



# Statewide Teacher Project Procurement

## Building In-House Versus Partnering with DonorsChoose

Teachers have innovative project ideas to help their students learn, and they often need specific new materials to bring their vision to life. State leaders and departments of education can try to fulfill these micro-grants and procurement requests in-house, or they can partner with a third party like DonorsChoose to handle the vetting, purchasing, and shipping involved with teacher grants.

### DonorsChoose Cost Structure

DonorsChoose is completely free for teachers to use, and provides free, best-in-class reporting and management tools to principals and school district administrators. We cover our costs by including two line items beyond the learning materials requested on each teacher’s project:

- A flat \$30 per-project fulfillment fee, which covers the costs of our operations: ordering materials for teachers, managing relationships with vendors, handling any customer service questions from teachers and donors, and collecting feedback from benefitting classrooms.
- A 15% allocation to support the mission of DonorsChoose, which covers our overhead (5%), as well as program costs such as reaching new teachers, data science to enable customized reporting for partners and districts, and new website features and maintenance to keep our site user friendly.

We have continually received top ratings from Charity Navigator and Guidestar for our transparency and efficiency, putting us in the top 1% of U.S. charities, and we are confident in the top-quality experience we provide to teachers. We’ve built the table below to help your team think through the different services areas required to successfully run a teacher project fulfillment program.

Area of Work	Considerations for Building Within the DOE	DonorsChoose Services
Marketing to Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How will you get in touch with teachers?</li><li>• Do you have an email marketing platform?</li><li>• Do you have team members with the bandwidth and expertise to run targeted marketing campaigns to different</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Email marketing to the thousands of teachers already using DonorsChoose (at least one teacher at 85% of America’s public schools has created a project)</li><li>• Outreach to new teachers, including teacher colleague referral programs</li><li>• Analytics for you on open rate,</li></ul>

	groups of teachers?	<p>click rate, conversion rate, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderation of a thriving, 20K+ member Teacher Facebook community</li> </ul>
<b>Coordination with Principals and Districts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who will be in charge of tracking teachers' requests from different schools?</li> <li>• Who will send updates and reports to principals and central offices, and how often?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automated notifications to principals when projects are posted and funded</li> <li>• Line item reporting for school districts on donated items</li> <li>• Notification to school offices when packages are expected</li> </ul>
<b>Vetting Projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who will review submitted requests from teachers?</li> <li>• Who will verify teaching status?</li> <li>• How quickly will the DOE staff be able to review projects for teachers, recognizing that many projects are timely and related to a particular unit or activity?</li> <li>• How will you determine that the price quotes are accurate?</li> <li>• Who will provide feedback to teachers if their projects need edits?</li> <li>• How many projects will the department be able to review?</li> <li>• What happens to the projects that aren't approved? Do teachers get a chance to make edits?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vetting of project essays for student privacy, clarity of learning goal, and appropriateness of materials for the described project</li> <li>• Upon request and as needed, additional custom vetting can be implemented, e.g. reviewing projects against a funding DOE partner's specific criteria</li> <li>• Feedback to teachers who need to make edits to their projects and resubmit</li> <li>• Capacity to screen more than 300,000 projects annually, with volunteer screeners trained and working in time zones across the country</li> <li>• Average turnaround time of 1–2 business days</li> </ul>
<b>Pricing and Fulfillment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will you give cash or checks to teachers?</li> <li>• How will you get their banking information?</li> <li>• Who will collect and review receipts?</li> <li>• If you opt to fulfill projects by purchasing materials, how will you pay for and ship individual items to school buildings? What if</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiations for best-in-class pricing and other benefits (e.g. free shipping, free returns) with 24 education vendors, including Best Buy Education, Lakeshore Learning, Carolina Biological, CDW-G, and Amazon Business, among others</li> <li>• Full fulfillment of all funded projects, including special requests for items and experiences not available from</li> </ul>

	<p>teachers request items from multiple retailers? How will you ensure you stay on budget for each individual teacher?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What happens if an item is not available anymore or the price has increased?</li><li>• What happens if teachers need to return an item?</li></ul>	<p>our vendors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Project materials are typically ordered within one business day of when the project is funded</li><li>• Teachers are given the option to re-shop if any items originally selected are no longer available</li><li>• Our team works closely with our vendors to handle any returns or exchanges</li></ul>
<b>Customer Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will you run a Help Desk for teachers? Who will they call or email with questions? How fast will you be able to respond to hundreds or thousands of e-mails?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 19+ full time Customer Support Specialists answer all questions from teachers and donors in under 4 days</li><li>• 94% Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT) - (Customers who reply "Good, I'm satisfied" to the question "How would you rate the customer service you received?")</li></ul>
<b>Web platform</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What part of your website will you use to receive teachers' applications?</li><li>• Can your site handle large upticks in capacity, e.g. right before a submission deadline?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dedicated team of 22 on the Engineering, Product, and Data team at DonorsChoose</li><li>• Consistent website maintenance, improvements, and capacity building</li><li>• History of the site staying up during major media events, including Good Morning America and Late Night with Stephen Colbert segments</li></ul>
<b>Soliciting Donations and Private Funds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will the DOE pay for each teacher's full request out of their own budget?</li><li>• Will you look to form a public-private partnership? Who will approach prospective donors and handle grants and sub-grants?</li><li>• Who will ensure that teachers don't accidentally reveal student information to funders?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capacity to include donations from the public, with an audience of 4.5 million donors</li><li>• Can explore conversations with philanthropic institutional partners with local footprints, from our ~300 annual partnerships with companies and foundations</li></ul>
<b>Reporting and storytelling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How will you capture classroom stories?</li><li>• Who will connect with teachers to hear how their materials are</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Live updating partner page on the DonorsChoose website that aggregates your impact in real time and includes links to every</li></ul>

<p>being used?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Who will track grants for auditors’ review?</li><li>• Who will produce reports for public oversight?</li></ul>	<p>funded classroom project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Final 20-25 page report including trends in project submissions, curated example projects, and impact stats by school economic need tiers</li><li>• Spreadsheet of all funded projects</li></ul>
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