



Funding School Maker Spaces

Maker Spaces can be expensive and many schools don't have the resources to fund this sort of valuable learning space that can create amazing educational experiences possible for students. Sure, in a perfect world, all schools would have huge budgets that would cover all the resources, tools and supplies needed to fill a first-rate Maker space. Unfortunately, that isn't always the case . . . or anywhere near the case for many cash-strapped schools.

Teachers, of course, are amazingly resourceful: filling Maker spaces with whatever they can find, borrow or have donated. Many teachers start the Maker space process with little money yet big ideas: forced to get creative in finding sources of funding. Grants may be able to help with some of the bigger items, such as 3-D printers, new furniture and power tools or Arduino kits. But finding funding for smaller things, like LEDs, robots, conductive thread and circuit kits can be challenging. Many corporation and organizations offer grants for school programs. Tech firms, for instance, are a likely go-to for STEM-related programs.

School fundraisers can be an effective way of drumming up funds and awareness: Tech Weeks, Maker Fairs, and Science Challenges can all be utilized as ways of securing donations, resources or vital networking opportunities.

One particularly powerful way of getting Maker space of funding is through DonorsChoose. [DonorsChoose](#) is a nonprofit website where teachers can create projects for the materials they need, and donors can fund whichever projects inspire them. Once a project is fully funded, DonorsChoose.org purchases the requested materials and ships them directly to the school!

Amazon business is one of DonorsChoose's vendors and educators can find almost everything you need there. Carolina, Grainger, Frey, Nasco, and Blinks are popular vendors for science, engineering and arts supplies.

It only takes a few minutes to set up a DonorsChoose account and start creating a project. You create the wish list of supplies you need and write up a few short essays about your students and the projects. DonorsChoose provides a percentage chance of your project being funded as you make the project (projects up to \$400 have an 85% chance and projects from \$401 to \$800 have a 70 percent chance). If the entire project isn't funded by the deadline then you don't get your supplies, which is why it is smart to create projects around the \$500 range, if possible. Then you promote it to help bring in donations. Once you've created one successful project, you can often reuse a lot of the information in future projects.

It's important to share your projects once they're up: posting them to your school e-mail newsletter, your school's classroom management system, your school's Facebook page, Instagram and Twitter accounts.

Thousands of teachers have used DonorsChoose.org to fund their Maker spaces and other STEM projects, allowing their students to explore the infinite possibilities of engineering and technology.