

Pasadena Educational Foundation FAQs regarding Grants and Fundraising

As a service to the community, PTAs and schools in the Pasadena Unified School District, the Pasadena Educational Foundation (PEF) compiled the following are tips and answers to frequently asked questions to help with and coordinate efforts for grants and fundraising.

1) What does PEF do?

PEF develops community partnerships, financial resources and educational opportunities that benefit all students and encourage greater involvement from the community in support of public education. Among many other activities, PEF works with PUSD to write foundation and government grants to help support this mission. While PEF usually directly administers private foundation grants, government agency grants are generally awarded directly to PUSD. PEF provides this service at no cost to the district.

2) How can I find out about grants?

There are a number of Internet sites listing grants available to teachers, schools, nonprofits, etc. PEF also sends out information regarding competitions open to individual schools and teachers such as those listed above. We encourage you to contact PEF, however, before applying to foundations as such requests are best coordinated to ensure that they are not disqualified and that schools and programs are not competing against one another.

3) When should I apply for grants? The first answer is to apply only when it is appropriate. Read the grant guidelines thoroughly to make sure that you are eligible, within the geographic scope, and are applying for a project which falls within the funders priorities. The second answer is to pay attention to the stated deadlines and make sure you apply before then and in the appropriate format requested. Grants usually take several months to process. As PTA leadership frequently changes and PTAs do not maintain paid administrative staff, few foundations are likely to give directly to a PTA. Because of these issues, it is worthwhile to explore other avenues for raising funds.

4) Are there grants for PTAs?

Although rare, there are some grants available to assist unit, council, and district PTAs and California State PTA commissions and committees to develop and implement programs in parent education, cultural arts, and leadership development. Grants are also available to assist unit, council and district PTAs to translate PTA materials into other languages. Applications may be obtained from the California State PTA office, on the website at www.capta.org, or from Fax-on-Demand at 877. 406.3680.

Parents can be instrumental in helping teachers and administrators submit grants to companies and foundations that offer grants or donor programs to individual teachers and schools. This includes not only **PEF's Teacher and All School Grant Program (deadline November 28, 2011)** but an increasing number of companies such as Target, Airborne, DonorsChoose.org and others. PEF grant guidelines (as well as links to other teacher/school grant sources) are available on our website, www.pasedfoundation.org. Please contact Linda Machida at (626)396-3600 ext. 88353 or machida.linda@pusd.us

5) How can my school start an Annual Fund?

A growing number of schools have started working with PEF to receive funds for their Annual Fund campaigns. Annual Funds are distinct from PTA funds, and can generally be used during the next fiscal year or beyond. Since a number of factors need to be considered, we suggest that you contact the PEF office to arrange for a meeting.

6) How can I plan a fundraiser?

Do you want funds for a specific project or equipment? Or do you also want to build a sense of community? Is there an educational component or theme? Some other questions to think about:

- **Who is my target audience?** Is it the parents, the neighboring community members, the kids? How many audience

members do you think will participate or donate?

- **How much do we want to make?** What do you think your audience can afford? Multiply an average by the number you come up with for potential audience members/donors.
- **What interests my potential audience/donor?** Will we be identifying a specific purpose for our fundraiser, such as the school's band or playground equipment, etc. or will it generally be for the school and the PTA to use at its discretion? If it is to address specific need, is there general agreement within the school community that this is a priority?

In general, most PTA and school fundraisers tend to fall into the following types of categories:

- **Product sales** featuring everything and anything from wrapping paper to cookie dough.
- **Events** that usually feature some sort of attraction, exhibition or competition, but can be stand alone fundraisers such as a silent auction dinner.
- **Services**, often provided by students, such as car washes

Examples of a few fundraisers that various PUSD schools do:

- **Restaurant Nights** - Many local restaurants already have established procedures for helping schools (and themselves) by offering them a percentage of the sales for a night. The school/PTA distributes flyers to come to restaurant on specified night (usually a weekday night). Please visit www.BuyInPUSD.org for more information about this campaign and a list of local restaurants supporting PUSD schools.
- **Fitness Raisers** - Walk-A-Thons and Jog-A-Thons can be a great way to promote health and fitness.
- **E-scrip and other shopping percentage fundraising** - If parents are frequent shoppers at stores like Vons, Ralphs or Target, this may be a good way to have percentage of their shopping dollars go back to the school. Target has a relatively simple sign-up procedure – ask the store. E-scrip

may require more of a campaign. Some PTAs have a table with the forms at Back to School night or other events.

A successful school fundraiser can sometimes become a signature community event, something that families look forward to each year. Once you have some ideas for the type of fundraiser you want to launch and for what purpose, then you can really get started on the nitty gritty planning. A few tips to get you on your way:

Up front costs

You will need to consider whether there will be expenses prior to receiving the funds to be raised. If so, will you be able to front these? Is there an element of risk involved?

Culture and Language

If building community is a goal, school fundraisers should try to be sensitive to their diverse populations and communicate in languages as appropriate.

Food

This can be good, particularly if you can get it donated. But one needs to be careful about health code and food preparation issues. One story I remember involved a community group that prepared food that got everyone sick. Another issue is candy, sweets and sodas. Does selling these send the wrong health message? There is actually a PUSD board policy recommending against them.

Pricing

This can be tricky because of income disparities. Ask around, particularly the teachers and principal, and find out about what is the going rate for fundraising activities.

District and School Staff Support

Events on school grounds (and grant applications) need the support and sanction of school and district administration. The time it takes staff to respond to a question or a problem can be very frustrating. Sorry, no easy answers here. The point, however, is that getting involved in your children's school is a learning experience and a starting point for how we can all work to make for a better system and a community that cares for all its kids.