

Funding Your Project

Once a project is identified, an important next step is estimating the costs associated with your proposal.

Leaders and decision-makers need to know if you have a grasp on monetary estimates and ramifications both for the initial buildout of a site, and ongoing management and maintenance once the project is complete. If your proposal is for new programming, be prepared to discuss ways to fund your idea. Resources to determine the potential cost of your project are available through the USTA and your local government.

Local leaders will want to know what ideas you can bring to the table about raising needed funds. Public entities, such as a city council, county commission or school board, may be more receptive to funding a project if there are multiple private sources committed to the support of the project.

Below is a list of funding options you and your organization can explore in depth as your project moves along.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDS

- City or town budget
- County budget
- School district budget

Each local government funds parks and recreation projects differently. Research your local community to learn if tennis facilities and programs are funded by the city, town, county or school system. In many cases, the cost is shared.

Local governments begin working on their budgets in the spring, as the fiscal year begins July 1. Budget and planning discussions are open to the public and invite participation. You and your supporters can submit your project proposal at a budget hearing for local leaders to consider.

LOCAL BOND REFERENDUMS

Building parks and recreation capital projects is often funded through public bond referenda. Bonds that are voted for by the people are available at lower cost to municipalities, counties and schools. Bonds cannot fund programs, but they can fund facilities such as tennis courts.

If your local government is considering a bond for parks and recreation facilities, ask that tennis facilities be included in the package. You can also volunteer to work on the bond campaign, submit petitions in support of the bond, and get people out to vote for the bonds on election day.

GRANTS, DONATIONS AND SPONSORSHIPS

Grants

Grants are a vital way to create additional support for a project. Whether the grant is coming from a business or foundation, the initial support, especially from a well-known entity in the area, can supply the needed push to raise the remaining funds. Keep in mind that many grants may require the receiving organization to be a non-profit. Grant information can usually be found on the business or foundation website. It's important to understand whether the entity generally supports programs or capital campaigns to ensure the appropriate request is submitted. Working with a bank's endowments and foundations group is a good way to see which foundations will be willing to assist in your project or program.

Donations: cash and in-kind

Corporations and businesses may be willing to make cash or in-kind donations to your project. For example, a fencing company may donate fencing materials or installation as an in-kind donation for a tennis court construction project. Or, a local tennis merchant may offer free tennis balls to support a new tennis program for at-risk youth.

Sponsorship

Corporations and businesses invest in community projects as sponsors. This may be in the form of a cash donation over several years to have their name on a facility (referred to as a Naming Rights Agreement), or a one-time donation where the business is sponsoring the event. Your local government may have policies and procedures regarding naming facilities. Research what these are before approaching a business about sponsoring facilities or programs.

USTA TENNIS VENUE SERVICES

The USTA Tennis Venue Services can offer your community assistance with technical and financial resources. Grants may require matching funds from the local community. Those receiving funds are appointed project consultants from USTA National, who deliver personalized support and service to help take your proposal from dream to reality.

To be considered for project funding, communities must:

- Start the process by completing the USTA Tennis Venue Services Form, found [here](#).
- Be actively engaged with the USTA Tennis Venue Services program (working with USTA-appointed project consultant, etc.). Any project completed prior to engaging the USTA is NOT eligible for funding.
- Meet specified industry standards for the project as determined by the USTA Tennis Venue Services program's technical team.
- Demonstrate financial need and matching (up to 50%) of project funds.

Below lists the types of financial assistance available. For current funding amounts please visit www.usta.com/facilities.

Category I

- Basic Facility improvements, including fixed tennis court amenities (i.e. backboards, windscreens, smart court access, etc.) and blended 36' and 60' tennis line installation on existing tennis courts.
- USTA National contribution: Up to 50% of total project cost (\$5,000 maximum).

Category II

- Resurfacing of existing 36', 60', and 78' tennis courts. Converting 78' tennis courts to stand-alone 36' tennis courts. Fencing.
- USTA National contribution:
Up to 50% of total project cost (\$35,000 maximum)
2 – 3 courts = \$5,000 – \$12,500 max
4 – 8 courts = \$12,500 – \$25,000 max
9+ courts = \$25,000 – \$35,000 max

Category III

- New construction or existing facility reconstruction of 36', 60' and 78' courts. Lighting.
- USTA National contribution:
 - Up to 50% of total project cost (\$55,000 maximum)
 - 2 – 3 courts = \$15,000 – \$25,000 max
 - 4 – 8 courts = \$25,000 – \$40,000 max
 - 9+ courts = \$40,000 – \$55,000 max

INDIVIDUAL GIFTS

Your local tennis community may be willing to put their own money into the project. If your local Community Tennis Association is a 501(c)3, partnering with the organization is a way to obtain the charitable tax status for your project.

Your local parks department may also be able to assist in this endeavor. A capital campaign to the local tennis community is another way to raise funds for a project and show city/county officials that members of the community are supportive of the project.

FUNDRAISING PROJECTS AND TOURNAMENTS

Organize a local tournament to raise funds for your project. Participation fees can be used as “donations.” To keep your costs low, get local businesses to sponsor the event, donate food, cover court fees and provide prizes. Other fundraising events that may be successful are galas, 5K runs, casino nights, golf tournaments and car washes.

Engaging larger donors for a “matching grant” is a great way to encourage participation among other individuals who know their support is being matched. For facility projects, solicit donations for bricks, benches, landscaping or pavilions. The ideas are limitless. Those who donate can be memorialized by having their name on a brick, or on a plaque within the facility.

USTA FOUNDATION, NATIONAL, DISTRICT, SECTION, STATE AND LOCAL GRANTS

The USTA has grants available at many different levels for both facilities and programs. Visit <https://www.usta.com/en/home/organize/grants-and-assistance.html> for current information. Your USTA district, state and section may also have grants to support your project. In addition, many sections and states have their own charitable arm that may provide grants to help with funding a project or program. Explore all avenues of funding through the USTA.

ONGOING SUPPORT

The ongoing health of the project once it's completed is just as important as the initial funding efforts. Decision-makers and donors will want to ensure that a facility project can be successfully sustained once completed, ensuring the initial capital contributions were put to good use. The same is true for new programming initiatives.

Revenue streams such as pay to play, teams, memberships, coaching or lesson fees can help to support the ongoing operations while program grants can be used as a supplement to core programming. Sharing your pro forma income statement with potential donors and decision-makers is a great way to show how that income will be used to support your project.

FUNDRAISING CASE STUDY: WOODSTOCK TENNIS CLUB JUNIOR CAMP SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

| Submitted by Jesse Chalfin

Introduction

The program has been very well received, and there are many returning scholarship campers. Club members have worked to grow the program every summer and have introduced kids to the game of tennis who otherwise never may have picked up a racquet.

A measure of success is the fact that children who, up until two years ago, had never played tennis, are now actively playing for their high school tennis teams.

Funding: The funding for this project came from outreach to club members, friends of members and people in the community. Many people were willing to donate the amount needed for one camper to attend a week of tennis.

Goals

To give children from underprivileged communities and families the ability to learn and play tennis, to have them be outside in a safe and healthy environment, and to acquire skills and instruction they would not otherwise have the opportunity to receive.



- **Project Size:** The first summer the program was offered, organizers were able to offer eight children a two-week camping experience.
- **Location:** Woodstock Tennis Club in Woodstock, New York
- **Community Size:** Woodstock has a population of approximately 6,000 people. The club has just over 240 members; the members are the primary donors for this program.
- **Lead Advocate Organization:** Woodstock Tennis Club; program leaders are Jesse Chalfin, Dana Patton and Vivienne Hodges
- **Length of Project:** This project started in the summer of 2020 and is now in its third year.
- **Budget:** Unlimited; the more donations received, the more children the program can reach.
- **Funding Source(s):** Donations from Woodstock Tennis Club members as well as other members of the community in Woodstock and surrounding towns.
- **Partnership(s):** USTA Eastern has written an article about the program. Mark McIntyre, executive director of the Junior Tennis Foundation and executive director of the Riverside Clay Courts in Manhattan, gave an extremely generous \$1,000 donation in the summer of 2021.

History

The program was started in the summer of 2020 when members of the Woodstock Tennis Club became concerned about children who were cooped up inside because of COVID restrictions. Additionally, after-school programs and sports clubs had been closed, so it became a priority to get youngsters outside and into the sun and fresh air in the summer.