



Donation Guide

Safe Routes to Schools incentives can entice children and their parents to choose active and/or eco-friendly transportation options for getting to and from school—walking, biking, carpool or bus. Soliciting prizes from local stores is easier than one might think. Many local businesses perceive donating their goods and/or service as positive community relations. Local Rotary Clubs raise money for the purpose of benefiting their community.

Here is information on how to ask local businesses and organizations in your town for donations and how to purchase discounted prizes for your school's Safe Routes to Schools event. As you develop your plan please consider sharing your successes and further tips with us by emailing wendy.mcmillan@state.co.us. Your efforts in supporting Safe Routes to Schools are inspiring a safer, healthier future, and are greatly appreciated!

Rewards for your contest or special event can range from ice cream coupons to a brand new bicycle. As you approach local organizations and companies, it will be helpful to have specific successes of how your school participates in Safe Routes to Schools. Details such as: how many bikes at the bike rack in an average day, photographs of students participating during a walking school bus, photos of bicycle rodeos, etc.

Many thanks to Marin County Safe Routes to Schools for sharing their Donation Guide, from which this is modified.

How to Approach a Business or Organization

Talk to the right person:

- Speak directly with the business owners (of small shops) or the marketing/community donations staff person (of larger businesses/firms)

Be very clear about what you are asking for:

- Prizes for Contest: Pollution Punchcard or Frequent Rider Miles
- Prizes for children who are biking or walking to school
- Be specific: bike or scooter, walking gear: hats, gift certificate.

Used sample letter and templates provided:

- Request for Donation Letter Sample
- Request for Donation Letter Template
- Thank You Letter Template
- Tax Donation Receipts

Accentuate the positive:

- Tell them the highlights/successes of your schools SRTS Program: # of bikes at bike rack on an average day, # or participants on Walk and Roll to School Day.
- General SRTS details: Safe Routes to School programs improve safety for children and whole communities. Programs reduce congestion and pollution around schools. Walking and biking to school offers further health and academic benefits for students. If you qualify as a 501(C)(3) program, use the supporting documents (see sample letter and templates).

Donor benefits—tell them exactly what they get for their donation, recognition, tax deduction:

- Remind businesses that their marketing budget can be used for community donations and offer to acknowledge them in your publications.

Types of Donations

In-kind donations:

- This is when a local business provides product or discount coupons.
- Suggested businesses: restaurants, coffee shops, bike stores, sports shops, smoothie or juice shops, local grocery stores
- Local grocery stores have the ability to give out \$20 gift coupons without having to go through corporate. This can be used to buy treats for your Walk and Roll to School Days.
- Solicit your favorite shops because businesses prefer giving to their own friends and loyal customers

Cash donations:

- Local service group—Rotary Club, Lions Club raise funds and look for ways to spend the money in their community.
- PTA and parents—Ask your PTA for a line item in their budget to help purchase treats and prizes. Sometimes a parent in the school has a business or cause they wish to promote by giving you a donation. One local orthodontist paid for the purchase of a bike.
- Local families with charitable funds

SRTS Rewards

Not all events require a prize to motivate participation. Being recognized and acknowledged for a positive behavior can go a very long way! Below are a few no-cost, or very low-cost, highly honorable rewards that students, staff and teachers really appreciate. Your school may have such rewards currently in place.

Treasure Chest of Recycled Prizes:

You can create your own treasure chest of recycled prizes to give away as an award for children who walk, bike or carpool to school. The treasure chest of prizes can be used at your welcome table for your regular Walk and Roll to School Day, or for contest prizes.

To collect prizes for your Treasure Chest you will need to submit to your school's newsletter editor a posting to let your parent community know that you are collecting recycled party favors. Parents are glad to get the clutter out of their house. Establish a location at your school where parents can drop off a bag that is stapled shut or recycled items from around their home: bouncy balls, key chains, new pencils, etc.

The next step is to create a Treasure Chest. This is a fun project for your family or perhaps for your student council. Obtain a plastic bin with a lid or a cardboard box. (Or you could post in your school's newsletter that you are asking for a treasure box as a donation. Someone might have a chest or light trunk that they are willing to donate.) Decorate the box however you like ... be creative! Write Safe Routes to Schools on the cover of the treasure chest. Place the prizes that you collected into the box. Let children who walk or bike to school select one prize from your Safe Routes to School treasure chest.

School-Based Rewards:

Schools often have programs that encourage positive behavior and offer the reward of special privileges. Here are a few ideas:

- Recognition at an assembly
- Posting the names of winners in the school newsletter or on a bulletin board
- Principal recognition.
- First in Line for Lunch Card
- Preferred Seating at School Event
- VIP Bike Parking
- Extra time in the Garden
- Get out of Homework Free Coupons
- 5 Minutes early dismissal
- Cafeteria coupons
- Your ideas:

Other Donations

Rewards don't have to be complicated. Sometimes a little food is all the kids require. Parents can provide baked goods, or cut up fruit. Older students can offer babysitting services. A ribbon or sticker can go a long way. Remember—walking and biking are rewards onto themselves. Ultimately the best reward is when we've reduced the traffic and increased the safety around all schools so everyone can walk and bike to school.

