



# **Six Simple Steps to Posting a Project at DonorsChoose.org**

- 1. Get Started**
- 2. Go “Shopping”**
- 3. Find Your Materials**
- 4. Write Your Essay**
- 5. Quantify Project Impact**
- 6. Confirm Your Project**

# Step 1: Get Started

- ❑ **Register for an account and confirm your email address.**

We all need to start somewhere, and for DonorsChoose.org this means that we need some vitals – like who you are and where you teach!

Plus, we absolutely, positively need to know that you can get DonorsChoose.org emails (like when we have to let you know that you've had a project funded!), so be sure to confirm that our emails can get through your email spam filters.

- ❑ **Upload a photo.**

We all know that a picture is worth a thousand words... here's your chance to ensure that you grab the attention of the tens of thousands of people who visit DonorsChoose.org.

Select a picture of yourself, your students, your empty bookcase – anything that helps tell your classroom story – and upload the picture to your teacher account. We promise, it's worth it – donors love pictures!

- ❑ **Sign in to your teacher account.**

It's time to start using your DonorsChoose.org teacher account. Just remember to sign in using the email address and password you provided during registration (you just *knew* that would come in handy).

- ❑ **Select the green “create a proposal” button.**

Green means “GO!” Choose the “create a proposal” button in your “My Account” page.

- ❑ **Create a great title.**

Think: “Sit on Me” rather than “Classroom Chairs” or “Bangin’ on Buckets” rather than “Drums for Music Class.” In other words, the catchier the title, the more likely a potential donor will read your project request. So take a few minutes to come up with something fun, short and descriptive. Then simply “save and go to the next step.”

## Step 2: Go “Shopping”

### ❑ Find exactly what you need.

You know better than anyone else the specific resources that your students need to learn. DonorsChoose.org makes it easy to choose the materials that will bring your project to life. Just select the blue “Request Materials using eSchoolMall” link and prepare to go “shopping.”

### ❑ Choose where to shop.

On the “Find Materials” screen, choose which list of vendors (Express Catalog or Express Website) you’d like to work with first.

**TIP:** Whenever possible, use **Express Website vendors** to select materials. These websites are updated more frequently and have the most up-to-date selection of available materials.

### Find Materials

Find materials for your project request using Express vendors  catalogs and websites, and then add them to your eSchoolMall shopping cart.

**After you have selected materials for your proposal, be sure to view your eSchoolMall cart and then check out of eSchoolMall so that all of the items will be transferred to your DonorsChoose.org project proposal.**

#### Search Express Catalogs

Search the catalogs of the vendors below.

  
  
e.g. "LCD projector," or "Scrapbook"

- All Catalogs
- AKJ Books
- Best Buy
- Cannon Sports
- Carolina Biological Supply
- Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.
- Highsmith

OR

#### Shop Express Websites

Select a vendor to go to its website. Shop and add items to your cart. Completing the checkout process is required to add your item(s) to your eSchoolmall cart. Note that you will not need to pay for your items.

- ABC School Supply
- Abilitations
- Barnes & Noble
- Blick Art Materials
- Brodhead Garrett
- CDW
- Childcraft
- Frey Scientific

## Step 3: Find Your Materials

### □ Option 1: Search for materials using an Express Website vendor (preferred):

1. Select the website where you'd like to shop by clicking the circle by the vendor name. Then select **"Go to Website."**
2. Shop on the website as you normally would, adding the items you've selected to your online shopping cart by selecting **"Add to Cart."**
3. When finished, open your online cart and select **"Checkout."**
4. **Confirm your materials by checking out again.** These screens vary by vendor – select the button marked, "Checkout," "Place Order," or "Place Requisition."  
Note: You will not be asked to pay for anything.
5. When your vendor screen closes, you will be taken to a white eSchoolMall window. In this window, select the gray **"View Cart"** button.
6. If your items are correct, select the gray **"Check Out"** button.
7. In the next screen, select the gray **"Complete order and submit to DonorsChoose"** button.
8. To add additional items, select "Request Materials Using eSchoolMall," then select the gray "Find Materials" button and **repeat the process.**

### □ Option 2: Search for materials using an Express Catalog vendor:

1. Enter an **item keyword** in the box marked "Enter Text." (e.g. printer, "Harry Potter" etc.)
2. Select **"Search"**
3. Select the appropriate item from the list and **"Add to Cart."**
4. Select the gray **"Find Materials"** button to search for additional materials.
5. Once all materials have been added, select **"Checkout"** in the white eSchool Mall screen.
6. In the next screen, select the gray **"Complete order and submit to DonorsChoose"** button.

### □ Summarize Your Resource Request.

Draft a resource summary sentence that gives donors an overview of the items you request. (You'll have a chance to write a more detailed essay in the next step.) For example:

- My project needs 10 test tubes, Bunsen burners, and lab notebooks.
- My project needs books, bookshelves, and a reading rug.

# Step 4: Write Your Essay

**Write your essay.**

This is your chance to share with the world what your project will make possible. Inspire donors. Speak to them about your students as you would when talking to a friend – with sincerity, enthusiasm, and possibility. And most importantly, take the time to write well. Don't forget to use the spell check to review before submitting.

Use the four-part Self-Guided Project Essay template or the Free-Form Project Essay box to complete your essay. Great essays usually follow the structure below:

Paragraph #	Theme	Other Guidelines
1	<b>Introduce Your Students and Classroom</b>	<p><b>Tell donors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what grade-level and/or subject you teach</li> <li>- anything helpful for a donor to know about your school or your students (high-need school, ESL population, charter / alternative school, etc.)</li> </ul> <p><b>Don't tell donors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- your name, room number, or location details (including school, district, county, or city -- state is ok).</li> </ul>
2	<b>Describe the Situation</b>	<p><b>Tell donors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what obstacles or challenges your students face in the classroom</li> <li>- what opportunity your students might miss out on without the supplies you requested</li> </ul>
3	<b>Describe the Solution</b>	<p><b>Tell donors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what resources you are requesting</li> <li>- how the resources you request will solve or mitigate the situation/problem mentioned in paragraph 2</li> </ul>
4	<b>Empower Your Donors</b>	<p><b>Tell donors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- how important this project is to your students</li> <li>- any other information that might encourage donors to support your project</li> </ul>

**Confirm Your Essay.**

Review what you've written. Check grammar and spelling. Then, when you feel positively great about what will be posted online, read the acknowledgement section and select the "I Confirm" checkbox.

**Adjust expiration (if needed).**

Only if necessary, shorten the project expiration date (the date after which you would no longer be able to do the project), then select "**Save and Go to the Next Step.**"

## Step 5: Quantify (Project) Impact

Help quantify the impact your project will have on your students. We share this information with donors to give full transparency into all that they have helped make possible in supporting your project. Plus, we hope you'll think of this as a good reminder of the impact *you* have in your classroom every day.

- ❑ **Calculate how many hours of learning your project will provide.**  
To estimate this number, think about:
  - the number of hours students will spend working with the materials in the classroom and at home, and
  - the number of hours of discussion, reflection, and writing the students will spend as a result of the materials.
  
- ❑ **Approximate how many students will use the project resource(s).**  
Verify the number of students that will use the resource(s) and enter that number in the appropriate space.
  
- ❑ **Determine whether the resource is reusable.**  
Will future classes be able to use the materials (books, lab equipment, musical instruments) or is it something for this year's students only (field trip, periodicals, paper)? Select "Yes" or "No" as appropriate.
  
- ❑ **Select the grade range of your students and the subject(s) you teach.**  
Use the drop down menus to select the grade range and subjects that will benefit from this resource.
  
- ❑ **Select the appropriate resource type / description.**  
Use the drop down menus to select the appropriate resource type and resource description. Once you do, select "**Save and Go to the Next Step.**"

## Step 6: Confirm Your Project

- ❑ **Review your Project.**  
Take one last look. Be sure to double check your title, list of materials, resource summary sentence, essay, and project expiration date.
  
- ❑ **Submit.**  
This is it. If all is correct, select the green "**Submit**" button. Congratulations, you did it!

# Final Tips for Success

## □ **Project Review**

Once your project is submitted, your peers – other teachers – read, review, and post your request.

On occasion, you will receive an email requesting additional information or edits. Please know that we want you to be successful, and these emails are our best effort to ensure that your project is best equipped to be successful at DonorsChoose.org. So, don't give up! Use the feedback and direction in the email and resubmit your project.

## □ **Keep the resource cost under \$400.**

Our experience has been that 80% of projects under \$400 are funded within three months. So, when possible, try to keep the cost of the materials you request between \$100 and \$400. One suggestion for larger projects is to “break up” the project into smaller pieces – initially, you can submit up to three projects under \$400.

## □ **Spread the word!**

Don't be shy! Tell the world about your project and DonorsChoose.org. We have found that many of our most successful teachers have inspired the networks of their friends and family to tell even more people who, in turn, are inspired to help make your project possible.

And this means more teachers too. We know. You might be afraid that the more teachers who know, the less funding you'll receive. But that's not it at all. The more people who use and know about DonorsChoose.org, the more likely we are to create a movement whereby every teacher knows to submit needs to DonorsChoose.org and every individual is motivated to become a citizen philanthropist.

## □ **Thank you.**

We know all that you do every day. And we believe that it is the most important work out there. Thank you for taking this time to submit a request to make your classroom, your students, and the learning you make possible even better.