



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.

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.

WEBSITE	DESCRIPTION	FEES
Livingtree www.livingtree.com	AISD-supported crowdfunding platform for donations. Includes built-in communications, templates, school-based approval process and direct deposit into AISD accounts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.1% Livingtree fee • 2.0% PayPal processing fee plus \$0.49 per donation • Additional 2% per donation if organizations use America’s Charities (option only available to PTAs)
DonorsChoose www.donorschoose.org	Online crowdfunding site for supplies and equipment, focused on PK-12 education. Raise funds for project costs using only with approved vendors and items are shipped directly to school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5% credit card processing fee • \$30 labor & materials charge, including costs associated with screening projects, purchasing materials, processing thank you notes, etc. • 15% optional donation per campaign

Crowdfunding Campaigns Must:

- Support educational or instructional-based initiatives.
- Be Approved before a campaign is published. The Office of Innovation and Development does not approve your campaign.
 - Livingtree Approval: Two-Step approval process, embedded within the platform.
 - DonorsChoose Approval: Review and approval completed by DonorsChoose staff.

- If you used a crowdfunding platform other than Livingtree or DonorsChoose to fundraise, please submit this [AISD Donation or Grant Award Notification Form](#) to report back on the campaign's success.

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).

AISD has partnered with [Livingtree](#) to create a customized process for AISD teachers and staff to raise money online. Livingtree is a crowdfunding platform that all AISD teachers, staff, administrators, PSSs, PTAs, and booster clubs have access to throughout the year. Once you start fundraising through Livingtree, no matter if you reach your goal, all funds that are raised get deposited into your campus account and can be spent on project costs. 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 a 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 Review:** 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 entered in the field.
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.

[DonorsChoose](#) is a crowdfunding platform that is available for teachers and staff who work with students at least 75% of the time. Teachers can submit projects with a fundraising goal and an itemized

Last revised 9/3/21

budget using one of DonorsChoose's approved vendors. Once you reach your goal, DonorsChoose then purchases the items and ships them directly to your campus. No money is ever deposited to your campus.

Per AISD policy, campuses must ensure that:

- Items are shipped directly to the campus, and not the teacher's home.
- Items ≥ \$500 in value are tagged as a fixed asset through the Fixed Assets Department.
- Items received remain property of the campus.

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 from which the campaign creator can spend from on related costs. Donations through DonorsChoose are made directly to DonorsChoose and never transacted with the campus. Once you reach your goal, DonorsChoose will purchase the items and ship them directly to the campus.

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 more detailed resources and strategies on how to set up a campaign, please review the [AISD Crowdfunding page](#).

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.