



BUILDING HEALTHY STUDENT BODIES – ONE AT A TIMESM

**Seeking Donor
Support for
Your School
Wellness
Program**





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Introduction








The Local School Wellness Policy, part of the *Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004*, requires each school district participating in the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program to have a local wellness policy in place. With alarming increases in the rates of childhood and adolescent obesity, programs that promote the health of students through nutrition, nutrition education and physical activity, as well as tobacco use prevention and other lifestyle issues, are more important now than ever. In addition, staff wellness programs help reinforce student wellness programs since staff serve as strong role models. Implementing and sustaining these programs, however, require funds that may not be readily available in your school's budget.

While it may not be written into your job description to raise funds, you know as well as anyone that finding support — financially or otherwise — is key to developing successful projects.

Seeking support is an art as much as it is a science, but it doesn't have to be a daunting task. This handbook refines the process, providing eight easy-to-follow steps. Use them as a guide. You may need to reorder the steps, or add others, in light of your particular project and your school environment. The steps include:

- 1** Define Your Need
- 2** Identify Potential Donors
- 3** Obtain Approval and Support from Your School/
District Administration
- 4** Develop Your Fund Seeking Strategy
- 5** Draft, Review and Submit Your Proposals
- 6** Follow Up
- 7** Receive Notification from Donors
- 8** Follow Through

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Step 1

Define Your Need

Think big! In what ways can you impact student wellness in your school or district?

The first step is simple. Just answer these six basic questions:

- What changes do you wish to see in your school or district relative to student wellness, either in the way it's taught or the way it's supported?
- What projects do you propose to help change things?
- How much do you anticipate your projects will cost to implement and to sustain?
- Can the projects be phased or implemented in stages, or scaled back, if needed?
- What resources are already available to help you with your projects (financial, staff time, facilities, equipment and otherwise)?
- What resources are you lacking (in the short-term as well as the long-term)?
- What do you need to do to obtain school or district support of your vision?

Example:

- "We plan to schedule cardiovascular routines for the 5th grade and 6th grade PE classes that will last 20-25 minutes. Students will gain increases in aerobic capacity and lowered body mass index. We will need 35 heart rate monitors for the classes in order to track student progress. Each monitor will cost \$250 for a total of \$8,750."

This is just a high-level overview, so don't spend a lot of time taking this first step. Stay flexible and be willing to revise your project ideas as needs evolve and resources materialize.

By the time you get to **Step 5**, you will be ready to draft a detailed description of your project.

Consider this:

- Always look first within your school district for funding. If the necessary resources for your project can be justified as curricular needs, the school or district may cover the cost. Many schools and districts allocate funding in other areas, such as technology, that can be shifted in part to improve wellness programs.
- Engage others interested in the projects as sounding boards in constructing the overview.
- You may wish to talk first with your principal or superintendent about the overview (see **Step 3**) before proceeding to **Step 2**.

Deliverable:

- A summary or statement that articulates your goal, anticipated outcomes, resource requirements for the short- and long-term, how much additional financial support you need and what you need it for (sometimes referred to as the "resource gap" or the "funding gap")

Step 2

Identify Potential Donors

Think of this step in terms of brainstorming. Consider various sources of support, and be sure not to overlook any viable entities. You will have a chance in **Step 3** and **Step 4** to narrow this list and actually make contact with the sources that are most likely to support your project. Later in the process, as you develop your fund seeking strategy and follow up, you may be surprised to discover the amount of support that's available to you, as well as the strength of relationships you can help to foster between your school or district and your community.

Following is a list of types of funding sources:

- **Individuals and Groups:**

- Parents
- Parent organizations and PTA groups
- Booster clubs
- Alumni groups
- Activity-oriented clubs (cycling or tennis clubs, square dance clubs, dinner groups, etc.)
- Civic organizations
- Celebrities from your area
- Key past supporters

Examples:

- Singer/songwriter Sheryl Crow helped her hometown of Kennett, Missouri, raise funds to build a new aquatic center.
- Rap star Snoop Dogg launched a football league to attract budding sports stars in some tough neighborhoods in Los Angeles, California, allowing them to join only if they maintain a 2.0 grade point average.

• **Businesses:**

- Large employers (especially those whose employees' children attend your school)
- Healthcare providers and healthcare-related businesses
- Businesses that list a commitment to community wellness among their core values
- Insurance agencies or insurance companies
- Fitness centers
- Sporting goods stores
- Railroad and other large industries
- Banks
- Newspapers, radio stations, TV stations, Internet service providers
- Grocery stores
- Fast food restaurants
- Companies affiliated with school board members
- School vendors for food, sports equipment, construction and supplies

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- Computer giant IBM donated more than 150 Young Explorer computer learning centers to every pre-K and Kindergarten classroom in lower Manhattan, New York where education was disrupted in the aftermath of September 11. Earlier, IBM provided more than 250 of the colorful computer centers to every "More at Four" classroom in North Carolina to increase the quality of learning for at-risk 4-year-olds.

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- **Foundations:**
 - School/district foundations or fundraising organizations
 - Local or regional business foundations
 - Local or regional family foundations
 - Community foundations
 - National and regional foundations with focus areas that relate to your project
- **Federal and State Government:**
 - U.S. Department of Education (e.g., PEP Grants)
 - National Institutes of Health
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
 - State agencies for health

- Country music star *Martina McBride* joined volunteers from Home Depot to construct a new playground in her hometown of Medicine Lodge, Kansas.
- Grocery store chain Price Chopper allows customers to earn points toward free computers and sports equipment for their schools.
- Office Depot rewards schools based on school supplies purchases.
- Best Buy provides grants in support of school programs that creatively integrate interactive technology into the curriculum.

Consider this:

- Many businesses are going through their own internal strategic planning processes and are looking for ways to make notable differences in the community. All local businesses will benefit from a healthy and active population.
- Be creative as you compile your initial potential donors list. While some entities may prefer to be the sole sponsor of a project, others may welcome the opportunity to collaborate.
- Creativity is key in building alliances with parent groups and booster clubs. Consider combining efforts to raise money for equipment that can be used by your project as well as your school's athletic teams or student organizations.
- Local fitness centers, universities, sports teams and hospitals may be willing to donate used equipment.
- Universities require professors to write grant applications. Contact the chair of the education or nutrition departments at your local or area university and inquire about opportunities to work together to obtain grant money.
- It may strengthen your request to list possible opportunities for community exposure (news release, signage or plaque, etc.). Keep in mind that what is important to one donor may not be important to others.
- Assess the level of effort for the options identified to guide time investments.
- Make sure you have a process in place to cultivate and handle unsolicited offers of help.

Deliverable:

- A (fairly comprehensive) list of potential donors and likelihood of success

Step 3

Obtain Approval and Support from Your School/District Administration

If you have not done so already, now is the time to make an appointment to talk with your school principal or superintendent about your project. You will need a commitment of support from your school and/or district administration before you proceed.

There are several important reasons for this:

- Your principal or superintendent may have additional ideas and other potential funding sources to suggest, and he or she may be able to help narrow your list of potential donors.
- Your principal or superintendent may be aware of similar projects, timing issues, existing relationships or collaborative possibilities.
- This step may be required for new projects to be in compliance with school or district policies.
- Your principal or superintendent may be able to refer you to a grant writer who can help draft your proposal.

- Your principal or superintendent may be able to talk with school board members to garner donor support from their places of employment.
- An early letter of support from your principal or superintendent may be a very helpful appendix to your proposal.

Consider this:

- Keep in mind that many grant applications will require an administrator's signature. You will avoid last-minute problems by gaining this early support and keeping administrators in the loop as you draft your proposal.

Deliverables:

- A letter of support from your school principal or superintendent
- Counsel, guidance and suggestions from your administrator

Step 4

Develop Your Fund Seeking Strategy

Now that you have a project, a goal, a comprehensive list of potential donors and buy-in from your administration, you are ready to develop a strategy for seeking financial support.

Here are a few questions to answer:

- What are other schools/districts in your area doing relative to your project?
- Who is funding other wellness projects in your area?
- Is it possible to collaborate with other programs, schools, districts or community organizations? Is this kind of collaboration important to your potential donors?
- What is the ideal timing for implementing your project? What is the ideal timing for securing funding for your project? Does this timing coincide with a potential donor's funding cycle?
- Who will write the proposal? If a grant writer is not available from your school or district, do you need to seek outside help?
- Do your potential donors prefer to fund projects outright or to provide matching funds?

Your answers to these questions will help prepare you to draft the proposal and help you determine which potential donors are most likely to support your project.

As you narrow your list of potential donors, begin to cultivate relationships with them. Contact potential donors to request application forms and/or their funding guidelines. If possible, arrange a meeting to talk in person about their funding priorities and your project. Learn what is important to them, and consider ways in which your project — and a relationship with your school or program — can help meet the donors' needs.

Deliverables:

- A written strategy with a timetable and to-do list
- A short list of likely donors and a copy of their funding requirements
- Potential grant writers, if needed

Step 5

Draft, Review and Submit Your Proposals

A proposal typically includes the following components:

- Justification or case statement
- Overall goal and supporting objectives
- Program description
- Statement of need (i.e., what you are asking the donor to provide, financially or otherwise)
- Budget [see sample at right]
- Evaluation methodology, performance measurement and goals (i.e., how you are going to show that you have done what you said you were going to do)
- Plans for sustainability
- Timeline of activities
- Supporting documentation (newspaper articles, letters of support, etc.)

Don't hesitate to submit proposals to more than one potential donor. Your proposal may need to be customized for each potential donor. If the donor has written guidelines, be sure to follow them exactly, reorganizing content if necessary.

Consider this:

- Allow yourself plenty of time to meet the donor's deadline. Remember that you may need to obtain a signature from your principal or superintendent. Additionally, some donors now prefer or even require electronic grant application submissions.
- Be sure to include a statement in your proposal about the potential donor's priorities and how they align with the objectives of your project.

Sample Budget

Some potential donors may prefer to fund only certain parts of your project (i.e., one may choose to fund only salaries, another only equipment and supplies, etc.). Most ask to see a itemized budget of total project costs as well as an list of items/activities for which you are seeking support. Total budgets should incorporate professional development fees for staff, warranty fees, maintenance costs, storage/security costs, liability/insurance costs, special wiring requirements for technology, research/project evaluation costs.

This is merely an example of how an itemized budget could be formatted.

	YEAR 1 Total Project Costs	YEAR 1 Support Request
PERSONNEL		
Project Coordinator	\$40,000	\$10,000
Benefits (10% salary)	\$4,000	\$1,000
Total Personnel	\$44,000	\$11,000
TRAVEL		
PE4life Academy training fee and travel (for team of 10)	\$7,500	\$7,500
AAHPERD meeting (3 staff to attend in 2007, 2008, 2009)	\$2,000	\$1,000
Total Travel	\$9,500	\$8,500
CATEGORY 3 (Ex: Equipment)	\$50,000	\$25,000
CATEGORY 4 (Ex: Supplies)	\$15,000	\$5,000
CATEGORY 5 (Ex: Assessment)	\$10,000	\$10,000
Total	\$128,500	\$59,500

Funded: \$69,000
Support Request: \$59,500

Total Project Costs: \$128,500

Example:

- "On behalf of the students and faculty at Community High School, we are writing to ask Company A for \$5,000 to purchase five hand cycles for Project Wellness." (Be direct!)

Deliverable:

- A written proposal submitted to one or more likely donors

Step 6

Follow Up

There are several important things to do now that your proposal has been submitted.

First, make contact with the potential donor to be sure your proposal has been received. Ask whether or not they need additional information in order to make a decision, and when you will be notified and/or when they prefer for you to check back. Upon reviewing your proposal, the potential donor may wish to negotiate certain points with you.

As you wait for notification, turn your attention to your project itself. Do as much preliminary work as possible and work out internal issues so that you'll be ready to implement the project as soon as you receive the necessary funding.

If you receive early notification that a donor will be supporting your project, notify other likely donors that the project is further along than previously communicated and that you still would appreciate their support, financial or otherwise.

Deliverables:

- Pre-project activities completed
- A known timeframe for donor response

Step 7

Receive Notification from Donors

When the time comes, you will receive notification from the donors. Be prepared to send a thank-you note, whether their response is positive or negative.

If the donors agree to support your project, be prompt about completing all necessary paperwork so that you may begin to develop or implement your project.

Coordinate with your school or district communication officer to appropriately thank, acknowledge and recognize the donor. There are a variety of ways to do this — send a press release and photograph to your local or regional media, organize a school assembly, offer to write an article describing your project for the donor's internal newsletter, etc. Keep in mind that some donors wish to remain anonymous.

If a donor does not agree to support your project, ask for a copy of the reviewer's notes or other feedback so that you may refine your proposal or funding strategy. Ask whether or not it's possible to resubmit your proposal and when that would be appropriate. Also ask if they are willing to identify other potential donors whose funding priorities may be more closely aligned with your project and objectives.

Consider this:

- Some donors prefer repeated public acknowledgements of their support.
- Some donors require approval of joint releases and logo usage.
- Some donors appreciate photo opportunities.
- Be thinking about ways to give back to those who donate money, equipment or time. Reciprocation builds positive relationships. Recognition could include announcements at public events, signage, school apparel, plaques or reciprocity of volunteers. Thank-you letters from students are always appreciated.

Deliverables:

- A written notification from your donors
- Thank-you notes written and sent
- Announcement of the award
- Suggestions for refining your proposal
- Suggestions about other potential donors

Step 8

Follow Through

Once you receive the necessary funding, it's time to implement your project. As you do so, make active efforts to track its effectiveness — this will help you continue to refine the project and secure future funding.

Report to donors periodically as per their requirements or your agreement. Honor their timeline expectations; many times schools miss out on funding because they did not meet timelines or provide progress reports. You may wish to send photographs and/or notes from teachers or students describing the benefits of your project along with your written reports. Testimonials are beneficial in conveying the personal impact of the program.

Continue to build relationships with your donors.

Consider this:

- Donors will expect reports of what impact has been made on the targeted population. It will be very difficult to sustain funding for the project if documentation cannot be provided that verifies that the funding is having a positive impact.
- Deadlines are important — always meet them.
- You also may wish to report to donors as your project experiences change, meets individual objectives or celebrates milestones.
- You may wish to invite donors to visit your school to see your project — and their support — in action.
- Be sure to ask donors if they require an updated proposal for subsequent funding cycles. Remember that their funding priorities and guidelines may change.
- Always share accurate outcomes with donors even if the outcomes are not positive. Your donor is now your partner and can help you trouble-shoot and problem-solve.
- Make sure you have a process in place for evaluating your program effectively.

Deliverables:

- Baseline and subsequent performance measurements
- Progress reports on objectives and milestones
- Interim and final project and financial reports, as required

Resources

- **pe4life Academy training and other resources:**
www.pe4life.org
- **Legal requirements of the Wellness Policy (USDA):**
www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellness_policyrequirements.html
- **Grants for Nonprofits (see education, computer technology and health):**
www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/2sgalpha.htm
- **SPARK (Sports, Play and Active Recreation for Kids):**
www.sparkpe.org/money.jsp

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