Treasurer Huddle
October 26, 2026

Presentation Overview

- **Cents-able Solutions**
- Navigating PTA Fundraising: Rules, Risk, and Efficient Revenue
- **Collaboration Solutions**
- Fundraising for Subsets of Students
- **Hot Seat**
- Questions & Answers

Navigating PTA Fundraising: Rules, Risk, and Efficient Revenue

Core Objective:

- Protect 501(c)(3) status,
- Lower risk exposure, and
- Execute low-effort, high-profit fundraisers.

IRS Rules & 501(c)(3) Compliance

Mission Alignment:

- All fundraising must directly support educational and child welfare goals defined in your PTA bylaws.

Non-Inurement Rule:

- Funds cannot benefit specific individuals or families (no individual student accounts or private hardship funds).
    - This includes providing free shirts or other PTA promotional items to board members.

Political Limitations:

- Absolute prohibition on endorsing or opposing political candidates.
- Advocacy/lobbying (e.g., school ballot measures) must remain an insubstantial part of total activities.

PTA Governance & Financial Controls

The 3-to-1 Rule

For every 1 fundraising event, offer at least 3 non-fundraising community or educational programs.

Adult-Led Operations

Children should not conduct door-to-door sales or sell products directly to strangers.

Transparent Budgeting

All revenue targets and expenditures must be voted on and approved by general membership. Transparently disclose how fundraising proceeds will be used.

Internal Controls

Implement dual signatures on checks, two-person cash handling, and annual financial audits. Daily deposits to the bank.

Qualified Sponsorships (Tax-Exempt):

Allowed

Displaying sponsor logos, contact info, slogans, or product depictions as donor recognition.

Not Allowed

Do **not** post product endorsements or comparative claims (e.g., *"Vendor X serves the best pizza in town"*).

Not Allowed

Do **not** mandate or incentivize members to purchase from a sponsor in exchange for contributions.

Low-Prep, High-Profit Fundraiser Ideas

Direct Request / "No-Sell" Campaign

- *Setup:* Single donation request (e.g., "$50 direct donation = no coupon books").
- *Volunteers Needed:* 1–2 | *Profit Margin:* ~95–100%

Corporate Employer Matching & Retail Rewards

- ➔ *Setup:* Connect parents to employer match portals (Benevity, Double the Donation).
- ➔ *Volunteers Needed:* 1 | *Profit Margin:* 100%

Digital Read-a-Thon or Move-a-Thon

- ➔ *Setup:* Turnkey online platform where students collect web pledges from family/friends.
- ➔ *Volunteers Needed:* 2–3 | *Profit Margin:* 80–90%

Dine-Out / Spirit Nights

- *Setup:* Partner with local restaurants for 15%–33% sales returns on designated nights.
- *Volunteers Needed:* 1 | *Profit Margin:* 100% (Zero upfront cost)

Shopping Site Donations

- Set-up - Organization will need to Verify 501(c)3, and then sign-up through their portal.
- *Volunteers Needed:* 1 | *Profit Margin:* 100% (Zero up front cost)

Retail Platforms that Offer Give-Back Donations

	Effort Level	Primary Revenue Driver	Best For...
Kroger Community Rewards	Set-and-forget	In-store grocery runs	Regional/Local Grocery Shoppers
Box Tops App	Active promotion	Scanning receipt photos	Elementary Schools & Early Youth Groups
iGive/TownChest/ ShopRaise	Set-and-forget	Browser-extension cashback	cashbackHoliday & E-Commerce Shoppers.
Walmart Spark Good	Set-and-forget	Micro-donations at digital checkout	Online & App Shoppers

Other Fundraisers

1

The "No-Sell" / Direct Ask Campaign
How It Works: Send a humor-filled letter (e.g., *"Skip the bake sales, skip the coupon books: $50 direct donation = zero sales pressure all year."*

2

School Yard or Community Garage Sale
How it Works: The PTA "rents" parking spaces in the school lot ($25–$35 per spot) to neighborhood families who want to hold a yard sale. Families keep their sales earnings.
This could also work in conjunction with an event already happening at school for a vendor/ craft fair.

3

Online Auction
How It Works: Reach out to local businesses or organizations to ask for donations. List these in an online platform and share it out. People can bid from home on items and you can offer front row promotion seating or reserved parking.

4

Spirit Wear
How it works: Get approval from your board and administrators first, check pricing for what your gear should look like and selling price point. Some vendors will let you pre-sale the items so that money is coming in first before you spend anything. Order the items and distribute them to the families who ordered in a timely manner.

Raffles:

- Must register with the Attorney General by submitting a Raffle Permit Application - CT-NRP-1 with $30.00 permit fee.
- Raffle Permits are good from January 1 to December 31
- Require submission of CT-NRP-2 by February 1st.
- Must be current with Attorney General, & Franchise Tax Board
- Online sales of raffle tickets is prohibited. All raffle tickets must be purchased in person.
- 90/10 Rule - 90% of gross receipts must go to the non-profit organization for charitable purposes
- 50/50 Raffles are prohibited

What are Guidelines for Specialty Programs that only Benefit a Subset of Students

The Restriction:

- You cannot track fundraising dollars to individual students (e.g., *"Student A raised $200, so Student A gets $200 off their field trip ticket"*).
- This violates 501(c)(3) law and can cause the PTA to lose its tax-exempt status.

The Solution:

- Funds must be raised for the **entire group or program as a whole** (e.g., *"We are raising funds to lower the cost of the 5th-Grade Camp trip for every attending student"* or *"We are raising funds to purchase equipment for the 8th-Grade Band Program"*).

What are Guidelines for Specialty Programs that only Benefit a Subset of Students

Restricted Fund Allocation

How It Works:

- The PTA Board and General Membership vote to create a specific budget line item (a "Restricted Fund") dedicated to a designated school program (e.g., *5th Grade End-of-Year Celebration Fund*).

Execution:

- All promotional materials must clearly state: *"Proceeds from this fundraiser will directly support the PTA's 5th Grade Activity Fund to cover venue and event costs for all 5th-grade students."*

Governance Requirement:

- The money goes into the main PTA bank account, but the Treasurer tracks it in a dedicated ledger category.

Recommended Fundraiser Types for Student Sub-Groups

Grade-Specific Spirit Nights / Dine-Outs:

- Partner with a local restaurant where proceeds from purchases made by families of that specific grade level are tagged for the group's activity budget.

Dedicated Direct-Ask Campaigns:

- Send a targeted digital donation request specifically to families of that grade level or group (e.g., *"Help us reach our $1,500 goal to pay for the 8th Grade Promotion Trip"*).

Student Experience / Service Projects:

- Have the specific group of students participate in a group project (like a school campus clean-up or community service day) where sponsors pledge money to the overall project fund.
    -

Financial Need & Equity Grants

How It Works:

- Create a general **PTA Student Activity Assistance / Equity Fund**.

Execution:

- Funds are collected for the overall scholarship pot.
- School administrators or counselors (who know student financial needs while maintaining privacy) anonymously request allocations from the PTA to cover trip costs or fees for students in need.

Governance Requirement:

- The PTA does **not** handle individual student applications or know which specific students receive the aid—school staff handle disbursements anonymously to protect student privacy and ensure compliance.

Compliance & IRS Rules: How to Structure Ticket Sales

Cost-Recovery / Non-Profit Pricing:

- Ticket prices should be set to cover (or partially offset) the actual costs of the venue, transportation, entertainment, and food.
- The goal is event execution, not making a commercial profit.

No Individual Accounts:

- Ticket revenue goes into the PTA's general/restricted account for the event—it cannot be credited to individual student accounts or tied to how much work a specific student or parent did to organize the event.

Inclusivity & Scholarships:

- Under PTA equity and inclusion guidelines, **no student should be excluded due to an inability to pay**.
- Best practice is to establish a discreet, administrator-managed scholarship fund (using PTA budget funds, local business sponsorships, or optional donor add-ons during ticket checkout) so every student can attend.

Summary Checklist for the PTA Board

[ ] **Vote First:** Did the general PTA membership vote to approve the specific fundraising effort and its intended program allocation?

[ ] **Check the Language:** Does all promotional text clearly state that funds support the *program/event*, not individual student accounts?

[ ] **Centralized Banking:** Are all funds deposited directly into the main PTA bank account and tracked in a dedicated budget line item?

[ ] **Equal Access:** Does the resulting program or event benefit all participating students in that targeted group equally?

Action Steps
Next Steps & Board Action Items

Review Policy Exclusions

Review insurance coverage before finalizing vendor or event contracts.

- Review Red, Yellow and Green Activities

Standardize Vendor Onboarding

Create a single intake packet

- Contract
- Certificate of Insurance Requirement
- Hold Harmless Form).

Budget Verification

Confirm all planned fundraisers

- Are voted on by executive board and association
- Align with IRS 501(c)(3) rules.

Simplify Strategy

- Select 1–2 low-prep campaigns to maximize profit while minimizing volunteer fatigue.
- Don’t over do it with fundraisers during the year. Be mindful of your school community in this regard.

Insurance, Vendors & Risk Management

General Liability

Protects against bodily injury and property damage during events.

Bonding / Crime

Protects against theft or embezzlement of funds.

Directors & Officers

Covers board leadership decisions.

Third-Party Vendor

- Certificate of Insurance (COI) with $1,000,000+ General Liability minimum.
- Must list local and state PTA units as **Additional Insured**.
- Signed Hold Harmless / Indemnity Agreement.

Workers Compensation

Mandatory if a vendor brings paid employees to school property or PTA events.

Resources

Tools to help your unit prepare for your fundraiser.

Sample **Onboarding Packet**

AIM - Hold Harmless Sample

CAPTA Grad Night Program

Q & A

Financial Fires or Roadblocks?

Thank you for attending the Treasurer ‘s Huddle!

The next Treasurer’s Huddle is scheduled for November 12th at 6:00 PM. - Topic will be Workers Compensation Reports

We will post all Huddles on the Ninth District PTA website in case you miss one.