

Managing the corporate charitable budget

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CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Whether working with a large or small budget, employees in Atlanta's companies are impacting people in need in our community.

Fundamentally, people have a desire to help their fellow human beings, and corporate volunteerism provides an outlet for that desire, said Tracy Hoover, executive director of Atlanta-based Hands On Atlanta, a nonprofit that helps companies facilitate corporate projects that meet their budgets and restrictions.

Although the Metro Atlanta Corporate Volunteerism Council (MACVC) advises a budget of \$7 to \$11 per volunteer, corporations are getting by with less. Some also are blessed with more.

"There is no blueprint as to the size of budget a company needs to make a difference," said Cecile Lilletved, director of development for Hands On Atlanta. With proper guidance from Atlanta's nonprofit liaisons, such as the MACVC, Hands On Atlanta and Corporate Community Outsourcing, local businesses can give to those in need for little to no money. Corporations with higher volunteer budgets still have their restrictions as well. No company has unlimited funds, but that need not matter, as "you can spend anything you want on a project and it still has the same impact," said Elizabeth Feichter, vice president of Corporate Community Outsourcing. The key is to maximize the



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available resources with careful budgeting and planning.

Here's a look at some Atlanta companies and how they manage their charitable means.

Stretching the dollars

Northside Hospital's volunteer budget is between \$50,000 and \$60,000 per year, and is managed by the Northside Hospital Foundation. According to foundation manager Delane Cope, the hospital boasts 1,500 active volunteers in its Northside Community Connection Volunteer Program, with the budget breaking down to \$33 usable per person. The money has to

be stretched a long way during each year.

Volunteers participate in monthly projects, such as at Project Open Hand (making sure those with HIV have meals to eat), as well as sorting food at the Atlanta Community Food Bank. Employees also participate in holiday toy, back-to-school and canned food drives.

Such events are community needs-driven annually. Northside also hosts the annual Christmas Celebration of Lights.



Cope

Northside Hospital
Foundation

Annual activities:

Northside Hospital's 1,500 volunteers participate in projects such as back-to-school drives through its "Community Connection" program.

Those projects are held in conjunction with the hospital's other charity drives, including the March of Dimes' Walk America, the American Heart Association's Heart Walk, the Corporate Challenge, the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life and other walk/races.

Managing 1,500 volunteers comes with expenses, most notably the hospital's annual Volunteer Appreciation Day at Zoo Atlanta, which has a catered lunch, and special events for volunteers and their families.

Other line items, or expenses, are tents, food and water supplied at races, T-shirts for each volunteer, project