

PLAY IT SMART GRANT GUIDELINES

I. Introduction

The mission of the National Football Foundation's Play It Smart program is to help student-athletes take responsibility for their future through lessons learned on the playing field, in the classroom and in service to others.

The National Football Foundation's Play It Smart program is able to accomplish its mission by working with high school football teams across the country to enhance the academic performance and life skills of the team members. The partnership between the Play It Smart program and member high schools creates a positive environment for student-athletes. The key to the success of Play It Smart is the Academic Coach, who supplements the football coaching staff to provide the academic and life skills mentoring and support.

II. The Play It Smart Local Commitment

The National Football Foundation's Play It Smart Program believes in the power of strong local and national partnerships. Since the inception of Play It Smart, quality programming and longevity have been a direct result of those communities and schools who have successfully created strong local partnerships and support. In order for Play It Smart to maintain partnerships with qualified schools and provide them with the best resources, a strong local commitment must be present from the start of the application process.

School district support from the Superintendent is required, as well as complete support from the building principal, administrative team, and head football coach. Other examples of demonstrated local support could be: parent or booster clubs; alumni groups; local businesses, corporations, community agencies; or civic minded individuals.

III. The Granting Process

Play It Smart is a 501(c) 3 tax-exempt organization which relies on contributions and limited governmental funding to support its budget. Therefore, the amount of Play It Smart grant funds available to high schools in any given year depends upon our fundraising success.

On occasion, some Play It Smart donors designate their gifts to support a particular school or geographic area. In those instances, grants will be made to qualified schools in accordance with the donors' wishes. The number and size of grants available to other schools will be dependent on the size of our unrestricted grant budget and may vary from year to year.

Any interested and qualified high school that does not already have a financially sustained Play It Smart program or funding to start Play It Smart is encouraged to apply for a *Program Initiation Grant* to help establish a program in their school.

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IV. Play It Smart Grant Making and Programming

Play It Smart provides *Program Initiation Grants*, which are generally two-year start-up grants to help high schools create the Academic Coach position, after which participating schools are expected to fully fund the position through district support, and/or support from the local community through individuals, community agencies, businesses and corporations.

Additionally, Play It Smart issues annual *Goal Achievement Fund Grants* so schools can provide support for program initiatives and rewards/incentives to student-athletes who are making an effort and achieving the program's objectives. Outside of being able to apply for *Program Initiation Grants* and *Goal Achievement Fund Grants*, each Play It Smart member school gains access to a national network of resources and services.

The partnership between schools and Play It Smart provides each school access to:

- year round support for school/district personnel through a National Football Foundation Fellow;
- recruitment and screening service for Academic Coach candidates;
- training and professional development through a yearly national conference;
- life skills curriculum materials;
- program evaluation through PACE (Promoting Academic Coaching Excellence);
- ongoing research and data collection initiatives;
- national and regional recognition and awards programs;
- national and regional special events for student-athletes;
- national public relations and media support;
- access to the national network of veteran Academic Coaches, Head Coaches and School Administrators; and,
- many other intangible benefits and rewards.

The National Football Foundation's Play It Smart program is dedicated to providing every member school with the best resources necessary to accomplish its mission.

Please note: There are specific guidelines and protocols that must be followed when implementing the Play It Smart program. Those guidelines and protocols are presented prior to official approval for programming.

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V. Grant Applicants

The National Football Foundation issues grants to high schools to support them in establishing a Play It Smart program for their student-athletes. Generally, grant applicants fall into one of the following two categories:

- A) New School Applicant – a school that is a first time applicant; a school that has applied previously but never received funding or programming; a school that had implemented the program or received funding in the past but was not operating in the 2007-08 school year. All new grantees are eligible to receive a two-year *Program Initiation Grant* to develop a Play It Smart program at their high school.
- B) Existing School Applicant – a school that is currently implementing the Play It Smart program in the 2007-08 school year. As indicated in section II, beginning in the third year of program implementation, schools/school districts are expected to fund the Academic Coach position. Current member schools may apply for continued funding from Play It Smart beyond the second year, but receipt of such funding is not guaranteed. Priority consideration is given to schools that have a demonstrated financial need **AND** have made effort to seek sustained funding outside of national resources.

VI. Grant Usage

Program Initiation Grants may **ONLY** be used to pay annual salaries or stipends to one or more Academic Coaches.

Program Initiation Grants may not be used to:

- Supplement “on-the-field” football coaches;
- Conflict with a current employee’s contracted school, district, or agency responsibilities;
- Pay individuals other than Academic Coaches.

Goal Achievement Fund Grants may only be used in accordance with the guidelines set forth to support program initiatives and reward student-athlete effort and achievement.

Goal Achievement Fund Grants may not be used for:

- Football equipment;
- Stipends for “on the field” football coaches;
- Player fees to attend football camps, clinics or combines;
- Scholarships.

VII. Grant Size

Program Initiation Grants vary by school depending on the need and request from each community. The maximum amount for an approved New School Applicant is \$15,000 per academic year for a 2-year term (\$30,000 total). This can only vary in instances where

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funding in geographic regions has been earmarked for schools in accordance with specific donor requests.

Grants to current grantees are for one year only and will be governed by the school's current funding level. Grants will not exceed \$15,000 for the 2008-09 academic year.

Goal Achievement Fund Grants are for a maximum of \$1,000 per school and must be applied for on an annual basis. All schools that are approved for programming are eligible to receive Goal Achievement Fund Grants on an annual basis. Funds will be allocated based on availability. Please note, as mentioned above, this may vary where funding in geographic regions has been earmarked for schools in accordance to specific donor requests.

VIII. Application and Notification Process

The application process is outlined below. New School Applicants begin with STEP I; Existing School Applicants begin their application with STEP II. To be considered for approved programming for the 2008-09 school year, applications must be complete and received by the deadlines set forth. Incomplete applications will delay the decision making process.

A. Application STEP I (General Information) – Due February 15th, 2008

Application STEP I is for *New School Applicants only*. The application and general information must be complete. The Letter of Intent must be signed by the principal or highest ranking school official and must be attached to STEP I Application. STEP I is available online at www.playitsmart.org.

Once Application STEP I is complete and received, the school representatives will receive an Application STEP II packet from the National Office.

B. Application STEP II (Grant & Program Application) – Due April 1st, 2008

School representatives must complete all the components of the Application STEP II packet and mail to the National Football Foundation by the April 1st deadline in order to be considered for the 2008-09 school year. School representatives will be notified of their status of program and funding requests by **May 15th, 2008**.

In addition to the grant application, all New School Applicants and Existing School Applicants with new Head Football Coaches will be required to submit a maximum 2 page signed Coaching Philosophy and Mission Statement with signature.

C. STEP III (Service Agreements and Expectations) – Due July 1st, 2008

After successful completion of Application STEP II, school representatives will be contacted by a National Football Foundation Staff member. The final screening and service agreements process will begin. It may be beneficial for schools to prepare their

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district offices in advance that a final agreement for services will have to be signed in order to officially be eligible to receive grant funding from the National Football Foundation's Play It Smart program. *Please be advised that before your school can be awarded programming and/or grant funds, your school/school district must approve and complete the Memorandum of Agreement by July 1st, 2008.*

D. NOTIFICATION

The final day for approved schools to be notified of grant awards is **May 15th, 2008**. Applications received after deadlines will be filed for consideration in the 2009-10 academic year.

Final receipt of any grant disbursement is contingent upon completion of all service agreements and understanding of expectations.

IX. **Grant Disbursements**

Program Initiation Grants are to be disbursed in three installments:

September 2008
December 2008
April 2009

Goal Achievement Fund Grants will be issued through the Play It Smart National Office upon fund request.

X. **Reporting Requirements**

Periodic progress reports and data submission is required of all designated Play It Smart schools regardless of receiving any funds. Schools that have received funds have additional reporting requirements.

Failure to report and/or submit data may cause a school to have disbursement and/or resources delayed until proper reports have been submitted.