

First Book

5 Great Ways to Find Funding for Books and More

A Toolkit

Spring 2017

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The Goal of this Toolkit

We know that many First Book members often buy books using money from their own pockets. Others have budgets that just aren't big enough to meet the need they have. This toolkit is designed to give you ideas and tools to explore other sources of funding. The recommendations are simple and don't require a lot of time or effort. This **First Book Funding Toolkit** provides actionable ideas that we hope will help you secure the funding you need to help your students succeed.

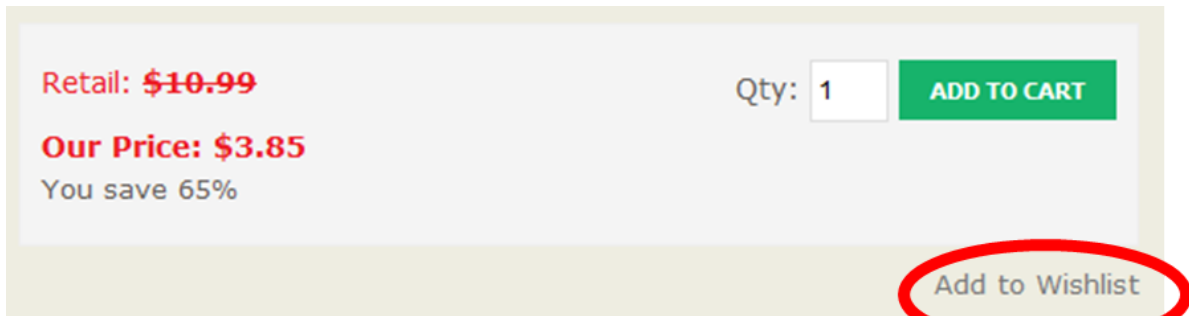


Your First Step - Determine How Much Money You Need

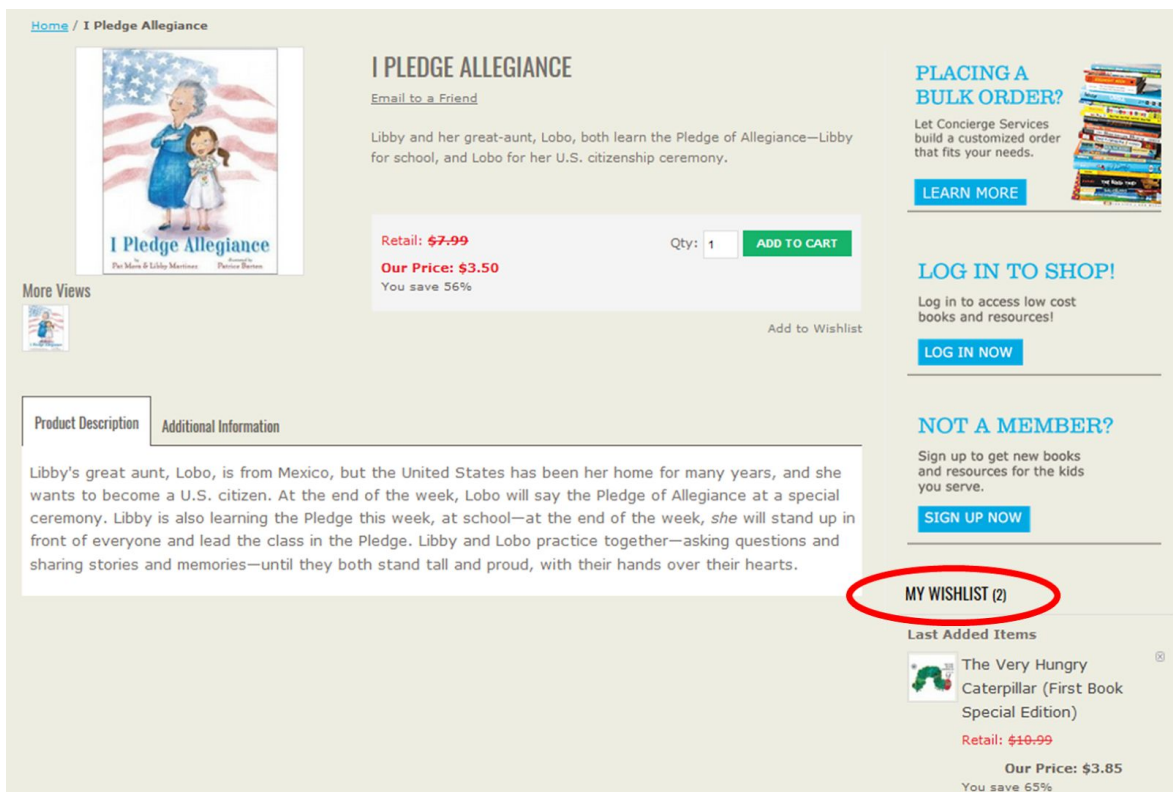
It may sound intuitive, but pricing out your wishlist is a great way to gain clarity when it comes to getting funding. Do you need \$50, \$300 or more than \$500 to purchase resources? To determine what you'll need, first decide what you want to do. Give every student in your class three books? Send a book home each week of your summer meal program? Once you have your goal, use the **WISHLIST** tool when logged into your First Book Marketplace account to create your ideal order. This will let you know how much money you need to obtain. Once you have the goal clearly articulated and the funding amount needed, you can explore your funding options.

How to Use the Wishlist Tool - A Tutorial

1. Login to your First Book account.
2. Select an item that you'd like to add to your "Wishlist." Just below the green "Add to Cart" button, you'll see "**Add to Wishlist.**" Click this link to add the product to your wishlist.





3. You will have the option to **Continue Shopping** or **Go to Your Wishlist**. Select Continue Shopping, and repeat steps 2 and 3 until you have all of the items for which you'd like to request funding.
4. Once you've added the last item to your wishlist, scroll to the far right side of your screen. You will see a column that says "MY WISHLIST" Scroll to the bottom of this list and click, **Go To Wish List**. You can also reach your wishlist from your Account Dashboard.



NOTE: Items in a wishlist are not on hold. If a product sells out, it will disappear from your wishlist.


5. This will take you to a summary page where you will see your full wishlist:

MY WISHLIST

	Dear Primo: A Letter to My Cousin Edit From Mexican author and illustrator Duncan Tonatiuh comes the story of two cousins, one in America and one in Mexico, and how their daily lives are different yet similar.	Retail: \$16.95 Our Price: \$6.19 You save 63%	Remove item
<input type="text" value="Please, enter your comments..."/>		7	<input type="button" value="ADD TO CART"/>
	The Very Hungry Caterpillar (First Book Special Edition) Edit Eric Carle's classic story is now available as First Book's newest First Book Marketplace Special Edition.	Retail: \$10.99 Our Price: \$3.85 You save 65%	Remove item
<input type="text" value="Please, enter your comments..."/>		30	<input type="button" value="ADD TO CART"/>
<input type="button" value="UPDATE WISHLIST"/> <input type="button" value="ADD ALL TO CART"/> <input type="button" value="SHARE WISHLIST"/>			

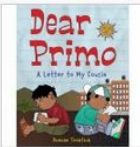

On the summary page, you will need to manually calculate the total amount needed for your project/initiative. Simply multiply the price of each item by the quantity you need to order. Add together the total prices for each item to determine your grand total.

6. In addition to using the wishlist tool to refine the amount that is needed for your project, you can also share it with others. When you are ready, click “**Share Wishlist.**” A new screen will open, and you will be able to enter the recipient's email address, and write a personal note. Click “**Send**” and your wishlist will appear in their email inbox.
7. The recipient will receive an email similar to the following with your wishlist items:



Take a look at my wishlist from First Book Marketplace.

Hi Principal Jones - Here is my wishlist. I'd love to talk to you about purchasing these books from First Book so that I can send a book home every week throughout our summer meals program to encourage kids to pick up food on Fridays.

	
Dear Primo: A Letter to My Cousin View Product Add to Cart	The Very Hungry Caterpillar (First Book Special Edition) View Product Add to Cart

[Add all items to shopping cart](#) | [View all wishlist items](#)

The “Do the Math” Calculator

Showing how you will impact the children you serve is an essential step in securing funding. Demonstrating the ability to maximize every dollar you receive -- and how much you will save by purchasing from First Book -- can encourage program leaders and community members to provide financial support. Using the following “Do the Math” calculator, you can show your school/program leaders and others just how much their dollars will stretch when you purchase from First Book.

Here’s an example:

<u>Retail Price</u>	<u>First Book Price</u>
\$10.99/book	\$3.85/book
x 30 copies	x 30 copies
\$329.70	\$115.50

You save \$214.20 by purchasing from First Book.

In the example above, a budget of \$300 would serve **27** students at retail price ($\$300 / \$10.99 = 27$), but **78** students at the First Book price ($\$300 / \$3.85 = 78$). Look for ways to make this point clear to funders.

This is great news to someone looking to support your project because it shows your ability to maximize every single dollar and support more students.

THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR (FIRST BOOK)

THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR
By Eric Carle

FREE RESOURCES

Retail: ~~\$10.99~~

Our Price: \$3.85

You save 65%

Your Next Step: Secure Funding For Your Program

Now that you know what you want to accomplish, and specifically how much money you need, it’s time to consider your options. Is it a simple request to your school or program leader? Could you meet your goal with a bake sale, or do you need a larger fundraiser involving the whole community? You have many choices when it comes to getting funds to support the children you serve. Review the following list to see which one(s) fit you best. And good news: the resources you need — sample letters, emails, scripts and even helpful websites — are included right here in this toolkit!

5 Great Ways to Find Funding for Books and More

Please note, the funding options are rated on an “ease of use” scale of 1 - 5. Items ranked 1 require minimal time and effort. Options ranked 5 require significant time and effort.

Ease	Funding Option	Summary	Toolkit Resources	Pg.
1	Ask Your School/ Program Leaders	Your school principal or program director may have funding available to support your purchase.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter template requesting funds First Book Wishlist 	7
1	Invite Local Businesses to Help	Local organizations, from the drycleaner to the Rotary Club, may be able to support your project or program. This section includes resources to find, contact and support them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to find local service orgs Script for initial conversation with organizations Thank you note template 	8
2	Start an Online Crowd-Funding Campaign	Online fundraising campaigns can be a great source of funding and exposure for your school/program. Learn how to get started and receive helpful tips in this section.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of First Book Campaigns 	10
3	Host a Fundraiser	Fundraisers can be low-lift ways to generate funds quickly to purchase resources. This section includes fundraising ideas as well as templates to plan and launch your idea.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 Fundraising Ideas Event Checklist Sample Press Release 	11
5	Seek Local Government Funding	Local elected officials may be a great source of support and funding to aid your program/project. Learn how to find them and start your outreach in this section.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link to state database of all elected officials Template letter 	15

Tools & Tips for Funding Goals of up to \$500

Tip 1. Ask Your Program/School Leaders

Use this option to reach out to your school or program leaders to explore available funding from your organization’s general operating budget or other special funding, such as Title I funding. Below is a suggested email/letter template to send to your principal/director. Be sure to include a summary of the items you want to purchase, the purpose, number of kids you will reach, and your savings by purchasing from First Book!

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### Sample Letter to School/Program Leader Requesting Funding

*Note: Copy and paste the text below and then personalize the sections highlighted in yellow. We strongly recommend you attach a copy of your wishlist to this email/letter for your school/program leader.*

Dear **Principal Smith**,

I’m writing because I’ve discovered a source of low cost books that I believe our **school/community/program/students** could greatly benefit from. First Book ([www.firstbook.org](http://www.firstbook.org)) is a national nonprofit organization that provides new books and educational resources to children in need. They offer resources at 50% - 90% off the retail price and are only available to educators working in low-income communities.

As you know, I am working on **(description of your project)**, and would love to give our **students/program/etc.** resources that **(what students will use the books for)**. I’ve researched the cost, and with First Book, the materials will cost us just **price of items from your wishlist**, which is far less than the retail price of **retail price of items**. I know that we have a limited budget, and I’d like to know if we have any funding available to purchase these resources.

I would like to explore our options so that our students have the benefit of these resources. Will you please let me know if there is funding available for this purchase, and, if so, what is the process for accessing it? Thank you for your support. It is greatly appreciated!

Sincerely,

**Your Name**



## Tip 2. Invite Local Businesses to Help

Local organizations and businesses can be great sources of support. They are already a part of the community, and often look to support initiatives that benefit residents and/or help them attract new customers. Our recommendations and tools for reaching out to local businesses and organizations are as follows:

- 1) **Create a list of organizations and businesses that you want to reach out to.** The list should include the owner's/manager's first and last name, full business name, phone number and mailing address. It may be helpful to walk/drive around your school's neighborhood to make sure you include large and small businesses in the area. For example:
  - a) The local dry cleaner
  - b) Corner store/Convenience store/Bodega
  - c) Laundromat
  - d) Local restaurants (pizza shop, popular breakfast place, etc.)
  - e) Gas stations
- 2) **Determine how much you'd like each organization to contribute.** Do you want everyone to contribute \$25, or should it be \$100, or more? Think of what is reasonable for these businesses. Are they more likely to donate a smaller or larger amount? Can you specify different recognition for different donation levels, such as a Bronze, Silver, and Gold sponsorship?
- 3) **Use the script below to reach out to the various organizations.** Whether you make phone calls, or speak to the owners/managers in person, this framework will help you get a persuasive message across. Note, please personalize the sections highlighted in yellow.

*Hi, this is **Jane Doe** and I am a **teacher** at **ABC Elementary**. May I please speak to the owner or manager? (Note, you **ALWAYS** want to speak to the decision-maker!)*

*Hi (**owner**), my name is **Jane Doe**, and I am a **teacher** at **ABC Elementary**. How are you today? We are located **just down the street**, and have many families that visit your store. We're working to provide our **3rd graders** with books to **help build their home libraries**. As **Company Name** is a pillar in this community, I wanted to reach out and ask if you'd be willing to donate a minimum of **\$25** toward our goal of **giving each student a book for the summer**.*

*As you know, being a strong reader will unlock many doors for our kids. Your **\$25** will help get **8** brand new books for our students. We know this will help them **(benefits to***

*student*). What I'd love to do if you can support us is *put your company name in each book that you sponsor* so that families know who is supporting their children.

*Does that sound like something you'd like to be a part of?*

*(if yes) Wonderful! When is a good time for me to stop by to pick up your contribution?*

*(If no) Thank you for your time. We'd like to contact you again to see if you might be able to help our students in the future.*

4) **When you stop by to pick up their contribution, be sure show gratitude.** Feel free to use one or several of the following examples:

- a) A Certificate of Appreciation to hang in their store (see pg. 17 for a sample)
- b) A letter acknowledging their contribution (on school/program letterhead for tax purposes, if applicable)
- c) A copy of the newsletter/communication that goes home with families highlighting their store and contribution
- d) An offer to showcase their business (e.g. flyers) on a school "Community" board
- e) Handmade thank you notes from students expressing their appreciation

It is always important to show gratitude to organizations that provide support, no matter how large or small the donation. Here's quick language you can use for your thank you notes to help you along!

Dear Mr./s. *Business Owner*,

*Thank you so much for your generous donation of \$25 to our Summer Reading project! Our students are excited to receive their new books, and look forward to reading them this summer. We are so grateful for your partnership and support. Thank you for supporting the children in this community. We wish you a wonderful summer, and look forward to staying in touch.*

Warmly,

**YOUR NAME**

## Tip 3. Start an Online Crowd-Funding Campaign

The internet has made our ability to connect with friends, family, parents and community members easier than ever before. The crowd-funding concept is simple. Create an account with our platform, [www.firstbook.fundly.com](http://www.firstbook.fundly.com), and set your fundraising goal. Write your project summary, and you are nearly finished. The last step is to share your initiative with your social network, and encourage others to spread the word. Now, folks who want to support have an easy way to do so, and you have just gotten the word out to many, many people!

For more information on launching an online campaign with First Book, please visit: [www.firstbook.fundly.com](http://www.firstbook.fundly.com) and click “**Start for Free**” across the top banner.

The screenshot displays the First Book website interface. At the top, a navigation bar includes links for BENEFITS, HOW IT WORKS, FUNDRAISING IDEAS, BLOG, SEARCH, SIGN IN, and a prominent **START FOR FREE** button circled in red. Below the navigation is the main heading "New Books and Resources for Kids in Need" with the subtitle "Transforming Lives Through Equal Access to Literacy and Educational Opportunities". A large banner features a young girl holding a book titled "To See My Friend!" by Kazuo Iwamura, with a "First Book" logo and buttons for "Start A Campaign" and "Start An Event". To the right of the banner are three yellow boxes with statistics: "Over 45 percent of American kids live in low-income households", "Just 20 books can help a child reach a higher level of education", and "As little as \$15 can provide 5 new books to a child in need." Below these is a "Learn more" link. A search bar with the placeholder "Search for campaigns or people" and a "Search" button is located below the statistics. Underneath the search bar is a "Show your support" section with social media sharing buttons for Like (88), Tweet, G+, 0, and Pin it, all of which are circled in red. The bottom section is titled "Featured Campaigns" and includes three images: "Project BRANCH" (a collaboration between the Junior League of Portland Provisional Class and the Children's Book Bank), a woman reading to a child, and a "First Book" logo.

## Tip 4. Host a Fundraiser

This option will require planning, support, and input from your school/program community. Whether you opt for a bake sale, selling concessions during a school event or something more creative, this section highlights options to generate funds to purchase the resources you need for the kids you serve.

Below are 10 ideas for fundraisers that you could host at your school/program, followed by a checklist to help you plan a great event!

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### 10 Easy Fundraising Ideas to Get You Started

1. Bake Sale
2. Concessions Stand at an upcoming school event (school play, basketball game, etc.)
3. Penny Wars - each class collects pennies during a specified period of time (e.g. 1 week). The class that wins gets bragging rights and a fun treat.
4. Lemonade Stand during dismissal
5. Car Wash
6. Raffle - Ask local businesses or organizations to donate an item, and sell raffle tickets for \$0.50 - \$1.00.
7. Community Garage Sale - Many families may live in apartments, or simply don't have yard space for a sale. Obtain as many tables as possible, and charge a fee per table - say \$10. Each person can sell their "garage sale" items on the tables for your event.
8. Partner with a local restaurant and host a "Restaurant Night," where a certain percentage of each order is donated to your school/program.
9. Sell carnations or another low-cost flower during special holidays - Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day
10. Host a "Parent's Night Out" by offering an evening movie, pizza and water for kids for 2 hours while while parents enjoy a date night.

## Sample Event Checklist

To ensure a successful event, make sure you check these items off your list:

- Set your fundraising goal
  - Know exactly how much money you need to raise
  - Communicate your goal with folks who support/participate in your event
- Confirm support from your school/program leader to host the fundraising activity/activities
  - Has your school/program leader signed off on this event?
  - Who else needs to know about this event in order for it to take place?
- Develop a Plan of Action to raise the funds
  - Who** is needed to make the event a success?
  - What** are you going to do to raise funds?
  - Where** will you have your event(s)?
  - When** will the event(s) take place?
- Determine the Staffing Plan
  - Create your planning team. What student/parent or other groups can help?
  - How many people do you need to “work” the event to ensure its success?
  - What do you need people to do? Will you host a training?
- Create a Marketing Plan
  - Do you need a theme for your event? What will make it fun for all involved?
  - How will you get the word out about your event? Flyers, phone calls, text messages, newsletters home with students, posters in the neighborhood, etc.?
- Obtain Event Materials
  - What materials do you need donated/to purchase for a successful event?
  - Do you need money to purchase items in advance of your event (i.e. prizes)? Where are you getting it?
  - Do you have enough time to allow for shipping if ordering items online?
- Event Wrap-Up
  - Share the results of your fundraiser with supporters and volunteers
  - Send thank you notes or other expressions of gratitude to those who helped support
  - Send a press release and photos out announcing your success to your local media
- Purchase Books from First Book at [www.fbmarketplace.org](http://www.fbmarketplace.org)
  - Create and/or sign into your account and access your wishlist (if you set one up)
  - Select your books and make your purchase
  - Be sure to allow 8 - 14 business days for shipping
- Distribute Books to Kids!
  - Make it a **BIG** Deal!
  - Take pictures and have fun!
  - Share your experience with First Book - we'd love to hear from you on Twitter (@FirstBook) or Facebook ([www.facebook.com/FirstBook](http://www.facebook.com/FirstBook))!

## Sample Press Release Template

NOTE: This press release is ideal for fundraisers that include monetary donations, raffles, a restaurant night, or other events in partnership with another company or organization. Press Releases should be sent to the education reporter of your local newspaper, tv station, and other organizations that provide reliable event & news information.

*Copy and paste the text below and then personalize the sections highlighted in yellow.*

~~~~~

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Your Name, Your School/Program

Your email

Your phone number

(Your School/Program) Partners With (Company/Organization) to Provide Free Books to Kids

{CITY, STATE, Date} – {School/program}, located in {neighborhood/area}, is teaming up with {company/organization}, an organization that {company/organization mission}, with {a donation that will provide/an event that will raise money to provide} {number} students with brand-new books and educational resources at no cost. First Book, the nonprofit social enterprise that has distributed 160 million books since 1992, will supply the books.

Access to books and a print-rich environment are leading indicators of a child’s educational success, but for the 32 million children growing up in low-income families in the U.S. alone, books are scarce. One recent study found that in a neighborhood in Washington, D.C., there was only one book per 830 kids.

{Insert quote from school/program administrator stating why they value the partnership with the company/mission, e.g.: “Thanks to ABC Company’s generosity, Pine Street Elementary School has been able to provide more than 500 new books and educational resources to our 3rd, 4th and 5th graders.” said Jane Doe, Director of Pine Street Elementary. “All children deserve equal access to a quality education. This partnership allows our school to give students the resources they need to become strong readers and succeed in school and thrive outside of class.”}

{Insert a description of the donation or event here}

{Insert quote from company/organization, e.g.: “We at ABC Company believe that education is critical for success in life,” said James Robinson, owner of ABC Company. “Supporting initiatives

that bring the benefits of education to children can lead to a brighter future, not only for the children but to society.”}

Books will be purchased on the First Book Marketplace, First Book’s award-winning ecommerce site, where eligible educators can access low-cost and free high quality books, learning materials, school supplies, and essentials, such as warm coats, toothbrushes, and nonperishable snacks. Educators and programs working with children in need are invited to sign up with First Book at <http://www.firstbook.org/register>.

About {Your school/program}

{Insert a 200-word description of your school/program}

About {company/organization}

{Insert a 200-word description of the company/organization who supported your school/program}

About First Book

First Book is a nonprofit social enterprise founded in 1992 that has distributed more than 160 million books and educational resources to programs and schools serving children from low-income families throughout the United States and Canada, which, with more than 275,000 members, is the largest and fastest growing network of educators exclusively serving kids in need. By making new, high-quality books and educational resources available on an ongoing basis, First Book is transforming the lives of children in need and elevating the quality of education. Eligible educators, librarians, program leaders, and others serving children in need can sign up at www.firstbook.org/register. For more information, please visit firstbook.org or follow the latest news on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

###

Note: The three hash marks (###) are required in press releases. They indicate that the press release is complete. Remember to include these!

Tip 5. Seek Local Government Funding

This option involves reaching out to your local elected officials to ask for their support for your students. This could be city council members, the mayor's office, or county or state representatives. Think immediate vicinity, and think big! Your first step will be to identify these individuals and find out who has supported your school/program in the past. A good source of this information could be your school/program leader.

1. **Identify your local elected leaders.** The sites below can help you identify your elected leaders who may support your funding needs.

https://ballotpedia.org/Elected_Officials_Lookup

<https://salsa4.salsalabs.com/o/51309/t/19899/getLocal.jsp>

2. **Identify 2 - 4 leaders you'd like to reach out to.** The input of your principal, parents, and others may be helpful as you determine the best person/people to contact. Remember, politicians may have certain issues that they support or don't support. Be sure to learn about this to ensure you reach out to the best person.
3. **Determine the best person to reach out to your elected official.** Does someone in your school/organization already have a relationship with your chosen elected official(s)? Ask if he or she would be willing to help in your outreach. If he or she has a positive relationship, it may be helpful to add a familiar name to your outreach. If you don't know anyone with a relationship, that's ok.
4. **Send an email to your local elected leaders.** Use the template below to initiate your outreach to your elected official. If you know someone with an existing relationship, ask for his or her help in determining the best way to reach out.
5. **After sending your email, follow-up with a phone call.** Elected officials can be extremely busy, and it doesn't hurt to follow-up with a call to make sure your request is on their radar. If/when you do get a chance to speak to them, use your email as talking points - explaining the situation, the need, the cost, and how the books or other resources will help the students in their district reach key goals. If they aren't able to help you directly, they may be able to connect you with others who can.

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## Sample Letter to Local Elected Official

*NOTE: Copy and paste the text below and then personalize the sections highlighted in yellow.*

Dear Councilman Perez,

I work in your district at ABC Elementary school. I'm writing because we are working to ensure all of our K - 2nd graders read at grade level by 3rd grade. This is a critical factor in their development. In fact, many studies show that students who read at grade level by 3rd grade go on to finish high school, while those who do not struggle throughout their educational careers. In order to help students, we plan to give each child 3 books to read at home during the summer. Unfortunately, our school does not have the resources to purchase these books. I'm reaching out to ask for your help.

I've found a non-profit organization, First Book, that offers books at 50% - 90% off retail price for children in low income communities. The books we want to purchase are \$XX at normal retail price, but with First Book, they are just \$XX. This difference will stretch limited dollars much further, and still make a tremendous impact in the development of children in your district.

Will you please let me know if you are able to contribute \$XX toward this initiative? I'd love the opportunity to further discuss this effort by phone or in person and determine how you can take part. Our families love our school, and we are doing our best to prepare all students with the highest quality education possible. Your support will go a long way toward making that happen.

I look forward to hearing from you, and to hopefully receiving your support!

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME

YOUR PHONE

YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS

## Award Your Supporters

You and your supporters have worked hard to bring books and resources to kids. To recognize the contributions of others, use the template below to create an award that highlights their support.

{Insert Your School/Program Logo}

**{Company Name}**

**{Project or Initiative Name}**

In recognition of your outstanding leadership  
and dedication to  
bringing new books to children of {Your school/Program name}  
you are our

**{Your School/Program Name} Hero!**

---

**Your Name, Your Title**

**Date**

*Note: Consider having your students sign the award, and then frame it for your supporters.*

## Final Reminders

Obtaining the funds you need to support the children you serve doesn't have to come from your own wallet. There are a variety of options for generating additional funds to support your program. As others help you do amazing work, be sure to keep these tips in mind:

- Send thank you notes! Include pictures, handwritten letters, and more from students
- Offer something to the contributor to show appreciation: hang their business flyer on your "community board," or in the main office.
- Invite contributors to your school events (i.e. plays, award ceremonies, guest reader opportunities) so they can see the students they are supporting.
- Plan your asks for funding: don't ask in September, then again in October, and again in January (you get the idea). Map out what you need, so you can save time and ask for what you need all at once.
- Share your success with us at First Book! We'd love to hear how this toolkit has helped you support the children you serve.

## Conclusion

There are a variety of ways to seek funding to get resources for the children you serve. It may be simple, or quite involved, but you have options to consider. We hope this guide has helped you see more possibility for purchasing items that will help your students develop a love of reading and thrive.

Once you have tried an approach or two, we'd love your feedback (@FirstBook on Twitter or [www.facebook.com/FirstBook](http://www.facebook.com/FirstBook)). Please let us know what you tried, how it worked, and how your students were able to benefit. We are in this with you and want your students to get what they need.

