Livingtree – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why should I use Livingtree?
Livingtree is an Austin ISD-supported crowdfunding platform for online donations. The platform enables schools to create fundraising campaigns, accept online credit card payments, manage donor information, and communicate with donors using preloaded templates and social media links. Livingtree has been customized to meet the needs of our district and includes a built-in principal/bookkeeper approval process, direct deposit into AISD accounts and automated donor receipt for tax purposes.

Do Livingtree campaigns count as a fundraiser?
No. Crowdfunding campaign contributions are considered donations, not fundraising sales (for example, tee shirts, popcorn or gift wrap).

Do Livingtree campaigns count toward my annual grade level fundraisers?
No. Campaigns will not count against the grade level fundraisers.

Can individual teachers run a crowdfunding campaign for classroom items?
Yes. All AISD teachers and staff have a registered account with Livingtree and can create campaigns for classroom supplies and materials. Campaigns must be approved by the campus principal before being published.

Can PTAs use the Livingtree?
Yes. PTAs can use the Livingtree. Each campus PTA has a separate login and password to access the Livingtree site. PTA campaigns are linked directly to the PTA's Paypal account.

Who is going to see the campaigns?
You can share your campaign with anyone. Campaigns can be shared via social media channels and by email to the list of contacts in a schools' account. Campaigns are also visible through AISD's website, all campus websites, and the AISD fundraising page on the Livingtree platform.

Why do principals have to approve fundraising campaigns?
Fundraising campaigns must be approved by the campus principal in order to ensure that each campaign meets the school's objectives and goals as related to the campus improvement plan.

Will the district help me promote my campaign?
Yes. Campaigns created through an AISD school account will receive visibility on AISD's main website.

Why should I use Livingtree when our school already uses PayPal or KEV School Cash Online?
PayPal and KEV are online payment processing platforms, not crowdfunding platforms. Through Livingtree, schools can create campaigns using preloaded templates, send emails to your community of supporters, manage donor information, and leverage social media channels to raise money online.

Is there support for using the Livingtree platform?
Yes. Livingtree provides online chat support and training modules through their website. In addition, support is available from AISD Office of Innovation and Development and AISD Finance department.

Can I get started on my own campaign online?
Yes. However, all AISD teachers must create campaigns using their @austinisd.org email address on Livingtree. Go to engage.livingtree.com/login to login. You may need to create a new password. Contact Ryan O'Donnell at ryan.odonnell@austinisd.org with any login questions.

What activity account do I use when setting up my campaign?
Activity account codes are assigned based on the campaign being created. For example, if the 3rd grade class is raising money for a field trip, the 3rd grade activity code would be used when setting up the campaign. Once a campaign is created and submitted, it will go to the bookkeeper who will enter information regarding the activity account code. PTA campaigns will receive funds directly through their own PayPal account.

My campaign is still pending. What are the next steps?
Teacher campaigns must be approved by the bookkeeper who will enter activity account information first, before getting approved by the campus principal, before finally being published. Please contact your principal for information regarding the status of your campaign.

How do I reset my password?
To reset your password, click on "Forgot Password" on the Livingtree login screen. If that does not work, contact Ryan O'Donnell at ryan.odonnell@austinisd.org with any login questions.

Are the donations tax-deductible?
Yes. Donations made through the Livingtree platform are tax-deductible as allowed by the fullest extent of the law. A letter confirming the tax-deductible donation is automatically emailed to the donor.

Are the donations secure?
Yes. Livingtree uses PayPal as their payment processor. They are one of the industry leaders in mobile and online payment processing. Livingtree does not store credit card data and their site is SSL encrypted.

Can donations be made by check or cash?
Yes. Donations to your campaign can be made by check or cash. Please include detailed instructions in the body of your campaign regarding the process for making a check or cash donation to the school.

Are there matching funds?
No. At this time there are no matching funds, but the district is working with partners to create matching campaigns in the future.

What are the fees to use Livingtree?
All crowdfunding platforms charge fees. Please see the comparison chart below. The fees include a Livingtree platform of 3.1%, and a PayPal processing fee of 2.0% + $0.49 per transaction.

Is there an annual fee?
Yes. However, the annual fee to use the Livingtree platform is paid for by Austin Ed Fund, AISD and other generous partners.

How does my campus receive the money?
The process for receiving donations was created in conjunction with AISD Finance. All Livingtree campaigns are associated with a general student activity account. Once the money is received in AISD Treasury, funds are transferred to the campus for the bookkeeper to transfer into the corresponding activity account.

How quickly do we receive the donations that were made to our campaign?
AISD Treasury distributes money to activity accounts once per month. It may take up to 30 days to transfer funds to the appropriate campus activity account.

How is the Livingtree platform different from KEV?
KEV is an online payment processing system. It does not enable users to create crowdfunding campaigns or market those campaigns using social media channels.

How do Livingtree's fees compare to other crowdfunding sites?
AISD has partnered with the following crowdfunding platforms to serve all teachers and schools. Read the comparison chart below for more information about these great resources.

Vendor	Fees & Details
Livingtree	• Money that is fundraised is deposited into AISD account in order for the campaign creator to purchase the desired items. • Get to keep all funds raised no matter if goal was reached or not. • Livingtree platform fee = 3.1% and PayPal processing fee = 2.0% + $0.49 per donation • Additional 2% per donation if organization uses America's Charities (only available to PTAs)
DonorsChoose	• Money that is fundraised is used by DonorsChoose to purchase the requested items or experiences, and then ship directly to the campus. The teacher never receives money. • A campaign goal must be met in order for the project to be awarded complete funding. If a campaign does not reach its goal, then funds may be returned to donors. About 70% of all campaigns are fully funded. • 1.5% payment processing fee per donation • $30 fulfillment labor & materials charge (costs associated with screening projects, purchasing materials, processing donor thank you notes, etc.) • 15% optional donation per campaign

***All crowdfunding platforms other than Livingtree and DonorsChoose have not been vetted and approved by AISD in order to be used in schools. Please be aware that websites not on our list may have higher fees and conflicts of interest regarding student privacy guidelines.

Please contact Ryan O'Donnell at ryan.odonnell@austinisd.org with any questions.