

RUNNING YOUR PTA WHEN SCHOOL IS CLOSED

PART 4: ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL ISSUES

LEADERSHIP RESOURCES



Illinois PTA is continuing its efforts to support our PTAs and PTA Councils by answering questions you may have about running your PTA in this unprecedented situation. Our previous parts of this ongoing series are here:

- [Part 1: Meetings & Elections](#)
- [Part 2: Fundraising & Unused Funds](#)
- [Part 3: Audit & Budget](#)

If you have questions not addressed here, please contact your Region or District Director or e-mail info@illinoispta.org.

Do we still need to sign all our forms like we normally do?

Yes. The purpose of signed forms are to provide documentation on how PTA funds are spent. Scanned documents are sufficient with the exception of checks. If your PTA requires two signatures on a check (a best practice recommended by Illinois PTA and AIM Insurance), those checks will still need two physical signatures on the original document.

How do we handle documents and checks that need more than one signature?

For all documents except for checks, the document can be printed, signed, and then scanned to PDF before sending on to the next signatory to repeat the process until all the required signatures are collected. For checks, the treasurer can prepare the check and provide the first signature before delivering it to the second signatory. Delivery can be by mail or physically dropped off on a front porch if you know the second signer is home and picks it up after you've moved a safe distance away from the door. **Do not leave PTA checks at a front door without seeing them taken inside!** Illinois PTA recommends that if the check is to be mailed after signing, the treasurer include a stamped envelope and any associated paperwork so the second signer can then mail the check.

What do we do about bills that were sent to the school?

You can contact your school principal to see if it would be possible for someone to collect these from the school. If it is not possible to do so, then you will need to identify those bills and follow up via e-mail or phone calls.

Your treasurer can use last year's documentation to identify specific bills that may have come since the school was closed. Contact your committee chairs to see if any vendors from events prior to school closing may still have unpaid bills and what their contact information is. Many vendors are likely to be understanding of the difficulties surrounding the current situation and may waive any late payment fees that have accumulated.

Our PTA has a graduation event every year and it is now postponed until July (after our fiscal year ends on June 30th). How do we handle this?

If the funding for the event was already approved in your budget, then you don't have to do much. Your PTA books will close June 30th like usual, and the funding for the event will be included in the carryover funds for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. Note that you will also need to add an expenditure line for the 2020 event in your budget for the 2020-2021 year or make a note in your PTA minutes explaining why the event's budget line is twice what it normally is in the 2020-2021 budget.

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If we cancelled an event that we collected money for, does it need to be refunded?

Yes, if the funds were collected for a specific event, which means that the funds are restricted to that event. Now that the event has been cancelled, the funds need to be returned. For example, if your PTA collected money for tickets for an end-of-year carnival or \$5 per student for a fifth-grade picnic, then the funds need to be returned. You can ask people you would need to give refunds to if they would like to turn their purchase into a donation to the PTA. Taking your PTA up on that offer moves the funds from a restricted use (e.g., the carnival) to an unrestricted use (i.e., part of the PTA's general fund).

Note that this does not apply to things like membership dues, events planned as part of your PTA's general budget, or general fundraising activities (e.g., your PTA's cookie dough sale last fall); only to funds collected for a specific event or purpose beyond the PTA budget.

How do we handle refunding money for cancelled events? We don't have 200 checks left in our checkbook.

For funds paid by check or cash, you will need to issue a refund by check. As noted above, you can ask if those due refunds would like to turn their purchase into a donation. It would be okay to use a single expense form for multiple refund checks of the same amount. Just be sure to explain the process, range of check numbers, and size of the refunds on the form.

For funds collected electronically, you should be able to return the funds in the same manner. Print copies of the reimbursements, or if you have a large number, print screen shots of pages with multiple reimbursements. Document the process on the expense form, especially if it covers multiple refunds.

Refunds, either electronically or by check, still need two signatories to approve them, either on the expense form for electronic refunds or on the check itself for physical checks. See above for additional information on collecting signatures.

Can we donate funds to other charities or families that need financial help?

501(c)(3) organizations may only collect money to support individuals or families if the organization was created to do so. PTAs are not organized for that purpose, and so cannot donate to individuals or families. PTAs may share information about benefits or fundraisers being held for individuals or families, local charities (e.g., a local food bank), or community-based projects (e.g., a food drive).

PTAs may also sponsor a food drive or similar activity. For those who would prefer to donate money instead of canned goods, for instance, checks should be made out to the beneficiary of the drive (i.e., the food bank) and not to the PTA. **No deposits may be made to the PTA account on behalf of another organization, individual, or family.**

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What do we do with items that were donated to our PTA's silent auction that has since been cancelled?

If the donations were for a specific event that has now been cancelled, contact the donors to see if the donation can be used for a different PTA event in the future. They may choose to do so, or they may request that it be returned.

Our PTA had a fundraiser, and the fundraising company is currently holding the products that people have already purchased. What do we do?

If there is a safe way to deliver the items that people have ordered without added expense, try to deliver them. Contact the company to see if they are able to ship directly to the buyers at no or low cost. Contact your school district to see if items could be delivered along with student meals being delivered to some families.

If there is not a safe way to deliver the products now, inform your families that the order is on hold with the company and will be delivered as soon as it is safe to do so.