

# Funding for K-12 Service-Learning



Source: RMC Research Corporation, July 2004, Updated June 2008

For additional resources on this and other service-learning topics visit Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse at [www.servicelearning.org](http://www.servicelearning.org).

Service-learning programs can be funded in several basic ways, including through Learn and Serve subgrants, foundation funding, and fundraising. Ideally, funds for school-based service-learning would be a line item in the school or district budget, reflecting the fact that service-learning is a part of the mainstream educational delivery system. Many districts choose to fund service-learning as a strategy to accomplish curricular goals, so no additional sources of funding are needed.

If you do not have access to internal funding or if you need additional funds to support start-up or special activities, funds can be generated as part of the following programs. More information on these is provided below in the Resources sections.

- The Corporation for National and Community Service Learn and Serve America program grants (available on an annual basis, typically through State Learn and Serve programs);
- Title I or other Title programs, e.g., Safe and Drug Free Schools (Title IV) especially through the annual competitive character education grants and the Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Education (Title VII) and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century After School programs under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* – service-learning may be bid as a strategy to meet Title goals;
- The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (often referred to as Special Education) – service-learning can be used as a strategy to meet Title goals;
- The *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration* (SAMHSA) grants;
- Solicited or unsolicited grants or donations from public or private foundations such as State Farm and United Parcel Service grants;
- Grants or donations available from individuals, school districts, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and other sources; and/or
- Local fundraising by parents, teachers, students, and/or community members.

Each of these sources has particular application requirements so you will need to research them using the resources provided below. Typically, you will need to provide information on:

- how service-learning will accomplish program goals (rationale and citation of statistics);
- goals or performance objectives (written in measurable terms);
- specific proposed activities and timeline;
- costs and justification of costs; and
- how you will document outcomes or evaluate your programs.

Deciding on the specific fundraising strategy to use depends on how much funding you are looking for and the size/scale of your service-learning program. If you are fundraising for a large school-based service-learning initiative you may want to seek federal or foundation funding. For a single class service-learning project, you may want to look for



local donations or fundraising activities. For sustainability, finding a stable funding source such as a district line item or long term grant is preferable.

There are several grant portals you can use to search for grants that may be available to support service-learning. A search conducted recently yielded over 100 possibilities. Many of these grants do not specifically list service-learning as a topic, but if they list academic achievement or engagement, civic outcomes or engagement, or character development or outcomes, there is no reason not to propose using service-learning.

The following resources may be helpful to those designing a funding strategy for service-learning programs.

## **Web Resources**

*Campus Compact* [www.compact.org/opportunities/grants\\_and\\_opportunities](http://www.compact.org/opportunities/grants_and_opportunities)  
Provides a list of grant and fellowship opportunities.

*The Chronicle of Philanthropy* [philanthropy.com](http://philanthropy.com)  
Provides information about grant writing and fundraising. Contains a searchable database of corporate and foundation grants.

*The Foundation Center* [foundationcenter.org](http://foundationcenter.org)  
Lists funding opportunities and provides information about the grant application process. Contains the *Philanthropy News Digest*, a foundation directory, and online grant writing and fundraising tutorials.

*Grants.gov* [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)  
This web site provides a central storehouse for information on grant programs.

*Idealist.org* [www.idealist.org](http://www.idealist.org)  
Provides resources on funding related to youth leadership and community involvement.

*Learn and Serve America* [www.learnandserve.org](http://www.learnandserve.org)  
Contains applications for Learn and Serve and other grants. Also see [www.nationalservice.org/egrants/index.html](http://www.nationalservice.org/egrants/index.html), the Corporation for National and Community Service's online grant application and management system.

*National Service-Learning Clearinghouse* [www.servicelearning.org](http://www.servicelearning.org)  
An excellent source for information on awards, fellowships, scholarships, funding resources, grants, and funders. Visit [servicelearning.org/instant\\_info/funding\\_sources](http://servicelearning.org/instant_info/funding_sources) and the NSLC Funding Blog at [www.servicelearning.org/rss/funding.html](http://www.servicelearning.org/rss/funding.html).

*National Service-Learning Partnership* [www.service-learningpartnership.org/youth\\_innovation/resources.cfm](http://www.service-learningpartnership.org/youth_innovation/resources.cfm)  
Contains sample funding applications and press releases, and provides timelines for fundraising and grant writing.

*National Youth Leadership Council* [www.nylc.org](http://www.nylc.org)  
Provides a tip sheet on how to find funding for service learning programs.

*The U.S. Department of Education Forecast of Funding*  
[fund/grant/find/edlite-forecast.html](http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/find/edlite-forecast.html)

[www.ed.gov/](http://www.ed.gov/)

Lists all programs and competitions under which the Department of Education has invited or expects to invite applications for new awards.

### **Related NSLC Resources:**

*Hot Topic: Sustainability / Institutionalization*

[servicelearning.org/instant\\_info/hot\\_topics/sustain/index.php](http://servicelearning.org/instant_info/hot_topics/sustain/index.php)

*Sustainability in K-12 Schools: Selected Resource* (bibliography)

[servicelearning.org/instant\\_info/bibs/k-12\\_bibs/sustain\\_k-12/index.php](http://servicelearning.org/instant_info/bibs/k-12_bibs/sustain_k-12/index.php)

### **Print Resources**

Billig, Shelley H. "Funding Your Service-Learning Program." In *Building Support for Service-Learning*, edited by Shelley H. Billig, 105-124. Denver: RMC Research Corporation, 1998.

Brewer, Ernest W. *Finding Funding: Grantwriting From Start to Finish, Including Project Management and Internet Use*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2001.

Burke, Mary Ann. *Simplified Grantwriting*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2002.

Dobbins-Harper, D. and Bhat, S. *Finding Funding: A Guide to Federal Sources for Youth Programs*. The Finance Project, Washington, D.C., 2007.

*Grants for K-12 Schools*, edited by Mollie Mudd. Gaithersburg, MD: Aspen Publishers, 2001.

Ruskin, Karen B., and Charles M. Achilles. *Grantwriting, Fundraising, and Partnerships: Strategies That Work*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 1995.

Sandel, K. and Bhat, S. *Financing and Sustaining Out-of-School Time Programs in Rural Communities*. The Finance Project, Washington, D.C., 2008.

Vander Mey, B. and McDonald, S. *Landscapes for Learning: Growing Children, Youth, Schools, and Communities. Linking Learning with Life*. National Dropout Prevention Center, Clemson University, Clemson, SC, 2001.