

Funding Family Fun Nights: Quick Guide for Schools

Family Fun Nights can strengthen literacy and math learning, family-school partnerships, student engagement, attendance, and school culture. Because these events support students and families, many community organizations may be willing to help.

Where to Start

Know What You Need

Determine the cost of your Family Fun Night and any additional school expenses, such as food or transportation.

Build a Team

Involve administrators, staff, PTA/PTO, and others who may know of funding sources or community connections.

Assess Existing Assets

Explore existing school, district, grant, or family engagement funds before seeking outside support.

Where to Look

»» School District & Existing Grant Funds

Always check existing funding first. Possible sources include:

Title I (family engagement) Funds, Title III Funds (english learners and their families), Title VI Funds (American Indian/Alaska Native students and families), 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Family engagement allocations in existing grants, and/or district/school funds

Check with district or program leadership to determine what is allowable.

»» Community Organizations | \$250 – \$2,500

Local civic organizations frequently support youth and education.

Examples: Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions Club, Elks Lodge, and the United Way

Ask for: Family events, reading nights, STEM activities, supplies

»» Banks & Credit Unions | \$250 – \$5,000

Many financial institutions have charitable giving, sponsorship, or community investment programs. Ask your local branch, even if you don't see a formal grant program.

Ask for: Event sponsorships, literacy kits, supplies, food, and/or incentives

»» Community Foundations | \$500 – \$10,000

Community foundations are often a great starting point for small, locally focused grants.

Examples: Black Hills Area Community Foundation, South Dakota Community Foundation/local affiliates, Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation, other local community funds

Ask for: Broadly reaching educational activities, family learning materials, presenters, supplies

»» Local Businesses | Cash or In-Kind

Consider utility companies, retailers, grocery stores, healthcare organizations, hardware stores, dealerships, manufacturers, technology providers, restaurants, and major local employers.

Ask for: Cash sponsorships, food, supplies, gift cards, prizes, printing, volunteers. Think about businesses where the school is a "customer." For example, who is your utility company? Internet provider? The Midco Foundation awards up to \$5,000 grants throughout the region twice per year. NorthWestern Energy supports a wide range of community activities.

Tip: Make a specific ask: "Would you sponsor our family literacy station for \$500?" Consider offering sponsor recognition or a table at the event.

Getting Your Family Fun Night Funded

Keep the request local, specific & student-focused

Funders are more likely to respond when they know exactly what their contribution will provide.

Request Example:

- **\$250:** Activity supplies or student incentives
- **\$500:** Take-home literacy or math materials
- **\$1,000:** Food, supplies, and family activities
- **\$2,500+:** Larger events with activities, materials, food, and presenters

Don't overlook in-kind donations. Food, books, supplies, printing, prizes, gift cards, and volunteers can significantly reduce event costs.

What to Include in Your Ask

Keep your request short and specific.

Include:

- What the event is and who it will serve
- How it supports student learning and families
- The specific amount or item you are requesting
- The event date
- How the sponsor will be recognized
- A contact person and deadline for responding

Sample Request:

"Our school is seeking community support for a Family Fun Night that promotes student learning and family engagement. Families will participate in educational activities, receive resources to support learning at home, and build stronger connections with our school. We are seeking [amount/item] to help support [specific need] for our [date] event. Your contribution will directly support local students and families."

Think Small + Combine Sources

You don't need one funder to pay for everything. Consider an approach that combines School Funds + \$500 Local Grant + Business Sponsor + Donated Food/Supplies = A Fully Funded Event

Consider a Fundraiser

A PTA/PTO, booster groups, alumni associations or other school partner could incorporate:

Book fair, silent auction, basket raffle, bake sale, and/or community sponsorship wall

A successful event can raise funds for future family engagement activities while building community involvement.

Quick Tips

- ✓ **Start local.** Community organizations are often most invested in local students.
- ✓ **Connect it to learning.** Highlight literacy, math, attendance, engagement, local community, or another educational outcome.
- ✓ **Ask for cash & in-kind support.** Small contributions from several partners add up.
- ✓ **Offer sponsorship opportunities.** Let businesses sponsor a specific station, activity, meal, or resource.
- ✓ **Capture the impact.** Take photos when appropriate.
- ✓ **Follow up.** Thank sponsors and share results. Today's \$500 contribution could become an ongoing partnership.

During/After the Event

Track: Number of students & families attending, activities offered, resources distributed, family feedback, photos, and/or Impact stories

Use these results to make your next funding request even stronger.



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compass.bhssc.org/contact

