

The Leader in Me Quick Funding Guide

Introduction

You are excited about *The Leader in Me* and see its potential to transform the culture and results of your school. However, you do not currently see any possible way to fund it. Don't fret; we want to provide you with a proven formula to find the funds to implement *The Leader in Me*. That's the purpose of this Quick Funding Guide—to share with you the best practices of those schools that have already found funding.

If our experience with 500+ schools tells us anything, it's that districts, businesses, communities, and parents desperately want great schools and will provide financial support to create them. Thus, believe that you have it within you to find the funding. This can-do attitude must be the foundation of everything you do. The rest of our suggestions will be of little value without the belief, determination, and initiative to make it happen! And of course, you can always tap into a never-ending source of motivation by beginning with your end in mind—a great school with students who will be the leaders of tomorrow.

Funding Formula

The funding formula represents three steps: (1) Identify the funding source; (2) Engage the funding source; (3) Ask for funding. It also bifurcates the funding sources: public funding and private funding.



Public Funding

Government money is meant to fund schools and school programs. Funds usually flow through the district. Thus, you should start your search for funding within your district office (i.e., first think inside the box). Recognize that the district administers a number of federal and local programs for developing staff and improving schools. Therefore, your goal should be to tap into these funds. Many principals make the assumption that “the district is slashing budgets and making layoffs, so we’ll never have money to fund *The Leader in Me*.” Yet, there are many different pools of district funding for different purposes. Moreover, districts must get better results with fewer resources! How can the district do this without innovating in some respect? In fact, districts need leading-edge models that help schools run in more effective ways.



1. Identify

In collaboration with the district, seek to **identify** what funding pools are currently at work to create the types of outcomes *The Leader in Me* creates. In other words, “seek first to understand” the overlap between various funding buckets and *The Leader in Me* results such as a (1) stronger school climate, (2) greater teacher engagement, (3) better student behavior and discipline, (4) higher student achievement, (5) 21st century skills learning, and (6) increased parent involvement. These six outcomes, for example, are common focus areas for districts and money is being consistently allocated toward them.

Here are some more prominent district-funding pools:

Title I Schoolwide Program: According to the Department of Education, there are over 44,000 schools that receive Title I schoolwide funding. The money flows from the federal government to states to districts, and principals work in concert with their district to direct these funds to salaries and programs that will most improve student achievement. Many *Leader in Me* schools have used Title I funds to implement. When conducting your school’s “needs assessment,” identify gaps that *The Leader in Me* can address (e.g., school climate, student behavior, etc.), then write your approach to address these gaps in your school improvement plan using *The Leader in Me*, and then get approval from your district representative.

Title II Part A: This federal program is meant to improve the quality and effectiveness of principals and teachers. Several of the official “strategies” strongly overlap with the goals of *The Leader in Me*, including improving the knowledge of teachers to “improve student behavior,” “involve parents in their children’s education,” “improve classroom practices,” as well as “initiatives to promote retention of highly qualified teachers.”

District-level professional development: Learn about the professional-development opportunities for educators in your district. Then look for connections between district learning goals for adults and *The Leader in Me* learning goals. Have discussions with the district office to reallocate some of those professional development funds toward *The Leader in Me*.

These are obviously not all the programs and pools of money at the district level, but we mention them because they are more prominent. *The Leader in Me* covers a lot of territory, so investigate many funding earmarks such as “Safe and Drug-Free” funds, state professional-development funds, and state textbook funds (for Student Activity Guides).

Beyond the district level (but still public funding), many states have regional educational agencies that provide services to multiple school districts. Become familiar with the agency serving your district and the types of programs and services they are providing, as well as the needs they are targeting. Then approach the key person within this agency and show him or her how *The Leader in Me* staff development is in line with their goals.

2. Engage

If your district representative does not feel that *The Leader in Me* is an outstanding process with major potential to transform his or her school’s performance, then that person most likely won’t get creative in helping you find pools of funding to implement *The Leader in Me*.

Thus, to engage your district, you must convince them that *The Leader in Me* is the right solution for your school in achieving the outcomes that are most important. Use the tools and resources you have to engage your district:

- Your client partner for presentations
- *The Leader in Me* website and videos
- *The Leader in Me* book
- Case studies of schools that have transformed themselves
- Leadership Days of other schools in your state

Many schools have found success by starting *The Leader in Me* practices in a pilot classroom and then bringing the district people by that classroom to see the change in the kids and the different environment created in the classroom.

3. Ask

The bottom line is that you ought to get support from your district for implementation of *The Leader in Me*. Even if they won't fund the entire process, they ought to provide some level of funding. Be confident in asking for their support and expect that they will respond. It may take some persistence on your part to reveal your authenticity in what you want to accomplish.

Private Funding

If you have not been able to acquire all of the funding necessary from the district, there are many outside funding sources that you can identify, engage with, and ask from (an expanding source of funds).

Whereas the district discussion likely happened between you and the district office, when going after outside funds, you will want to put together a team—perhaps those members who will make up your Lighthouse Team—and get creative and collaborative about finding sponsorship. Talk through each of the funding sources listed below and identify what each team member brings to the table pertaining to the funding source—be it relationships, leads, skills, interests, or knowledge. “Play from strength” is the mantra that will help you get the most from your team and fundraising effort.

We'd like to recommend a number of funding sources you may look into. The following sources are organized into three categories: business, community, and parents/students.



1. Identify

Business:

Local chambers of commerce. Chambers of commerce are both trying to stay relevant and trying to attract and retain members. *The Leader in Me* gives students the leadership and life skills to succeed in a fast-paced and competitive business environment—something that will resonate with local business leaders. After sponsoring a *Leader in Me* school, one chamber officer reported: “I have never come across a better way to give back to the community.” Approach the leadership of the local chamber of commerce and ask to give a presentation regarding how your school

wants to teach 21st century business skills to its students. See your client partner as a key resource to potentially deliver this presentation.

Local businesses. There may be several local businesses that operate within the boundaries of your school or in proximity. Ideally, you may already have a relationship with some of these business owners. Even if you don't, there may be an opportunity to identify and approach these businesses.

Multinational businesses with local headquarters. You may be fortunate enough to have some large businesses headquartered in your city or in a city nearby. These businesses generally have several different ways to share with their community. These can include (1) money donated by the corporation itself, (2) marketing dollars used for sponsorships of public programs in return for marketing benefit for the company, and (3) a corporate foundation that contributes to local communities through grants.

Community:

Local foundations. There are likely several foundations that make grants to educational causes within your state and community. You may even have a community foundation that is already connected to your district and which already has donor relationships. You can also search the Web and narrow down your list of foundations to those where there is a fit between the mission of the foundation and what you are trying to achieve with *The Leader in Me*. Look at the types of grants they have made in the past and whether they are similar to what you would be asking for. Be aware of their grant cycles and the guidelines they offer to grantees to make sure you qualify.

Larger foundations. There are many larger regional foundations that could make a grant to you. Larger foundations are usually more strategic in the way they attempt to achieve their missions, so you may need to spend some time understanding the strategies of these foundations. Again, you can look to previous grants as a proxy for future grants.

Local service organizations. National service clubs such as Rotary International or United Way often have local chapters in cities and towns. You can approach the local chapter leadership and share with them your needs. Moreover, club members meet regularly and guest speakers are occasionally invited to present a certain topic. Networking with these people or even presenting to them is a great opportunity to meet local people who can potentially sponsor your school or who may know someone else that can sponsor your school.

Institutions of higher learning. You may be able to find sponsorship from a nearby college or adult learning center or university. Since these organizations are already dedicated to improving education in their community, they often support other educational causes, or members of their boards may have connections to potential sponsors.

Parents/Students:

Parents of students. The parents of your students may be employed by a company that has a corporate foundation. Or they may have other business connections you can tap into.

Networking among the parents of your students can be very fruitful, since these parents care deeply about their child's education and may have the connections to find sponsorship.

PTA, PTO, and other parent organizations. Parent groups are often responsible for conducting various fundraising campaigns for several programs. If you can plant the vision of *The Leader in Me* for your parent group, they could potentially conduct the campaign to raise the funds to adopt the process.

Students. Some schools have successfully raised a large amount of funds through student-led fundraising campaigns. Schools engage in multiple fundraising activities (led by the students) including carnivals, door-to-door campaigns, car washes, runs, etc.

2. Engage

Develop relationships with prospective donors, understand their values, and help them experience how your purpose aligns with their values for the community.

After understanding the prospective donors' values, think through the following questions: How can you help your prospect gain the emotional connection to your school? How can your prospect understand how *The Leader in Me* will deliver on transformational outcomes?

For instance, you may want to invite the prospect to tour your school so they can get to know some of the staff, kids, and parents. Or think about ways to paint the bigger picture of what kids need to succeed in a world where globalization and technology have changed the rules of the game. Finally, remember the power of asking good questions of your prospects. In fundraising, a successful formula is often 60 percent listening and 40 percent speaking.

Again, remember to use the tools and resources at your disposal:

- Your client partner for presentations
- *The Leader in Me* website and videos
- *The Leader in Me* book
- Case studies of schools that have transformed themselves
- Leadership Days of other schools in your state

If you are writing a grant, research the institution thoroughly and look at previous organizations that have won similar grants. Contact these organizations and ask them whether you can look at their winning proposal and whether they received any additional feedback from the grant maker. With smaller grant-making organizations, you may be able speak directly to the program officer who oversees the grant you are applying for and gain additional insight into what makes a winning grant.

3. Ask

Now that you have prepared your prospects, you are ready to ask for sponsorship. Here is a list of six ways to increase your chances that the donor will say yes:

- Pick a suitable setting for the ask.
- Tailor the ask to the individual or organization; make sure you are not “winging it” but are well rehearsed.
- On the other hand, don’t stick blindly to your agenda; be flexible in listening and responding.
- Only make promises you can deliver on.
- Be completely confident when making the ask, without hesitation or equivocation.
- Make sure to be patient with the donor—don’t pressure for a quick response.

When asking for a grant through writing, your proposal must be succinct and intelligible. You should not assume the grant maker understands jargon or acronyms. Have at least two people proofread the proposal to ensure it answers questions clearly, with sufficient depth and logic. Finally, you must have concrete and measurable objectives you plan to achieve with *The Leader in Me*. The funder must feel confident that you know how the project financing will be used to create the desired results and truly make a difference.