Sub Total Cost/per participant**.
10. Next the **Pro-Rated Cost/per** is added, which is currently \$15 per participant. *This is RLI's cost for materials, equipment and other overhead items and could change from year to year.*
11. Next the **Full Site Cost** appears.
12. The above number is then divided by the **Est. Participants** number you enter at the top, resulting in **Full Site Cost/participant**.

Once the various cost elements and the numbers of participants and others are entered to come up with a final cost per participant, the data can be manipulated in what-if scenarios. For example, what will be the result of changing a specific expense, or the participant and/or faculty numbers? Hence, it is an excellent tool use a month or two prior to an event as, attendance numbers are coming in, to determine if more emphasis is needed on PR activities, or last moment expense adjustment must be considered.

Caution – The formulas in the yellow-cells are not locked and can be damaged by entering data into those cells. They were left this way so that the user has the option to modify them if desired, and the sheet can be used interactively. Typically, changing these cells is not a good thing to do, unless the user is experienced with Excel spreadsheets and formulas.

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