



The Prichard Committee

Building a Groundswell for a Big Bold Future

BLENDING & BRAIDING FUNDING TO SUPPORT KENTUCKY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Practical Guidance for Building Strategic Support

Student outcomes improve when school districts partner intentionally with public funding sources, strategic philanthropy, and community organizations. The Groundswell approach strengthens these connections, building enduring partnerships among schools, families, and communities across Kentucky. Effective fundraising is grounded in clear goals, strong relationships, and demonstrable impact.

How to get started:

1. Ensure Internal Readiness

Note: Before pursuing funding for any project, obtain approval from the Superintendent, Chief Financial Officer, and other relevant district leadership. Ensure there is alignment on the identified need and use data to clearly define the district's challenge.

Successful districts designate:

- A point person for fundraising/grants (do you have a grant writer?)
- A tracking system for proposals and reporting
- Clear financial oversight

2. Explore Potential Funding Sources:

State and Local Opportunities:

- Community Foundations (do you have one in your region?)
- School Foundations (do you have a school foundation?)
- [Grant Ready Kentucky](#)
 - Matching funds for federal grants via [the GRANT program](#)
 - Grant writing training and capacity-building support

National/Federal Opportunities:

- Family and corporate foundations
- Federal grants ([Grants.gov](#))

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3. Build Relationships

Success comes from long-term relationship building. Tips for best practices include:

- Develop an annual plan and 3-5 year strategic plan for your district.
- Meet regularly with local business and community leaders.
- Invite partners to visit schools and programs.
- Invite your legislator to visit schools and programs.
- Share regular updates on progress.
- Storytelling is important. (Use student stories, teacher stories, stories of what the school meant to graduates, etc.)
- Make sure your website is updated.
- Utilize social media.
- Subscribe to newsletters.
- Follow up with impact reports after funding.

4. Prepare a brief summary for each funding request

Every funding request should include:

- Brief statement of need
- Clear funding request
- Population served
- Expected outcomes
- Budget summary
- District contact information

5. Potential Data Sources to Help Identify and Strengthen Your Ask:

- [Prichard Committee's Community School Profile](#)
- [KY School Report card](#)
- [Kentucky Kids Count](#)
- [National Center for Education Statistics \(NCES\)](#)
- [U.S. Census Bureau](#)
- [EDFacts \(U.S. Department of Education\)](#)
- [Civil Rights Data Collection \(CRDC\)](#)
- [KY Stats](#) (All K-12 data is housed here)

Recommendation: Review a nonprofit's 990, it shows the organization's income, expenses, and leadership, helping you make informed, confident decisions. You can access them for free here: <https://www.guidestar.org>.

6. Practice Strong Stewardship

After receiving funding:

- Send prompt thank-you communications
- Provide measurable updates
- Publicly acknowledge support (when appropriate)
- Invite funders to see impact firsthand