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Introduction

This toolkit is for charter school administrators looking to learn more about DonorsChoose.org and encourage their teachers to get the most for their students.

You’ll find information about frequently asked questions, examples of ways leaders like you have helped their schools benefit, and training materials for your staff.

We’re committed to working with school leaders to make it as easy as possible for charter school teachers to get resources for their classroom.
About the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools advocates for the millions of public school students attending or hoping to attend a charter school. This is through federal and state advocacy efforts, research, and elevating national awareness for the charter school movement.

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools educates lawmakers and thought leaders about how charter schools can meet the needs of the communities they serve by providing families with public school options.

The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools leads the charter school community from the nation’s capital, bringing together charter school teachers, leaders, lawyers, researchers, and policy experts through events like the annual National Charter Schools Conference, as well as through online resources.
About DonorsChoose.org

Already well-versed DonorsChoose.org? Skip ahead to learn best practices directly from school leaders or four easy actions that will set your teachers up for success!
What is Crowdfunding?

Schools have long relied on donations to enrich students’ academic experience and to fund materials that system budgets cannot always afford.

Historically, schools have raised such donations from the local community, often through fundraisers. In many instances, teachers also spend their own money (on average $500 per year) on school supplies.

Today, online crowdfunding makes it possible for schools to raise more funding for classroom resources regardless of the size of their charter school.
Why We’re the Leading Crowdfunding Site for K–12 Education

Plenty of websites let educators raise money from their local networks. But on DonorsChoose.org, teachers can reliably get funding from outside their personal community. Our network of over 3 million donors love to support educators they've never met.

As the largest crowdfunding site dedicated to public schools, DonorsChoose.org meets a **singly high standard of transparency, accountability, and security.** We send materials, not cash, to teachers, and we always keep principals in the loop.
Why We’re the Leading Crowdfunding Site for K–12 Education

Our dedication to efficacy and transparency has earned us the highest possible rating from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator, for 13 years straight. This achievement is held by fewer than 1% of nonprofits.
Teachers Ask. We Deliver.

Education takes a community, and DonorsChoose.org is ready to work with your charter school and teachers to get the additional materials and supplies that help students thrive. DonorsChoose.org is a 501(c)3 public charity founded by a Bronx high school teacher.

Since 2000, we've been trusted by teachers, donors, and school administrators across the country.

Through our platform, teachers request the exact materials and experiences they know will bring learning to life for their students. For some, that means some extra paper and pencils. Others want to expand their classroom libraries, sports teams, extracurriculars, or student orchestras. Many dream even bigger, proposing robot kits for their students, flexible seating furniture for their classrooms, and professional development opportunities to further their teaching.
Teachers at verified schools request specific items.

We vet every single project that teachers post.

Donors and foundations contribute to these requests.

We order the items and ship them to the school.

We notify the school in advance of every shipment.
520,000 classrooms with funded projects

$850 million given to support classroom projects

34 million students benefiting from DonorsChoose.org projects

82% of America’s district and charter schools have had at least one teacher create a project

National Fundraising, Local Impact

Unlike any other education funding platform, 75% of the dollars given to classrooms each year come from people and organizations outside of educators’ personal networks, making our site especially useful for educators in low-income communities.

Since our founding, our corporate and foundation partners have given more than $450 million to support classrooms. And by engaging a community of donors passionate about supporting classrooms, we connect educators with individuals they would never otherwise meet through traditional fundraising efforts.
Year after year, teachers at charters and non-charter schools request books more than any other resource.

By keeping their classroom libraries up to date with the latest books kids love, teachers can help students fall in love with reading year round.

Requests for computers and tablets also constitute a significant portion of funded charter resources on DonorsChoose.org.

These multipurpose tools allow teachers to further engage their students, and by using DonorsChoose.org to request the latest ed tech, teachers can keep their classrooms up to date and ready for 21st century learning.
Connecting the Public to Public Charter Schools

Nina Rees, President & CEO
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools

“DonorsChoose.org provides much-needed fundraising tools for charter schools of all sizes - from single site schools to those affiliated with a CMO. This partnership will help ALL charter schools, even those that may have limited resources available for fundraising, to utilize this proven platform to directly benefit their schools and classrooms.”

You can always learn more about the National Alliance’s mission and impact at www.publiccharters.org/our-work.
$77 million given to support charter school projects

75% of funding comes from folks who’ve never met the teacher they’re supporting
DonorsChoose.org
In Action
Partnering With Your Teachers to Dream Big

Any full-time teacher at a U.S. public school or public charter school can use DonorsChoose.org. Along with classroom educators, this also includes:

- Librarians and media center specialists
- Guidance counselors and social workers
- School nurses

Although school leaders can't create DonorsChoose.org projects, there are many ways you can support your teachers using the platform.
School Leader Power

School leaders can support their teachers use of DonorsChoose.org in a variety of ways. Beyond helping your teachers get more classroom supplies, you can leverage DonorsChoose.org to:

- Promote **instructional priorities**
- Offer **professional development** opportunities
- Engage **parents** and the broader community
- Support classroom **innovation**

In a 2018 survey, teachers who receive resources through DonorsChoose.org said their students are more engaged, happier, and more excited to learn because of those resources. And 74% of teachers said support from DonorsChoose.org played a role in their decision to stay in the teaching profession.
Case Study:
Supporting Arts and Project-Based Curriculum

Harding Fine Arts Academy
Oklahoma City, OK

Harding Fine Arts Academy is one of the most diverse student communities in the Oklahoma City area, and teachers work hard to engage all students in learning. Harding Fine Arts Academy bases its curriculum in project based learning, which integrates academic subjects with the arts to encourage creative problem solving and deepen learning. Superintendent Barry Schmelzenbach and his leadership team encourage their teachers to use DonorsChoose.org to support various initiatives, from acquiring class-sets of Chromebooks to supporting their successful Martial Arts program. Since 2007, donors of all stripes have given $360,000 to enhance the instructional program at Harding Fine Arts Academy.
“The 2017–2018 school year will be our seventh year of having a martial arts program. Students have cited better focus, discipline, and confidence as the result of taking martial arts. My high school is a charter school that is arts integrated, so creativity happens in every class, from art class to History, Science and English. My students are passionate and expressive — Martial Arts provides a way for them to express themselves physically.”

—Mrs. Allman, Harding Fine Arts Academy, Oklahoma City, OK

Materials requested

- Entry Fees
- Hotel Lodging
Case Study: Collaborating with the School Community

Girls Prep Bronx Charter School
Bronx, NY

Girls Prep Bronx Charter School uses core values like scholarship, merit, and sisterhood to create a culture where both students and teachers can thrive. Through network-wide professional development, teachers share their knowledge of DonorsChoose.org with each other, encouraging more project creation across the school and the entire Public Prep Network. As a result, Girls Prep Bronx Charter School has been able to innovate with robotics tools, coding robots, dot dashes, and flexible seating. Teachers also expanded students' horizons by bringing them to Broadway and ballet shows funded through the platform.
“Imagine 28 third grade students sitting at the largest repertory opera house in the world filled with excitement and awe as they see a professional ballet performed. Music filling the air, graceful dancers adorned in whimsical costumes that will not only weave together a story but a memorable experience that will inspire my students to dream big!”

—Ms. Rodriguez, Girls Prep Bronx Charter School, Bronx, NY

Materials requested

- Lincoln Center ballet tickets
Case Study: Leveraging Match Offers

Salt Lake Center for Science Education
Salt Lake City, UT

At Salt Lake Center for Science Education, teachers are empowered to think outside of the box when dreaming up project ideas for students, and DonorsChoose.org has become a great way to bring that innovative learning into the classroom while preserving school funds.

For leadership, DonorsChoose.org is deeply entrenched in school culture. By taking advantage of DonorsChoose.org funding opportunities from companies and foundation partners, like Chevron’s Fuel Your School, teachers have been able to successfully flex their creative and entrepreneurial spirit and receive a wide range of equipment from ukuleles to technology. Some teachers even work collaboratively to obtain funding for departmental resources like scientific calculators.
“Science students are more successful, engaged learners when they are able to investigate the topics they are learning about.

Donations to this project will help ensure that each of my learners has access to materials needed to develop experiments, model scientific principles, and hone their scientific skills in engaging, learning experiences.”

—Mrs. Moretz, Salt Lake City Center for Science Education, Salt Lake City, UT

Materials requested

- Carolina Investigations for AP Environmental Science: Soil Productivity 8-Station Kit
- Outbreak! Fingerprinting Virus DNA 8-Station Kit
- Carolinas Perfect Solution Frog, 3 to 4
- And more!
Engaging Your Teachers
Four Steps to Best Engage Your Teachers

Step 1
Host a staff professional development teacher training. Have a DonorsChoose.org teacher expert at your school help run your training and share their firsthand experience.

Step 2
While you’re gearing up for the back-to-school season, send regular email reminders or include information in your school newsletter so teachers can take advantage of two of our biggest funding months: August and September.

Step 3
Let your teachers, media specialist, or counselor know when there are DonorsChoose.org match offers and funding opportunities from our corporate or foundation partners.

Step 4
Share the success your educators are having at regular staff meetings. Educators are most likely to use the site after seeing how it has supported their colleagues.

Why wait? DonorsChoose.org is open 365 days a year.
3 Ways to Harness the Power of DonorsChoose.org

School leaders across the country are collaborating with educators, using DonorsChoose.org to bolster school initiatives, access new funders and so much more.

1. **Support Educators, Increase Retention**
2. **Raise Your School’s Profile**
3. **Engage Students**
Support Educators, Increase Retention

When educators feel supported by their colleagues and administrators, they’re more likely to stay in the teaching profession.

DonorsChoose.org can be a way to show that support. Almost three-quarters of our teachers say DonorsChoose.org played a role in their decision to stay in the teaching profession.

Ninety-four percent of teachers report their funded projects increased their effectiveness in the classroom.

Hosting a Teacher Training in your school is an easy way to get started. This training preparation checklist and these training slides will get your teachers up and running on DonorsChoose.org.

Excited to bring something new to your classroom this school year @MDCPS teachers? Bring your best ideas to life on @DonorsChoose. donorschoose.org/teachers

Participants at Miami Dade Public Schools Synergy Summer Institute.
Raise Your School’s Profile

Your educators are always going above and beyond for their students, and using DonorsChoose.org to get additional classroom resources is just one way they do that.

By showing the public that your educators are working hard to ensure their students have the most learning opportunities possible, you can garner media attention and increase your school’s reputation on local and national levels.

#BestSchoolDay
Turning a national story into a local achievement

In March 2018, Ripple, a San Francisco-based technology company, donated $29 million to fund every project on our site in a single day. As Ripple’s donation gained national attraction from outlets like the New York Times, so too did the benefitting schools. The DonorsChoose.org team sent districts detailed impact reports from the day, along with a templated press release, which resulted in dozens of schools and districts — like Charleston County School District and Boston Public Schools — featured in local media outlets across the country.
Engage Students

Every class is as different as the students in them. Educators know what will excite their individual students best, whether that’s a new novel, an exciting class trip, or a special art project. By empowering educators to think outside the budget, you can help them to bring learning to life for their students.

Impact of Gates’s Grants: Academic Achievement and College Readiness

We work with partners who are excited to inspire and support teachers and advisers creating innovative classroom solutions. One such partner is the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, who invited educators to create projects supporting academic achievement and college readiness. In a post-campaign survey, teachers who received funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation reporting that the Gates-inspired projects had an even greater impact on student outcomes.

93% reported improved cognitive skills
92% reported increased content knowledge
91% reported improved academic behaviors
Host a Teacher Training

Use the following tools to engage your educators:
- [Training preparation checklist](#), including follow-up tips
- [Powerpoint slides](#) for training your teachers on how to post a classroom project on DonorsChoose.org

Leverage Your Staff

Empower other members of your staff to help teachers maximize their participation.
- DonorsChoose.org veteran teachers can host trainings
- Your leadership team can keep teachers up to date on match offers and funding opportunities
- Assistant principals can sign up for notifications when teachers post new projects
- Teaching teams or grade levels can work together to create similar projects for their classrooms
Signing Up for Notifications
Controls for School Leaders

**Receive notifications before materials ship.**
DonorsChoose.org notifies each principal by fax whenever materials are shipped to one of their classrooms. If we also have your principal email address, we can make sure you receive these notifications electronically. For more information, visit [www.donorschoose.org/principals](http://www.donorschoose.org/principals).

**More information at** [www.donorschoose.org/principals](http://www.donorschoose.org/principals)
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