

PLAY IT SMART PROGRAM 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 Play It Smart program is able to accomplish its mission by working with high schools across the country to enhance the academic performance and life skills of student-athletes. By establishing a partnership between the Play It Smart program and member high schools, we are able to create a positive environment for student-athletes. The key to the success of Play It Smart is the Academic Coach, who supplements the athletic department staff by providing academic and life skills mentoring and support to participants.

II. Play It Smart Programming and Grant Making

The partnership forged between school districts and Play It Smart provides each member school access to:

- year round support for school/district personnel through an assigned Program Officer;
- recruitment and screening service for Academic Coach candidates;
- training and professional development through a yearly national conference and other training events and modalities;
- life skills curriculum materials;
- program strategic planning and evaluation through PACE (Promoting Academic Coaching Excellence);
- ongoing research and data collection initiatives;
- access to a network of Play It Smart partners that offer goods and services on a reduced or no cost basis to member schools;
- 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,
- other intangible benefits and rewards.

Play It Smart also provides *Play It Smart Initiation Grants*, which are generally two-year start-up grants to help new 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.

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Additionally, Play It Smart issues annual *Goal Achievement Fund Grants* to all member schools, enabling them to provide support for program initiatives and rewards/incentives to student-athletes who are making an off-the-field effort and achieving the program's objectives.

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

III. 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 school districts that 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.

A commitment to Play It Smart from the district Superintendent is required, as well as complete support from the building principal, administrative team, and athletic coaches. Other sources of local support could be: parent or booster clubs; alumni groups; local businesses, corporations, community agencies; or civic minded individuals.

IV. 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 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 Play It Smart program or funding to start Play It Smart may apply for a *Play It Smart Initiation Grant* to help establish a program in their school.

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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 applications are limited to *New School Applicants only*.

A New School Applicant is defined as: a school that is a first time applicant; a school that has applied previously but never received funding or programming; a school that previously implemented the program or received funding in the past but has not operated the program since 2006-07 school year. All new applicants are eligible to receive a two-year *Play It Smart Initiation Grant* to develop a Play It Smart program at their high school. The awarding and amount of grants are determined by the total pool of grant funds available in any given year.

Grant decisions are made based on several additional factors, including:

- Demonstrated need for the program;
- School's commitment to the overall development of student-athletes;
- School district's ability to sustain the program long-term.

VI. Grant Usage

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

Play It Smart Initiation Grants may not be used to:

- Supplement the remuneration of "on-the-field" 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" coaches;
- Player fees to attend football camps, clinics or combines;
- Scholarships.

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VII. Grant Size

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

Goal Achievement Fund Grants are for a maximum of \$1,000 per school. 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

New School Applications are due **February 2nd, 2009**. To be considered for programming for the 2009-10 school year, applications must be complete and received by the deadline set forth. Incomplete applications will delay the decision making process. Applications received after the deadline will be held for the following school year.

School representatives will be notified of their application status by **April 15th, 2009**.

Program Agreement Letter

A final agreement for services is required of all new member schools or districts. It may be beneficial for district offices to prepare in advance to sign the agreement letter as many districts require board approval prior to receiving programming or grant funding from the National Football Foundation's Play It Smart program. *Please be advised that before a school can be awarded programming and/or grant funds, the school/school district must approve and complete the Program Agreement Letter by **June 1st, 2009**.*

Final receipt of any grant disbursement is contingent upon signature of the program agreement letter.

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IX. Grant Disbursements

Play It Smart Initiation Grants will be disbursed in three installments:

September 2009
December 2009
April 2010

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

X. Reporting Requirements

Periodic progress reports and data submission is required of all Play It Smart member 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 disbursements and/or resources delayed until proper reports have been submitted.

For additional information please contact the Play It Smart national office:

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