

# Ministry Construction Planning Checklist

## Create Preliminary Plans

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- Nominate a vision team.
- Have the team choose a chairman, secretary, and possibly someone to coordinate communication with church leadership and the congregation.
- Have the team research current ministry needs.
- Have the team consider future ministry needs and include expansion in your plans.
- Document all team meetings—especially decisions.
- Ensure that the team communicates their vision to church leadership and the congregation before proceeding.

## Choose Qualified Professionals

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- Consider hiring a design firm—preferably one with experience building churches.
- Choose a reputable contractor.
- Research the candidates:
  - Make sure they're licensed.
  - Make sure they have at least five years of comparable experience.
  - Seek examples of work your candidates have done.
  - Check references from several current or past clients.
- Gather information from:
  - Your local building department.
  - The building contractors' association.
  - The Better Business Bureau.
- Ask specific questions, such as:
  - Was the project completed on schedule?
  - Was it completed within budget?
  - Were there problems along the way?
  - Were you pleased with the overall results?
- Check for insurance:
  - Obtain a certificate of insurance from your top three candidates as proof that they carry professional liability insurance.
  - Require the general contractor and all subcontractors to furnish a certificate of insurance verifying that all workers are covered by workers' compensation insurance.
- Bid it out:
  - Ask the best three candidates to submit bids on your project.
  - Give all three the same specifications for your project, so the bids will be easier to compare. Remember that the lowest bid isn't always the best bid. That contractor might use lower-quality materials or do less extensive work.
  - Consider bonding the project if it's large or time-sensitive. A bond ensures that a contractor is financially prepared to assume responsibility if he's unable to complete the job. Never proceed with a contractor if he's unable or unwilling to back up his work financially.

## Create a Master Plan

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- Prioritize your list of ministry needs.
- Prepare to work with an architect or design professional:
  - Nominate a liaison between your team and the architect.
  - Establish a chain of command between your team and the architect.
  - Establish a communication plan between your team and the architect.
  - Document communication and decisions.
- Work with an architect or design professional:
  - Determine whether you will build in phases.
  - Design an infrastructure that allows for expansion, if building in phases.
  - Determine the size of the initial project.
  - Determine the quality of materials.
  - Determine the cost.

## Evaluate Finances

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- Decide how much your church can afford.
- Establish how you'll pay for the project (loan, bond, capital stewardship campaign).
- Revise design plans, if necessary, to reflect your financial ability.

## Require a Written Contract

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- Specify the time frame.
- Specify the price range your church expects to pay.
- Include a copy of the drawings or architectural plans.
- Include a complete list of building specifications.
- Make sure the construction contract contains an indemnification provision requiring the contractor to compensate you for any injury, loss, or damage he or she causes.
- Have an attorney review all contracts before you sign them.

## Obtain Builder's Risk Insurance

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- Before a project begins, work with your agent to purchase builder's risk insurance.
- Clarify in writing who's responsible for insuring the building while it's being constructed.
- After the project is completed or occupancy begins, cancel the builder's risk coverage and add the building onto your ministry's property and liability policy.