

LeadershipPlenty® on a Limited Budget

At several places in the promotional literature for LeadershipPlenty®, we mention that the estimated cost for delivering the training to a group of twenty participants is less than \$200, *not including photocopying expenses, Trainer compensation (if any), meeting room rental, and food*. Based on the reactions of some of our partners, we can see how this figure might be misleading. After all, the costs of all those items *not included* in the \$200 could easily add up to a whole lot more.

But the incredulous looks and shaking heads came not only from organizations with big budgets, big staffs, and unlimited copy-machine privileges who thought they could easily spend several *thousand* dollars implementing a local LP program; we also heard from low- or no-budget organizations and volunteer trainers who were sure they could do it for a whole lot less. If you are in the first category (rolling in the dough) you can probably stop reading now. If, however, you would like to get some advice on how to run an LP program on a small budget, read on.

Materials You (Don't) Have to Buy

We actually arrived at our low figure by combining the materials and equipment lists for each of the nine modules (many of the items are repeated in more than one module), pricing the items at a giant discount retailer, and totaling the list *as if we were planning to buy all of the items brand new*. What kinds of things are we talking about? Magic markers, flip chart paper, name tags, blank paper, index cards, masking tape—not exactly hard-to-find stuff. In many cases, your sponsoring organization can provide these items as in-kind contributions. If not, we suggest raiding your home's junk drawer (everybody has a junk drawer) and asking partners and participants to do the same. You may be surprised how many markers, pens, pencils, safety pins (for homemade nametags), and empty notebooks you wind up with.

Here are some tips for creative ways to find or substitute for specific materials: **Flip Charts:** Go to your grocer's meat counter and ask if you can buy forty-five feet of their white wrapping paper for 5 cents a foot. Cut this into sheets 3 feet long by 2 feet wide, and you've got your flip chart paper. Total cost: \$2.25. Cost of a manufactured flip chart: \$15 to \$18. **Cardboard Chest of Drawers:** (see Module 1) The point of this exercise is to get small groups to cooperate on completing a task without detailed instructions. Assembling a cardboard chest of drawers is fine, but it can just as easily be substituted by another task that achieves the same objective. Give your groups drinking straws and masking

tape and ask them to build the Eiffel Tower in fifteen minutes. Even a small jigsaw puzzle (say 100 pieces) will work; by dividing the task groups will find they can solve the whole puzzle in the time given. **Note Paper:** Nearly every office has a recycling bin for office paper, most of which is printed only on one side. Borrow a stack for LeadershipPlenty® meetings, then return it to be recycled. Ask a local motel or hotel for note pads or pens.

Ask your participants and the community to contribute what they have.

The Cost of Food, or All the Pizza You Can Eat

In a normal six-hour training session, you are likely to need to provide at least one meal to your participants, and we encourage you to build the training around a mealtime for the simple reason that eating brings people together. Going out and buying restaurant or takeout food for twenty participants, however, is likely to break even the most generous program budget. Fortunately, there are alternative ways to provide food for a LeadershipPlenty® group without going out and buying it. Here are a few suggestions, which can be mixed and matched to fill out the nine-module schedule:

1. Make it a potluck. Most people have at least one recipe that they love to show off. Some have many more than one, and are glad to share them all. Others may not cook much, but will be more than willing to bring a bag or two of chips. By dividing up the task and making it easy for everyone to contribute a small part, you will find that you can feed your group many times over.

2. Ask another charitable organization to contribute a meal. Members of your neighborhood association, a local garden club, Junior League, Links, or any number of other civic clubs or religious organizations may be able to organize a sandwich-making committee to offer your LeadershipPlenty® group a meal.

3. Ask local restaurants and grocery stores for in-kind donations of food. One of our LeadershipPlenty® partners in Mississippi recently told us that the manager of a pizza restaurant (a major chain) in her town had this to say in response to a request for a donation: "I can never give you money, but I can give you all the pizza you can eat." You will never know unless you ask.

