Austin ISD – Crowdfunding Guidelines

Crowdfunding is the practice of funding a project or idea by raising small amounts of money from a large number of people within social networks via the Internet. The following guidelines outline acceptable platforms for crowdfunding, requirements and acceptable actions and quick start guides for each platform.

ACCEPTABLE PLATFORMS FOR CROWDFUNDING

AISD has partnered with the following crowdfunding platforms to serve all teachers and schools. These platforms have been vetted and approved by AISD’s Office of Innovation and Development. They are recommended based on their low-fee structure and eligibility for tax-deductible donations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEBSITE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>FEES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Livingtree</td>
<td>AISD-supported crowdfunding platform for donations. Includes built-in communications, templates, school-based approval process and direct deposit into AISD accounts.</td>
<td>• 5% fee plus $0.30 per donation (5% = 2.9% payment processing fee plus 2.1% Livingtree fee)</td>
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<tr>
<td>engage.livingtree.com/login</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Credit card processing is through PayPal</td>
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<tr>
<td>formerly Edbacker.com</td>
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<td>• Additional 2% per donation if organizations use America's Charities</td>
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<td>(option only available to PTAs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DonorsChoose</td>
<td>Online crowdfunding site for supplies and equipment, focused on PK-12 education. Raise funds for non-cash donations (materials and supplies only with specified vendors).</td>
<td>• 1.5% payment processing fee per donation</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.donorschoose.org">www.donorschoose.org</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>• $30 fulfillment labor &amp; materials charge</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(costs associated with screening projects, purchasing materials, processing donor thank you notes, etc.)</td>
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<td>• 15% optional donation per campaign</td>
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CROWDFUNDING GUIDELINES

Crowdfunding Campaigns Must:
- Support educational or instructional-based initiatives.
- Be Approved by the school principal before a campaign is published. The Office of Innovation and Development does not need to approve your campaign.
  - Livingtree Approval: Two-Step approval process, embedded within the platform.
  - DonorsChoose Approval: Via email through the [AISD crowdfunding application]
Last revised 10/3/19

- **Submit a summary report:**
  - Livingtree: Summary Reports are automatically created through Livingtree.
  - DonorsChoose: Complete an AISD crowdfunding summary report. A link to the report will be emailed to the creator at the end of the campaign and must be submitted within 3 weeks of the end of the campaign to the Office of Innovation & Development.

**Crowdfunding Restricted Actions:**

- Creation of personal campaigns or withdrawal of funds into personal banking accounts.
- Creation of campaigns that benefit individuals.
- Sales of any kind (i.e. popcorn, t-shirts).
- Transfer of donations from campus to campus.
- Donated items mailed to employee’s home.
- Post photos of students without signed media release forms.
- Violate FERPA rules.
- Fundraising for non-district organizations and charities (i.e. Red Cross fundraising for a local natural disaster).

## LIVINGTREE

AISD has partnered with Livingtree (formerly Edbacker) to create a customized process for AISD schools to raise money online. All fundraising campaigns created through an AISD school account include a built-in process for principal and bookkeeper approval. This process ensures that each campaign meets the school’s objectives and goals as related to the campus improvement plan.

Livingtree campaigns also benefit from increased visibility through AISD’s main website. Through the AISD website, schools can reach thousands of visitors and increase giving to their campus.

**Process for Setting Up an Livingtree School Campaign:**

1. **Log In:** Teachers and administrative staff can log in to engage.livingtree.com/login with their Austin ISD email address. To log in, your password may need to be reset. Click “Forgot Password” and follow instructions using your austinisd.org email address to receive a reset password link. **Do not create your own account. If you need to create an account or need login assistance, please contact Ryan O’Donnell at ryan.odonnell@austinisd.org.**
2. **Create Campaign:** Follow instructions in the Fundraising Tab to customize a campaign for your school/classroom needs. Once the campaign has been completed, click “Submit to Financial Accountant”.
3. **Bookkeeper Approval:** School bookkeeper assigns an activity account code (activity account name) to all fundraising campaigns. Activity account codes are assigned based on the campaign that is created. For example, if the 3rd grade class is raising money for a field trip, the “3rd grade Activity Fund” would be used.
4. **Principal Approval:** School principal reviews and approves the campaign to ensure it meets the school’s goals and objectives before the campaign is made public.

*A crowdfunding application or summary report is NOT required to be submitted to the Office of Innovation & Development if the campaign is created using Livingtree. Click here if you are interested in viewing the application as a tool to developing your fundraising campaign.*

For more detailed information and strategies on how to set up a campaign, please review the AISD Crowdfunding page at [www.austinisd.org/oid/grants-fundraising/crowdfunding](http://www.austinisd.org/oid/grants-fundraising/crowdfunding).
DonorsChoose is an online crowdfunding platform that allows individuals to donate directly to public school classroom projects. Once a project is fully funded, DonorsChoose will purchase and deliver the requested equipment and materials directly to the campus. DonorsChoose is NOT a crowdfunding site used for raising money.

Per AISD policy, campuses must ensure that:
- Items ≥ $500 in value are tagged as a fixed asset through the Fixed Assets Department.
- Items received remain property of the campus.
- An AISD crowdfunding application is submitted by the campaign creator and approved by the school principal prior to publishing the DonorChoose campaign.
- An AISD crowdfunding summary report is submitted within three weeks of the campaign close to the Office of Innovation & Development.

RECEIVING DONATIONS

Donations through Livingtree are automatically deposited into an AISD revenue account. It may take up to 30 days to transfer funds to the appropriate campus activity account.

TIPS FOR CROWDFUNDING

1. Be direct, but always grateful!
2. Set a reasonable fundraising goal. Most successful campaigns are under $2,000.
3. Personalize your campaign and your social media posts!
4. Personalizing a campaign with a personal story or your reasons why this cause is important to YOU makes it easier for people to feel connected to what you care about. As a person that they know, they will trust you and will want to support you.
5. Share your Crowdfunding link through ALL your social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube, Snapchat etc.), and often!
6. Create a sense of urgency for your campaign by reinforcing the need of your students and update people on your progress towards your fundraising goals
7. Use photos (with student parent permission) and hashtags!
8. Not on social media? We encourage you to text, call and email your friends and family too!

For questions or assistance with your crowdfunding efforts, please contact Ryan O’Donnell, Office of Innovation and Development, at ryan.odonnell@austinisd.org or 512-414-0108.