

10 Ways to Get Free Money & Classroom Supplies

Every year teachers spend a lot of money out of their own pockets for classroom supplies and materials for the betterment of their students. The IRS allows you to deduct some of those expenditures, but that doesn't always cover your out-of-pocket expenses. To help you avoid having to spend too much out of your pocket this year, I've compiled a list of ten ways you can try to find free money and supplies for your classroom.

As they have for the last few years, [Target](#) is again awarding 5,000 \$700 grants for school field trips. Applications for the grants are due by September 30, 2010. On the [grant application page](#) <http://sites.target.com/site/en/company/page.jsp?contentId=WCMP04-031880> you can find a Field Trip Idea Generator. To find an idea, enter your state, city, and subject area. The Field Trip Idea Generator will give you ideas based on what past grant recipients in your area have done with the grant money.

[Goldstar Registry](#) <http://www.goldstarregistry.com/index.php?sid=94661> is a free service for teachers to use to get school supplies. The idea behind [Goldstar Registry](#) is the same as bridal registry services. Teachers visit the Goldstar website and register for classroom materials that they would like to receive. Then if a parent or grandparent asks if you would like anything for your classroom, you can have them look at your online registry.

[Giving Getting](#) <http://givinggetting.com/content/?id=1> is a whose goal is to people exchange free material gifts. The process for using [Giving Getting](#) seems straight-forward. If you're in need of something, register and request it. [Giving Getting](#) will then try to match you with a donor that has that item to give.

[Grant Gopher](#) <http://www.grantgopher.com/> is a service that helps registered users find grants for just about any non-profit organization. The grant search engine is continuously updated to include new grant opportunities and remove expired grant opportunities. There is a free section of Grant Gopher and two "premium" subscription services offered by [Grant Gopher](#). The free service offers access to the search engine, weekly newsletter about grant opportunities, and access to common application forms.

[Donors Choose](#) <http://www.donorschoose.org/> is an exciting program for teachers. [Donors Choose](#) is a non-profit organization with a mission of helping under-funded schools. Donors Choose uses the term "citizen philanthropy" to describe its program. [Donors Choose](#) essentially solicits funding from private citizens (and some corporations), which get to choose the projects they wish to fund. Donors can donate as much as they like to one or more projects. [Donors Choose](#) provides potential donors with information about the projects that need funding and the financial situation of the schools submitting requests. (Donations

made through Donors Choose are tax deductible, but as always, check with your tax professional).

Classwish <http://classwish.org/> is a service through which teachers can find people willing to help purchase supplies for their classrooms. **Classwish** operates in a very similar manner to **Donors Choose**. On **Classwish**, teachers can create a wish list of supplies that they need for classrooms that aren't provided in their school budgets. People looking to help teachers can purchase products on a teacher's list and receive a tax deduction for their purchase.

iLoveSchools <http://www.iloveschools.com/> is a free service that helps teachers get supplies for their classrooms. **iLoveSchools** operates in a manner similar to that of **Donors Choose** and **Class Wish**. To get classroom supplies teachers register on **iLove Schools** and create a list of items that they would like to have for their classrooms. Donors then visit **iLove School** to choose a classroom to which they would like to donate supplies. A donor can contribute money toward purchasing the items a teacher has listed or a donor can contribute the actual items.

If you love free stuff as much as I love free stuff, check out **Go To Freebie** <http://www.gotofreebie.com/>. On **Go To Freebie** you can find free samples of everything from bath and beauty supplies to toys and school supplies. **Go To Freebie** has forums and feedback to share experiences and tips about the freebies.

Ask your local business owners. If you have a classroom project that requires special supplies that your school cannot provide, it never hurts to ask local businesses for free or reduced price items for your project. This is especially true if the project is something that will be displayed publicly on an open-house night and you can display a thank-you sign on that night.

Craigslist has a "free" section where people list items they're looking to give away. Browse through the free section on **Craigslist** page for your area. You also might want to consider posting the items you're looking for.

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