

US Servas Annual Meeting Minutes

June 3, 2023

10-11:30am PT, 11-12:30am MT, 12-1:30pm CT 1-2:30pm ET

Link to YouTube Video of meeting: [Servas Annual Meeting June 2023](#)



Called to Order:

The meeting was held by Zoom – 87 attended from across the country.

Welcome by Richard Weaver, Board Chair: Richard welcomed everyone. New ByLaws have annual meeting in June. US Servas reincorporated in Nevada, previously in New York, which gives us more flexibility. No official business today but opportunity to share with each other and for members to learn how we've been operating under our new structure.

Meeting etiquette by Shyla Esko Bare, Board Vice-Chair – Requested people keep on mute, add location and any questions into the Chat.

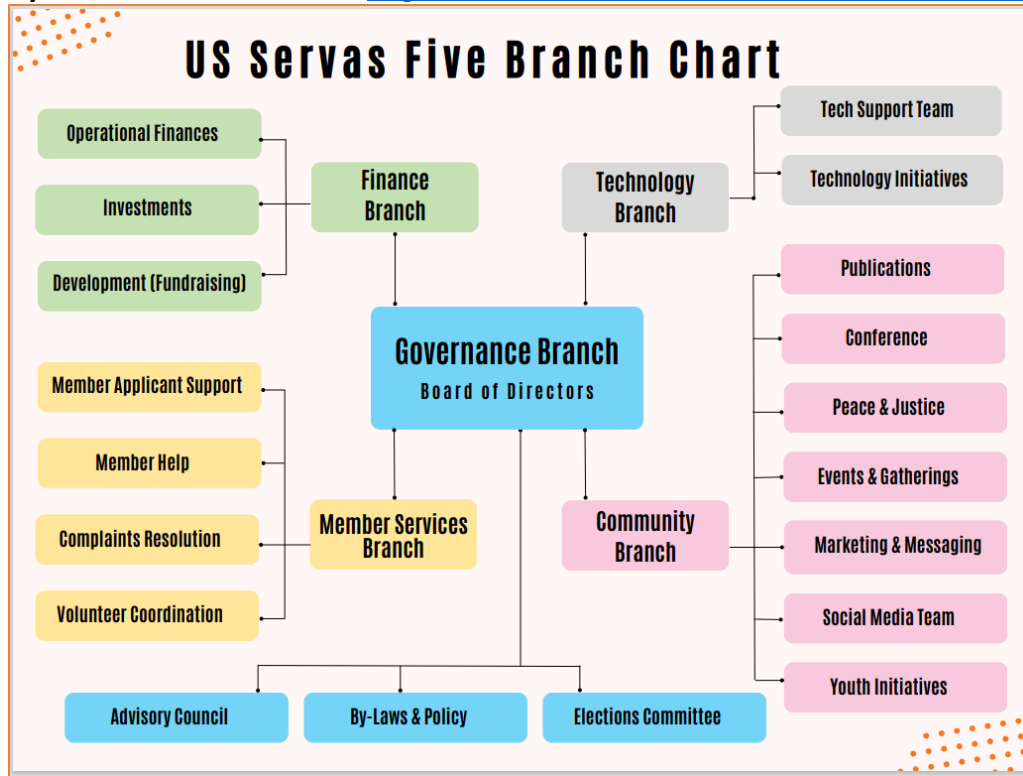
Break-Out Session - groups of 3-5

Members introduced themselves, said where they were calling from and shared their funniest experience with Servas as Host /Traveler

State of US Servas by Richard Weaver, Board Chair: US Servas has been through rough times with Covid – membership dropped dramatically, now in process of lapsed members returning. Communicating better. Not as expensive to be a member – now \$33 a year for everyone. But

financially because we no longer have office and employee expenses are in stable financial condition. We want to make the Servas membership experience valuable.

Reports by Branch: Five Branches – [Organization Chart of US Servas based on Five Branches](#)



Governance by Board Liaison Richard Weaver

Richard explained the Five Branches structure – dividing out the responsibilities of US Servas. Prior, dependent on staff. Teams are responsible for Governance, Finance, Technology, Member Services, Community. A board member acts as liaison for the branch to provide coordination and support.

Richard introduced the current US Servas Board.

Richard Weaver, Shyla Esko Bare, Leena Desai, Joanne Ferguson Cavanaugh, Bill Magargal, Shelley Mitchel, Arnie Rowland, Eileen Rowley, Tys Sniffen.

The Board had a productive retreat to set goals about where we want the organization to go.

Elections Committee elected at Annual Meeting October 2022.

Questions, Answers, and Comments from Chat: From Kelly Sackheim to Everyone: September 30 deadline to submit application for Board - questions and applications welcome any time!

The Advisory Council consists of long-term members of Servas who help advise.

Richard thanked former Peace Secretary, Yosi McIntire who served a number of years and recently stepped down. We are in the process of selecting a new Peace Secretary.

Responsibilities of the Peace Secretary

- Identify and encourage the expansion of peace and justice activities within the US Servas membership;
- Educate the US Servas membership regarding peace and justice issues;
- Propose peace messaging that aligns with the US Servas Mission and Vision;
- Coordinate with Servas International on peace and justice issues;
- Seek to establish, expand, and maintain a network of peace and justice contacts throughout the United States;
- Provide for cooperation and exchange of information with other peace and justice organizations;
- Arrange representation of US Servas at peace and justice conferences where possible and beneficial;
- Contribute articles to Servas International newsletters and the US Servas newsletter on the topics of peace and justice;
- Oversee Peace Awards process;
- Serve as a non-voting ex officio member of the US Servas Board and report regularly on the team activities;
- Carry out any other duties as are properly delegated by the Board.

Questions, Answers & Comments from Chat: Phyllis Chinn: peace secretary — one of the required positions to be a full member country in SI!

Radha Radhakrishna, former US Board member is now Servas International President, and Jon Corrodo, US Servas member is Co-Treasurer of Servas International.

Finance by Board Liaison and Treasurer Leena Desai:

Jan 1, 2022 \$398,910.95 end of 2022 \$504,121.45. Balance as of April 30th Balance \$518,117.69

Income 202,032.58 broken down into Membership fees, donations, income from conference

Unrestricted \$152,262.11 \$140,000 bequest from former Servas member trust, Jim Edwards

Investment Income - - negative return

(Full Financial Report at end of these minutes)

Questions, Answers, and Comments from Chat:

What percentage does the \$66,000 loss represent of the total invested?

From Leena D: The loss was from 435K+ of investment which amounts to 15% loss. Right now, we are in a process of investing the cash and reviewing our investments and change according to today's market.

Is the unrealized loss lower as of today (since the market is up since Dec)?

*Leena answered this during the meeting and said YES.
And does Servas have an investment policy?*

*Leena answered this during the meeting and said YES. For more of her answer
listen to recording*

*Leena D to Everyone: 2022 was running in green (black). For the last few years, long
before the pandemic, Servas was running in red. First year when we are running
in green.*

What was the goal of substantially reducing dues?

*Shyla/Richard/Joanne answered this during meeting – reducing our fee put us in line
with other Servas countries, we do not need to charge as much now that we
don't have office/staff, lower fee makes joining more accessible to youth. For full
answers listen to the recording.*

*From Phyllis Chinn to Everyone: Only travelers paid before — the \$33 for
everyone actually generates about the same as a costly LOI*

*From Kathy Tholin to Everyone: I think the lower cost is pretty essential for
getting more diverse members.*

Member Services by Board Liaison and Secretary Joanne Ferguson Cavanaugh:

[US Servas Membership Report Through May 2023](#)

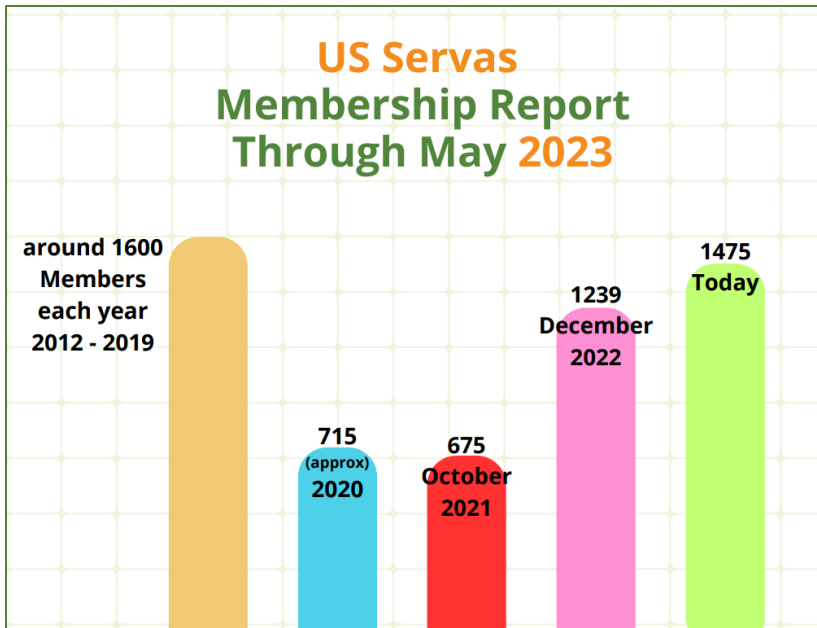
2012-2019 Average 1600 members

2020 Approximately 715

2021 (October) 675 – During pandemic long-time Servas members in their 70s, followed
by 60s & 80s made up more than half of our membership they responded to the Board's
call to join and support Servas even though they would likely not be traveling or hosting

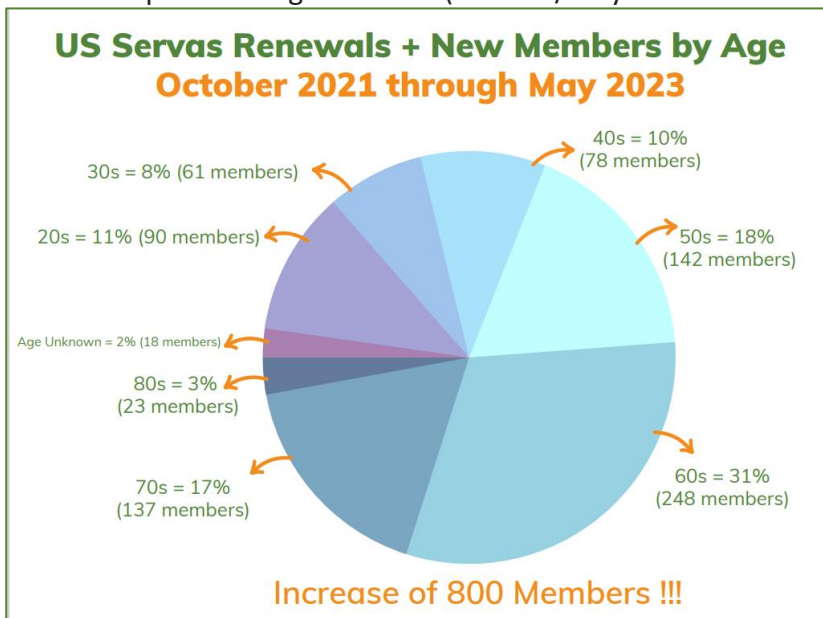
2022 (Dec) 1239

2023 To Date: 1475



[US Servas Renewals & New Members by Age Oct 2021-May 2023 \(increase of 800\)](#)

We've had an increase of 800 members from October 2021 through May of 2023! The 800 members we have gained in the past 20 months shows that the age is trending younger. We gained 90 people in their 20s!! The new members mean that our current membership is more age diverse. (FYI – 18/19-year-olds are included with the “20s”.)



Member Services made up of 4 teams of volunteers:

1) Member Applicant Support Team consists of volunteers who have administrative access plus our dedicated interviewers. The team onboards new applicants by distributing the new member applications to a regional coordinator responsible for

finding an interviewer to start the process, finishing by creating a Servas International account for the new member to fill out once accepted.

2) Member Help Team consists of volunteers who renew and issues estamps for current members and respond to customer service queries that come in through our 800 number and “contact us” link on our webpage. We have responded to 1394 queries since the process was instituted in April 2022.

3) Complaints Resolution Team. They meet as needed to help resolve issues as they arise.


4) The Volunteer Coordination Team is newly established. They are working with the branches to create job descriptions for the volunteer positions for better volunteer recruitment. If you have in the past indicated interest but didn’t hear back from us, we apologize as our Volunteer Coordination Team was just getting established so please reach out again on our [Volunteer Registry](#) link and we WILL make contact. We are seeking volunteers for Tech Support, Youth, Publications, Social Media, Member Help, Volunteer Coordination and Welcome Wagon Teams. KUDOs to all our volunteers at US Servas past and present-YOU know who you are - as we would not have weathered the pandemic without YOU and be able to function as an all-volunteer run organization, the way all the other Servas countries around the world do. It has been a unique experience to be a part of this transition from office and staff to an all-volunteer creating direct lines of communication with our members which has been a delightful added bonus to the transition to being all-volunteer. Thank you for your continued support of US Servas and for your patience.

US Servas is now an ALL-VOLUNTEER organization.
And we need more volunteers!!

Peace and Understanding
Through Travel & Hosting

Profile

MEMBERS AREA >



If you believe in this organization and our mission of peace - one conversation at a time, we invite you to consider joining us in a volunteer role.

Step up and add your name to the [Volunteer Registry](#).

Questions and Answers from Chat:

How many interviewers to we have in the U.S.? From Joanne FC, Secretary US Servas to Everyone: As Shyla mentioned, 75 interviewers on our roster with 69 who have done an interview.

How many volunteers do we have in each role? From Joanne FC, Secretary US Servas to Everyone: We currently have about 10 volunteers on Member Help and Member Application Teams with some crossover of volunteers helping on these teams, and on other teams.

From Joanne FC, Secretary US Servas to Everyone:
<https://www.usservas.org/volunteers>

Technology by Board Liaison Shyla Esko Bare:

The Technology team is working on the behind-the-scenes changes needed to have new membership levels. The plan is to roll this out this summer.

The new levels are Friend of US Servas and Host/Traveler.

This chart shows the difference of the levels: [Friend + Host/Traveler Info Doc](#)

Friend is a pre-interview level while Host/Traveler is post interview AND post orientation.

2023 New Membership Levels for US Servas

<i>Friend of US Servas</i>	<i>Host/Traveler</i>
<p>BENEFITS OF BEING A FRIEND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Can attend virtual US Servas meetingsCan attend local eventsReceive US Servas emailsHave access to Member area of US Servas WebsiteCan be a part of Peace & Justice TeamCan volunteer in limited roles (helping with local Peace initiatives)	<p>HOST / TRAVELERS GET ALL THE BENEFITS OF BEING A FRIEND</p> <p>PLUS +++</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Have a Servas International ProfileCan HostCan TravelCan make friendships with Servas Members around-the-worldReceive Servas International EmailsCan Vote in US ServasCan volunteer in any capacity with US Servas or Servas InternationalCan run for office in US Servas or Servas International
<p>LIMITATIONS OF FRIEND MEMBERSHIP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Can NOT HostCan NOT TravelDo NOT have a Servas International profileDo NOT get SI emailsCan NOT vote or run for officeCan NOT volunteer in role with WA or SI access	

2023 New Membership Levels for US Servas

Friend of US Servas

This is a **pre-interview** level that is similar to Servas International's plan to create an "Amiko" Level which is also pre-interview.

(Amiko means friend in Esperanto)

New Applicants will **Start** at Friend Level.

This will cost \$33 annually.

Volunteers should have this level active sometime **this summer**.

Host/Traveler

This is a POST-interview and POST-orientation level.

This correlates to our current US Servas membership.

Current members will automatically move to this level.

There is **NO** additional cost to be at the Host/Traveler Level.

Members do **NOT** get access to Servas International until they move to this level - which they do at their own pace.

Questions and Answers from Chat:

Purpose/rational for friend level? One or two examples?

Do we have reason to believe that people WANT to be a "friend?"

Shyla answered these during the meeting – for full answer listen to the recording.

In short, some people joined this past year and wanted to only be supporters of Servas not full members. Most people will want to become host/travelers. But the new friend level will change our onboarding to not be as cumbersome to volunteers and let people become host/traveler when they want.

When will people be able to give gift memberships?

From Shyla Esko Bare, Director US Servas: Gift memberships will follow us getting the Friend level active. It won't happen at the same time, but once the Friend level is up, we will then work out details for gift memberships.

The Tech team is also working with Events & Gatherings to help get local events promoted and onto the US Servas Website. The process was set up last summer, but there have been some glitches and we are now working on those. The Board believes having more local interaction between members will help our organization thrive. And we know lots of areas do summer picnics, so if you plan something, please use the Event posting form. You will find this in the Members Area / Event Support.



Questions and Answers from Chat:

From Mylene's iPhone to Everyone: I would love to be a volunteer in Vermont around Burlington to create events and gatherings.

From Katherine to Everyone: an idea for programming --- has anyone ever attended the zoom regional programs from servas SE Asia? They have a great idea. I have attended several of them.

From Joanne FC, Secretary US Servas to Everyone: Ideas for programming - - it is a matter of volunteer capacity. We did a lot of virtual events during the pandemic, but summer of 2021 didn't have much attendance so dropped them due to ROI

Community by Board Liaison Bill Magargal:

Presented information via a pre-recorded presentation about the Conference, Peace Award, and SYLE (Student Youth Language Exchange). To hear this report – watch the video recording on YouTube (link above).

Questions and Answers from Chat:

My annual membership ends at the end of June 2023. I tried to register for the October event in New York and could not. Is that because my membership will expire at the end of June? From Shyla Esko Bare, Director US Servas: Actually, you could not sign up as the registration is not open yet. I believe it should be open this month.

Is there a plan to get from the closest location to the annual meeting for those who don't have a car?

Will the conference be hybrid, or in person only?

Shyla/Bill answered during the meeting – the plan is for it to be in-person only. Doing hybrid meetings is tough on tech. Our venue this year is remote with limited bandwidth.

Should we consider recording conference presentations?

Recording the conference presentations would be great. We have a Servas YouTube page.

I agree that presentations at conferences should be recorded and put on YouTube and websites to spread the word about Servas!

These comments will be passed on to the conference planning team, so they know some members would like talks at the conference to be recorded and shared.

From Julie Emory to Everyone: Bill - GREAT pages to describe the NY conference. Lots of work. Thank you.

What does SYLE mean?

Can you describe/explain SYLE?

From Daniel Bare - US Servas Tech Support to Everyone:

SYLE - The Servas Youth Language Experience (SYLE) is a unique opportunity for Servas youth (ages 18-30) in which you are able to spend a month in the country of your choice immersed in the local language and culture! <https://usservas.org/servas-youth-language-experience>

General Q & A Facilitated by Shyla Esko Bare –

Question came into chat throughout the meeting. Questions/Answers/Comments related to specific topics are listed in those areas. General ones are below. For full Q&A listen to the recording.

Questions, Answers, and Comments from Chat:

Will you please send a copy of the PowerPoint slides or a link to them in an email?

Shyla confirmed that minutes of this meeting would be on US Servas website including the graphics shown today.

From Mharia & Baba to Everyone: Suggestion: Find more avenues to support a more diverse base of members

From Bill: Is the Servas Peace School in Türkiye a teaching facility with curricula, or just a place to gather

Discussion Topic Facilitated by Richard Weaver: What it means to be a Peace Organization

Break Out Session: Discuss this in small groups – Is there a role beyond linking travelers and hosts, and what is appropriate for us to do? What do those things look like? How can you be involved in peace related activities?

Report back on Peace Organization ideas:

Peace Thoughts from Chat:

- *I would love to see the 'peace and justice' pairing be used to link the connection between justice and peace*
- *The conversations between travelers and hosts could be more focused on peace-making as an activist aspect of SERVAS. I think the cross-cultural aspects are strong, and need to be a foundation of peacebuilding not the sole focus*
- *Connection is key, still---- and being able to operationalize it is the crux of it. I agree that local events are key. Outreaching and connecting with groups that are already doing the work. Nonviolent communication workshops are huge, and we can link each other with opportunities that are able to promulgate our values.*
- *Laughter Yoga is a GREAT way to build peace!!!*
- *Rachel discussed her presentations at local Libraries to explain the Servas role in UN Women's Conf and suggested use of local or online bulletin boards.*
- *Ideas for Peace...Stand up for Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Also, it seems that SERVAS could take a role in teaching what peace means to younger generations by sponsoring some competitions of peace posters K-10, peace speech contests middle and high school. Awards "trippships".*
- *Peace camps with the Native American tribes who feel disrespected.*
- *Make Peace part of the SYLE process*
- *Mel made a great point about outreach. We discussed how to have Servas local gatherings and invite the general public, via physical flying and also Social Media bulletin boards.*
- *Steve suggested meeting with Braver Angels — diverse thinkers willing to talk with others.*
- *Servas could talk to organizations like Braver Angels that brings together people who come from opposite ends of the political spectrum AND who are willing to talk together...for peace.*
- *Take a position on international conflicts.*
- *Reach out/connect with local peace and justice organizations, faith and interfaith groups, your community newspaper*
- *Our group had people from Washington, NY - -International Cities of Peace - - see if your city can apply. Bellingham WA has had a weekly peace vigil for the last 50 years.*
- *Bethene Trexel has a lot of valuable information as a former Servas officer person from NYC about National Peace Secretary's former role of connecting local peace groups - to local Servas groups so they can participate.*
- *Past National Peace Secretary would collaborate with peace organizations around the nation and then ask local Servas people to get involved with their activities.*
- *Some takeaways from our breakout group:*
 - *huge topic*
 - * the power of face-to-face relationship building*

** create a tab on the Servas website for centering justice*

- *Rosalyn suggested advocating publicly for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.*
- *Suggest all Servas members share their experiences with local justice activities; also recruit new Servas members from social justice groups*
- *From our conversation: most important kinds of activities: 1) reinforce the mission of international dialogue and peacemaking, so that we make it part of our interactions; 2) provide resources to membership about activities we can do; also 3) less crucial for organization to take organizational positions itself*
- *Promoting Peace ideas: including peace and justice component in conference (Bill looks to be on track here); Supporting Peace School (fiscally & volunteers); discussion topics and volunteer opportunities during local gatherings; sharing various holiday traditions via Zoom and/or social media.*
- *You have to create the conditions to Peace to occur you have to create a safe environment. A safe environment has to be defined. The room has to look like the people you want to have Peace with.*
- *Connect with organizations like Retired Peace Corps volunteers.*
- *Encourage a conversation around issues of justice in geographic spaces where people travel- make these conversations, normal even as uncomfortable as it can often be*
- *Are we peacebuilders in our own communities?*
- *Peace has an accompany idea of Justice*
- *Link the concepts of justice and peace*
- *Provide information about SERVAS at other local Peace Organizations we belong to. Use Facebook as a means of providing info about Peace and SERVAS foundation*
- *Learn more about how we as individuals uphold the system of white supremacy. Provide resources on website*
- *Broaden the notion of what constitutes a peace activity. Ron Roth in our breakout room helps send medical supplies around the world. This is definitely peace-making.*

Annual Meeting Wrap-up by Richard Weaver:

Please keep in touch with us with ideas and concerns – we are a membership organization, and we are in support of you just as you support US Servas.

Annual Meeting Adjourned at 11:35am (Pacific Time)

Financial Reports:

US Servas, Inc.

Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2022

Assets as of Jan 01, 2022	
Cash Balance	36,467.57
Investments	362,443.38
Total Assets	398,910.95

Assets as of Dec 31, 2022	
Cash Balance	69,035.12
Investments	435,086.33
Total Assets	504,121.45

Assets as of April 30, 2023	
Cash Balance	77,861.87
Investments	440,255.82
Total Assets	518,117.69

Profit and Loss Report (2 pages):

US Servas, Inc

Profit and Loss

January - December 2022

	TOTAL
Income	
4100 Member Fees	45,309.00
4290 Donations	
4291 Unrestricted Donations	152,260.11
4292 Restricted Donations	0.00
Total 4290 Donations	152,260.11
4300 Meeting Fees	5,263.00
4900 Misc. Income	100.45
Total Income	\$202,932.56
GROSS PROFIT	\$202,932.56
Expenses	
6021 Outside Services	
6022 Website Design & Maintenance	8,066.46
Total 6021 Outside Services	8,066.46
6040 Printing	
6043 Stationery, Etc.	108.74
Total 6040 Printing	108.74
6050 Outreach	800.00
6060 Postage & Delivery	1,426.46
6080 Office Supplies & Expense	75.00
6150 Telephone and Internet	152.70
Total 6060 Office Supplies & Expense	227.70
6085 Electronic subscriptions	149.90
6100 Insurance	
6102 Board of Directors' Ins.	453.64
6103 Gen. Liab.	605.24
Total 6100 Insurance	1,058.88
6110 Professional Fees	
6111 CPA	1,206.25
Total 6110 Professional Fees	1,206.25
6120 Meetings & Conferences	8,389.13
6122 Board Retreat Expense	376.71
Total 6120 Meetings & Conferences	8,765.84
6125 Travel	1,750.00
6160 Non Profit Registration Fees	300.00
6222 Servas Intl Online Fee	8,391.00
6223 Donations to Servas International	5,000.00

US Servas, Inc
Profit and Loss
January - December 2022

	TOTAL
6250 Bank Charges	
6251 Credit Card Fees	2,162.11
6252 Banking Fees	100.00
Total 6250 Bank Charges	2,262.11
Total Expenses	\$39,513.34
NET OPERATING INCOME	\$163,419.22
Other Income	
8010 Investment Income	
8020 Dividend Income	0.00
8022 Qualified Dividend Income	481.02
8023 Non-Qualified Dividend Income	3,536.41
Total 8020 Dividend Income	4,017.43
8025 Realized Capital Gain/Loss	
8026 Short Term Realized Capital Gain (Loss)	-8,396.08
8027 Long Term Realized Capital Gain (Loss)	2,505.71
Total 8025 Realized Capital Gain/Loss	-5,890.37
8030 Unrealized Capital Gain/Loss	-65,109.21
Total 8010 Investment Income	-66,982.15
Total Other Income	\$ -66,982.15
Other Expenses	
Unrealized Gain or Loss	0.00
Total Other Expenses	\$0.00
NET OTHER INCOME	\$ -66,982.15
NET INCOME	\$96,437.07

End of meeting Comments from Chat:

From David: THANK YOU to everyone for a great meeting

From Christie and Blaze: Thank you everyone for showing up, volunteering, etc.

From Ellyn: As a new member, this was so informative. Thank you

From Mel: Thank you to the Board for a very well-run meeting.

From Mylene: Thank you thank you thank you 🤗🙏💜🕊️🌟🌀🦋

From Teresa: A HUGE thanks to the board and other volunteers that are making US Servas thrive!!! Great meeting!

From Rozlynn: Thank you!

From Jane: Thank you to everyone!

From Johan: Thanks all! I believe Servas' commitment to peace and justice issues presents a strong way to attract younger and diverse membership who care deeply about social justice

From Kathy: Thank you to the board for all your work!!

From Peggy: Thanks to the board and volunteers for keeping Servas going!

From Mary: Thanks - great meeting!!

From Wyva: I am excited by this renewed life in the SERVAS community in the US and internationally. Thank you for a great meeting!!!

From Natalie: Thank you - great meeting! Very well run and informational. Everyone take care!

From Jeanne: This was a wonderful meeting. Thanks to all of you.

From Mharia & Baba: Thank You so much!!

From Julie: ENJOYED IT. Thank you!!

From Rachel: Thanks everyone. Posting the recording of this on the YouTube site will be helpful.

From Ginger: Thanks, helps me to feel a real part of the community of SERVAS

From Bethene: Best meeting in years. Thank you.

From Gail: Thank you very much!

From Steve: More meetings like this monthly!!!

From Katherine: Thanks for the online programming, especially for those who can't travel like me

From Mary + Jon: Very organized meeting--thank you! Well worth our time!



