



*Blue Heron takes pride in helping with community fundraisers and projects. We offer this fundraising guide, which is specially created to help you choose the caterer that will fit with your fundraising needs.*

## NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION GUIDELINE

**CONSULT A CATERER** before you set your menu budget. Blue Heron has many years of experience catering fundraising events. We offer many alternatives to menu planning that will help in offering a fair, marketable ticket price so that your organization realizes maximum funds and offers the finest overall event.

**REQUEST PROPOSALS** from two or three caterers. Request the same exact information, in writing, from all prospective caterers so that you may judge these bids fairly and easily.

**REQUEST LICENSE AND INSURANCE INFORMATION.** Check with all prospective caterers to confirm that they are licensed and insured. As part of the proposal, ask them to include a copy of their business license, evidence of General Liability Insurance, Food Certification (required now in California), Green Business Certification (if you desire a green event) and any other pertinent formal documents.

**SELECT A CATERER THAT KNOWS THE SITE.** It is important to work with a caterer that either has worked the site or is willing to do a site visit to go over all of the rules, regulations and logistics of the site. Fundraising events take place in varied sites that could include museums, zoos, malls, city halls, etc. These require experience, a trained event manager and staff to get the most out of the site for your event.

**ONGOING COMMUNICATION** with your caterer is key to a successful event. Ask if the event manager from the catering company will be attending meetings with the planning committee, site crew and other vendors. Select a caterer that is available and easily reachable.

**PROMOTE THE CATERER** on your advertising and promotional materials for the event. Some caterers will give discounted prices for their menus and service staff in exchange for publicity on event flyers, radio/tv spots, their name on admission tickets, event program and signage and/or by being announced by the master of ceremonies.

**CHOOSE A WELL ESTABLISHED CATERER** who works often with community fundraisers. These caterers will have established contacts with other vendors in the area. Ask for assistance in finding entertainment, theme décor ideas, rentals, beverage services and more.

**REQUEST A MENU TASTING** of the proposed menu. Confirm with the chef and event manager that the caterer is able to prepare the food under the same conditions that will be experienced on the event site and that the menu is doable with the kitchen facilities and permit restrictions at the site. Keep in mind that tastings are very costly to caterers and should only be requested after you have narrowed your choices down to two or three caterers.

**OFFER VOLUNTEERS** to help defray the cost of service staff. There are many positions in off-premise catering suitable for volunteer helpers. It creates a true sense of interaction among the volunteers and can help offset the costs of some event personnel charges. Be aware that some facilities/insurance liability preclude volunteers performing some tasks; i.e., serving alcohol.

**REQUEST AN EVENT CRITIQUE.** Ask the caterer you used at your event to give you a written report on event logistics, guest comments the staff received, and final food service counts. This will be important when planning your next event.

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