

Ways to Pay for an Author Visit

Bringing an author to your school or library is an exciting and enriching event for everyone. But many schools and libraries do not have the funds to pay for the visit, which may include not only the author's fee (which could range from \$100 for the day to over \$1000), but also travel costs, hotel, food, and other related expenses.

Following are some things you can do to help defray the costs of bringing an author to your school or library.

START CLOSE TO HOME

- **Check with your Home & School or Parent/Teacher organization.** Sometimes these organizations have discretionary funds they are allowed to use for school-related events like an author visit.
- **Have students pay a fee for the author visit like they would for a field trip.** In many ways, an author visit is a lot like a field trip—the only difference is that the trip comes to you! Work out the total costs in advance and figure out the right fee to charge.
- **Have fundraisers.** When students are directly involved in helping bring an author to their school, they are much more excited about it. Have them brainstorm about fundraising possibilities and let them be creative. Some options are a read-a-thon, bake or candy sale, or a used book sale where students bring in books they no longer want and the books are sold school-wide. Be creative! According to author Becky Clark Cornwell (<http://www.beckyclark.net/>), one school has an “Author Visit Juice Machine” – all profits from that vending machine go straight to author visits. They raise \$2500/year!
- **Sell the author's books.** Not only will this raise awareness and generate early excitement for the visit, but most authors can arrange for your school to purchase books at a discount, then you can resell them to students and interested parties for a profit.
- **Use Book Fair profits.** If your school hosts an annual or bi-annual book fair, consider setting aside some of the profits to bring in an author. Better yet, use last year's profits to bring in an author to this year's book fair!

EXPAND YOUR REACH

- **Contact other schools or public libraries in your area**—they can share the travel and accommodation costs while getting their own author visit.
- **Contact a local college.** If your local college has a course in children's literature, perhaps they'd to have the author speak and would be willing to help with travel and accommodation costs.
- **Contact local businesses.** Local businesses may be willing to sponsor an author if you will provide some kind of advertising for them before and/or during the author visit.
- **Contact home schooling or other educational organizations** (such as your state branch of the International Reading Association, National Association of Teachers of English, etc). If the timing works, these organizations might welcome a chance to have an author come speak at one of their meetings or conferences and be willing to share the cost.

If you do combine efforts with another school, library, college, or organization, each location should discuss their individual visit with the author, including fees for presentations, etc.

- **Contact local author and arts organizations.** Some author or book organizations, provide grants to schools and libraries to bring an author to their school. Other art organizations may offer grants for author visits. Check online for other arts, humanities, and book-related organizations in your area.
- **Contact your state Department of Education for grant opportunities.** The DOE offers a number of grants; author visits may fall into one of their categories.

My thanks to author Becky Clark Cornwell (<http://www.beckyclark.net/>) for developing “How to Pay for Author/Illustrator Visits,” which I used as a guide while compiling this resource.