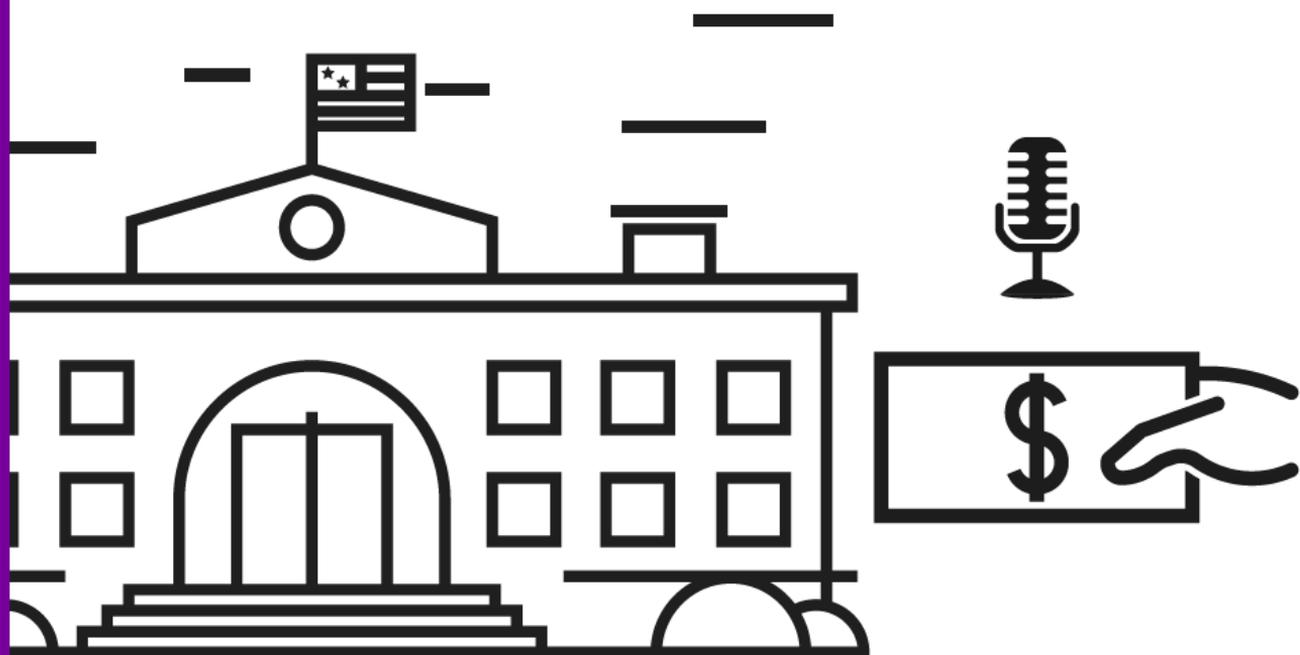


**10 WAYS**  
**TO FIND MONEY**  
**TO PAY FOR A**  
**SCHOOL SPEAKER**

*Even if it feels out of reach!*



ASHLEY BENDIKSEN

# 10 WAYS TO FIND MONEY TO PAY FOR A SCHOOL SPEAKER

(Even when it feels out of your reach!)

These *ten simple, highly effective, no-confusion strategies* can help bring the speaker you want to your community.

Students gain impact. You get praise.

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“We want to bring in a speaker, but our school has little to no funding! How can we make this happen?!”

As an education professional, you care about the youth you serve. Your goal is to ensure that your students succeed and thrive and that your community sees this commitment. However, you know that life can be challenging for students. Obstacles prevent or slow learning and success. It's why schools will seek to bring in *speakers and experts* to address students on everything from social issues to prevention, leadership, and motivation.

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*Speakers are a catalyst. They know how to reach teens. They help bridge the gap between where students are and where you want them to be.*

Unfortunately, many schools are financially limited, and funding for speaker programs just doesn't exist. Many will give up on the idea entirely. Others may find a speaker with a lower fee or be willing to speak for free. A simple word of caution on this: remember, you get what you pay for. A speaker willing to cut prices or speak for free drastically likely doesn't possess the experience to provide what you're hoping for. An experienced and established speaker is a masterful and *educational* storyteller and presenter. They know how to achieve those instant and lasting results you're looking for.

## SO HOW DO YOU PAY FOR THAT AMAZING SPEAKER?

Regardless of your budget,  
you are *not* out of luck!

I'm giving you the *inside scoop* on 10 simple but highly effective, no-confusion strategies to find money to pay for a speaker. Just one can be your answer! These are **tested and proven ways** to help you secure the funding you need to bring impact to your school and your community.

Your students deserve this opportunity, and you deserve the praise for making it all happen. Please give this a read, and give them a go!

### 01. Partner up with another school to reduce costs.

Youth speakers want to *reach students*. It's why many, like myself, will offer discounted rates to impact more schools all in one trip. For example, let's say the speaker's fee is \$2,000. This might be out of your budget. However, if you find another area school to host an assembly, the speaker may offer a split rate of \$3,000 - which is just \$1,500 per school. This is both cost-effective and provides a larger community impact. More youth in your community are impacted, and *you save!*

### 02. Utilize staff development funds by adding an in-service training.

Many youth speakers offer more than just assemblies. Like myself, in addition to student presentations, they may also offer professional development or in-service training for faculty, staff, and teachers. This can often open up another unique line of funding for schools to pull from.

### 03. Use or find grant monies.

Check to see if your school has any existing grants. If not, do a little web research to see what's available. You can start by contacting your State Department of Education to ask for guidance. If a speaker addresses a specific topic (e.g., I specialize in bullying and suicide prevention), research state agencies that already oversee these issues. Look up the "Department" or "Division" of an issue, e.g., Public Safety, Alcohol/Drug Abuse, Mental Health, Community Health, etc. These divisions often know of existing grants. If your speaker is visiting during a national "day" or "awareness month," there may even be federal grant monies available.

#### **04. Contact your local civic and community organizations.**

Often, there are organizations in your community that 1) have community funding and 2) want to support and sponsor programs for area *youth*. Contact organizations such as the Rotary Club, Lions Club, Elks Club, Kiwanis Club, Chamber of Commerce, or any other potentially similar groups. As a bonus, many also have service/volunteer requirements. They may wish to actively participate in organizing the speaker's event or incorporate added activities and resources.

#### **5. Get help from school-based organizations and parent groups.**

Reach out to the local PTO, PTA, and Booster Clubs for both your school and other area schools. (Remember #1 – Partner with other schools for discounted fees!) They may have existing funding or even be willing to host a fundraiser to help raise money to pay for your speaker event.

#### **6. Reach out to the business and banking community.**

Many businesses love the chance to give. Many corporations have charitable giving built into their company values. Ask a business in your community if they would be interested in sponsoring the speaker's visit to the school. Banks, nearly all of them, have a charitable giving fund. Applying for monies is typically as easy as an online application. Visit the websites of your local banks and apply. (If it's a hyper-local bank, often the response is *fast*. You may even know someone on the review committee).

#### **7. Contact groups already invested in “prevention.”**

I previously worked for my state attorney (District Attorney or Attorney General, depending on the state), and we always had community funding for youth violence prevention programs. Visit your state prosecutor's website to check for online applications, or simply call the main office and ask. You should also reach out to your local police department as another potential funding source or search for local prevention task forces. Many youth speakers speak on *prevention*. For example, my programs help prevent teen dating violence. Others specialize in substance abuse prevention, suicide prevention, etc. Think of *who* would want to reduce these issues or identify groups already working on these issues in your community.

## 08. Ask the speaker for pre-written letters to make soliciting easy-peasy.

To secure any outside support, you'll need to make your case. If you are unsure how to effectively communicate the speaker's programs, learning outcomes, value to the sponsor, etc., just ask the speaker for help! They should be able to provide supporting material. For example, I offer fully written letters that schools can customize. These outline my programs and their benefits to students, along with the value of sponsorship. I even suggest additional ways schools can offer value from these potential partnerships. Schools can then easily personalize and send these letters out.

## 9. Co-sponsor the speaker with one or more student clubs.

Student clubs can help you hire a speaker in two ways. First, clubs are great at fundraising. Identify a student club that would have interest in the speaker's message and find out if they'd be willing to host an event or fundraiser to help pay for it. Second, most schools have student clubs that fall under the umbrella of national organizations, e.g., SADD. Often, local chapters will have funding support or have access to apply for monies that support prevention programming.

## 10. Simply ask for donations from the community.

Solicit support directly from those who want to support your school and its students. Parents and community members care, and often they want to support added value programs like school speakers and assemblies. Make flyers asking for donations, or set up a GoFundMe page online. Clearly state that your school is seeking to bring in an acclaimed speaker to speak to your youth. If you succeed, you might host a thank you event for donors after the engagement. (And in the process, you may even identify a few rockstar community members that want to continue to support your school!)

# THERE YOU HAVE IT!

If you want to bring a speaker in, there are always ways to find funding. You might cover the speaker's fee in full or at least reduce the investment on your end. Try even just one of the strategies above, and see what happens. ***Your school is one speaker away from leaving a powerful mark on the lives of your students.*** With a little effort, you can do this.