



Guide to Starting a New Team or League



We Are US Lacrosse

US LACROSSE VISION

We envision a future that offers anyone the lifelong opportunity to enjoy the sport of lacrosse.

US LACROSSE MISSION

As the sport's national governing body, US Lacrosse provides national leadership, structure and resources to fuel the sport's growth and enrich the experience of participants.

US Lacrosse Operation

The US Lacrosse national headquarters is located in Maryland, and features the sport's national archives and The Lacrosse Museum and National Hall of Fame.

US Lacrosse currently employs over 70 staff members at its national offices and benefits from regular volunteer assistance. US Lacrosse, a 501 (c)(3) organization, relies on the growing membership support of over 450,000 lacrosse players, coaches, officials and enthusiasts for a large portion of its operational funding. Additional funding programs include annual giving, planned giving, foundation and corporate giving, capital drives, grants, advertising and special events.

US Lacrosse Foundation

The philanthropic arm of US Lacrosse, the US Lacrosse Foundation (USLF) works to generate resources above and beyond membership revenue to support the mission and vision of US Lacrosse to grow the game responsibly while inspiring participation across the country and in your own backyard. Refer to the Foundation's Annual Report for an overview of US Lacrosse's efforts to support and develop the sport. The report also includes a listing of donors that provide critical financial support to the organization. [Click here](#) to view the Annual Report.

US Lacrosse National Teams

The U.S. National Team program has 5 primary teams:

- U.S. Men's Senior Team
- U.S. Women's Senior Team
- U.S. Men's U19 Team
- U.S. Women's U19 Team
- U.S. Men's Indoor Team

Each team competes quadrennially in sanctioned World Championships through the Federation of International Lacrosse (FIL). Teams typically participate in more than 10 annual games, exhibitions, clinics and appearances.

Introduction

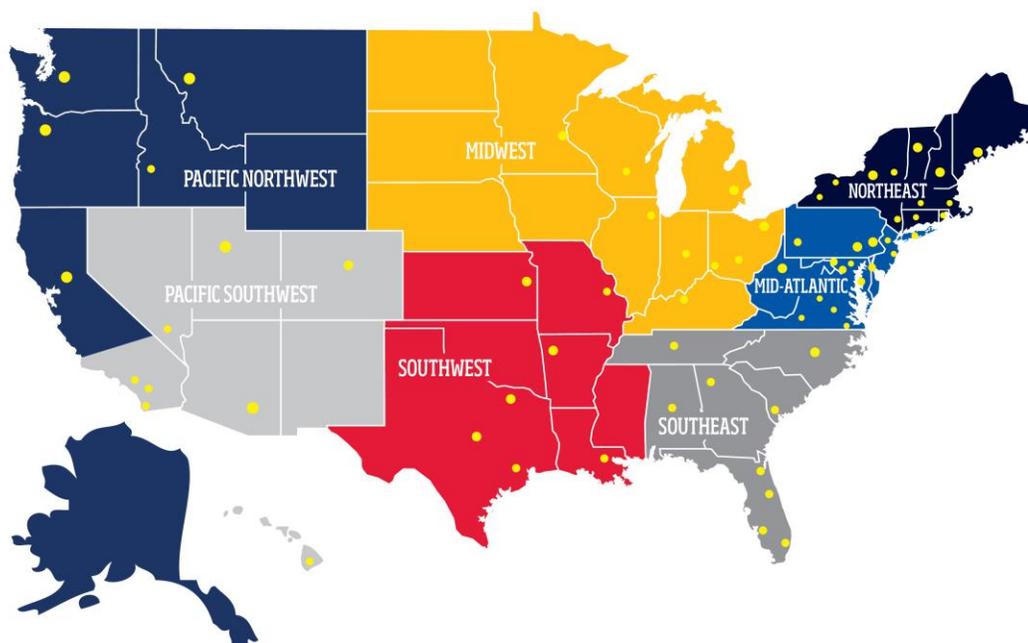
This manual is designed to guide you through the process of establishing a new lacrosse team or league at the youth or high school level. In addition to this guide, the US Lacrosse website (www.uslacrosse.org), headquarter staff, and regional chapter network are available to assist you with the process of starting a new lacrosse program.

US Lacrosse Regional Chapter Network:

As you determine which direction you are going, be sure to tap into the knowledge resources of those who have “gone before”. You will find the local US Lacrosse chapter network to be an invaluable resource when it comes to experience with beginning and sustaining new lacrosse programs. US Lacrosse is represented by 68 local chapters covering 45 states. They are there to help you! Visit www.uslacrosse.org/chapters for a list of contacts.

US Lacrosse Chapter’s can provide your program with the following:

- A list of local resources and contacts that have experience in starting new teams
- Volunteer support
- Serve as experienced resources for advice and guidance
- Website promotion for your new team
- Support with fundraising efforts
- Potential local grant programs



● Represents US Lacrosse Chapters

So You Want to Start a Team? Here's how:

To help you most efficiently execute the process of forming a new team, you will first need to answer a few questions about what kind of team you seek to form.

- What level will your team be – youth or high school (club or varsity)?
- Are you looking to join an existing league with your own new team or are you establishing your own league?
- Are you going to need to “sell” your idea to a school board or academic administrators?

In this section you will find general keys to success, and starting points for forming a team or league at any level. **Please refer to the “Special Considerations for Starting a Team at the Youth vs. High School Level” section of this manual for those elements of forming a team specific to your age level of play.** Before forming a new team and at the conclusion of reading this manual, the check list of general considerations we have provided should be completed.

Your “to do” check list:

- Gauge interest level; identify target group of potential participants.
- Create a budget and determine how the team will be financed.
- Recruit others (parents, volunteers, community support) to help you with the administration and maintenance of the team or league.
- Connect with an existing organization (such as Parks and Recreation Departments, Boys' and Girls' clubs, or YMCA's), establish a non-profit organization if forming your own league, or find a league to join if forming a team.
- Secure field space.
- Recruit committed coaches and officials and connect them with training opportunities.
- Confirm insurance for organization, players, coaches and officials; establish a risk management plan.
- Recruit players.
- Secure equipment for players if they don't already have their own; get other team and field materials.
- Find other teams to play.
- Secure financial support and fundraising.

Gauge Interest Level; identify target group of potential participants.

Before you commit your time and effort to forming a new team, you should determine your target area and participants and ensure that there is ample interest. Consider the following questions; the answers will help you to shape your program's mission and will affect the appropriate steps for success.

Who do you want to serve?

- Age groups & gender(s)
- Consider gender equity
- Single neighborhood vs. community-wide
- Urban/suburban/rural
- Recreational only vs. educational
- Volunteer vs. staffed

What model will you use to implement your program?

- Clinics only (basic skills, fun, awareness)
- Competitive league
- Summer Camps
- Year-round
- Seasonal
- Educational Component? Decide how and when to integrate the life skills component and who will implement this component. If you are considering a life skills component, visit the [Diversity and Inclusion](#) section of the US Lacrosse website for helpful information.

Tips on how to gauge interest:

Once you have determined your target audience and format and set your program's mission, holding informational meetings after school or at local YMCA's, Boy's and Girls' Clubs, or Parks and recreation departments will allow you to gauge the interest level.

Talk to attendees about your purpose and mission in bringing lacrosse to the area. Use the information and school power point presentation on the New Start Program site, as well as videos from the US Lacrosse You Tube Channel to present an explanation and history of lacrosse. Here are some helpful tools (click on the links below):

- [US Lacrosse Participation Surveys](#)
- [About US Lacrosse](#) video clip
- [About the Sport](#) video clip
- [This is Lacrosse](#) video
- [Game On: The National Campaign for Lacrosse](#) video clip
- [Getting Started: New Lacrosse Coaches](#) video clip
- [US Lacrosse Coaching Education Program Intro](#) video clip
- [Health & Safety](#) news, information and articles

Create a budget.

Starting a lacrosse team not only takes an investment of time, but requires a financial one too. Money is one of the quickest and most effective routes to program acceptance. Since schools and community organizations may not have the start-up costs for new sports, you must be prepared to gather funds before making your pitch. Remember that long-term planning – for more than just one or two seasons – is critical for the program’s success and sustainability.

Hidden Costs:

Financing a new team overall can still be challenging. Hidden costs may include fields, transportation, coaches, officials, practice equipment, tools, uniforms, marketing and promotional initiatives.

Equipment Costs:

Many first-time players and parents are hesitant to invest in equipment before they determine whether or not they are going to continue to play. Use the soft-stick rules and equipment and to teach fundamentals to new players and parents. This is great way to see who is interested in coming out to play on the “real” team. Parents like this as an initial step, before they buy all of the equipment for their kids. Apply to the [US Lacrosse Soft-Stick Equipment Grant](#) if your team needs sticks and balls for co-ed lacrosse.

Boys Equipment Articles and Information:

- [Equipment Description](#)
- [Field Player Equipment Video](#)
- [Goalie Equipment Video](#)
- [Helmet Fitting Tips](#)
- [USL Position Statement on Helmets](#)
- [USL Position Statement on Mouth guards](#)
- [USL Position Statement on NCAA Stick Specs](#)
- [NOCSAE Standards for Helmets with Faceguards](#)
- [Men's Rules](#)

Girls Equipment Articles and Information:

- [Equipment Description](#)
- [Women's Rules](#)
- [Women's Headgear Standard Approved](#)
- [Talking Points About Headgear](#)
- [Legal Sticks](#)
- [Approved Eyewear List](#)
- [USL Position Statement on Eyewear](#)
- [Research Abstract: Effectiveness of the Women's Lacrosse Eyewear Mandate](#)



Consider the following is a list of items that your team will need to finance and their estimated costs (your team may or may not require all items listed):

US Lacrosse Membership	Adult: \$55	High School Player:\$35	Youth Player: \$30
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Player Equipment:			
Boy's/Men's:	Cost:	Girl's/Women's:	Cost:
Complete Stick	\$30-150	Complete Stick	\$30-150
Mouth Guard	\$1-10+	Mouth Guard	\$1-10+
NOCSAE approved helmet	\$100-300	ASTM Protective eye wear	\$30 – 100
Arm pads / Arm Guards	\$30-130	N/A	
Shoulder pads	\$35-150	N/A	
Field player gloves	\$40 – 200	Gloves (optional)	\$20 – 35 a pair
Rib pads (recommended for youth)	\$30 – 60	N/A	

Goalie Equipment:			
Boy's/Men's:	Cost:	Girl's/Women's:	Cost:
Complete Stick	\$50 – 100	Complete Stick	\$50 – 100
Chest protector	\$50-125	Chest protector	\$50-125
Goalie gloves	\$70-175	Goalie gloves	\$70-175
Throat guards	\$15 – 30	Throat guards	\$10 – 20
Pelvic protection/Goalie Pants	\$40-80	Pelvic protection/Goalie Pants	\$40-80
Arm pads / Arm Guards (optional)	\$30-130	Shin guards	\$20 – 50
Shoulder pads (optional)	\$35-150	Helmet and straps	\$–100-300

Uniforms:			
Boy's/Men's:	Cost:	Girl's/Women's:	Cost:
Uniform shirts	\$25 – 50	Uniform shirts	\$25 – 40
Uniform pants	\$25 – 50	Kilts	\$25 – 40
		Shorts (under kilt)	\$10 – 30

Average cost for a player:			
Boy's/Men's	Cost:	Girl's/Women's	Cost:
	\$350 – 780		\$115 – 310

Other costs for both teams:	
Item	Cost
Pinnies/Scrimmage Vests	\$7-10 each / \$50 per dozen
Stopwatch	\$20
Balls	\$20 per dozen
Cones	\$1-2 each
Field lining equipment	\$100 – 1000
Goals and nets	\$200
Scorebook	\$5 – 10
Tools (screwdriver, pliers, scissors)	\$10 – 40
Horn	\$20
Game clock	Varies
Penalty clock	Varies
Cooler	\$10 – 30
Ice chest	\$15 – 30
Field space	\$35 application fee
Transportation	Varies
Coaches	Varies
Officials	Varies by level and county
Promotional material	Varies
Athletic trainer services	Varies
CPR/First Aid Training	\$50-75 per coach (varies)
First Aid Kit	\$15-30
Helmet Repair Kit	\$35

**Note: Refer to your rulebook for a list of required vs. recommended equipment.*

Regarding your budget/accounting:

As you get up and running and head into your season, continue to share as much financial information (needs, costs, donations, expenditures, etc.) as possible with any board members, parents, and other interested parties. Whether a non-profit organization or not, disclosing general financial information helps to maintain a professional environment and reassures participants and/or their families of the use of appropriate and ethical fiscal procedures (see [Checklist for Forming a Non-Profit Organization](#) document for guidance).

Recruit others.

Many programs have been started by the efforts of a single individual, but the most successful long term programs have a strong support team. Surround yourself with helpers from the very beginning.

PARENTS of the players you are recruiting are your strongest allies. Their participation must go beyond fundraising and game attendance. Parents need to be connected with the lacrosse team. They must agree to support the team's philosophy growth and standards of behavior and encourage participation.

Find two or three key parents who are proven leaders and engage them. Get them to invite other interested parents to an informal gathering where you and the other volunteers can discuss lacrosse and how a team might be established. Have facts at hand, such as cost of equipment, possible fields, neighboring teams or clubs, and how parents can help. Try to get as many people involved as possible and give them specific tasks. A parent's interest and profession can often prove invaluable.

A booster club should be formed by the parents of your team members. If utilized properly the club can be a very useful means of gaining more exposure, members and support.

Arrange for a few members of the club to meet with the local school administration for its input and possible help in such areas as providing fields, facilities, and the feasibility of adding lacrosse to the school. Keep in mind, there may be resistance from the existing athletic administration. The introduction of lacrosse can be viewed as a threat to existing sports.

Identify people in your area who have played lacrosse and if at all possible, involve them in any of the above activities - this will be a bonus for your core group.

Select players to give well-rehearsed presentations before booster clubs, PTA or community service organizations. Generally, people like to see young people stand up and show their interest in a good cause.

Parks and recreation departments may be able to provide field space, a place to advertise for coaches and players, and/or hold fundraisers and meetings.

Local businesses, especially sports retailers, may be able to sponsor a team, provide uniforms and other equipment at a discounted cost and post advertisements for coaches and players.

Here are some resources to further assist you in recruiting help, and how best to effectively use and manage your volunteers. Points of Light Foundation: www.pointsoflight.org or Volunteer Today: www.volunteertoday.com.

Secure field space.

Field space is a crucial consideration in deciding whether or not to start a lacrosse program. Decide on the availability of such space, and how many fields you'll need for the number of players and teams you intend to accommodate in your program. If the new team is to be introduced in a school, the question of field space may be less of an issue but availability should be confirmed early in the process. If the new team is a non-school affiliated club, and/or local school facilities are not available, then public facilities such as town fields (or field space belonging to local parks and recreation departments, YMCA's, and Boys' and Girls' clubs) would be the next logical choice. These organizations will require that you have insurance before they agree to let you use their fields. As stated in the [US Lacrosse Risk Management Manual](#), always visually inspect all aspects of a facility or venue before a rental agreement is signed. Please see the [insurance section of the US Lacrosse website](#) for more information on obtaining insurance. If interest is high enough and proper ground work and public relations have been done prior to your request, the challenge of securing field space will be significantly lessened.

Recruit committed coaches and officials and connect them with training opportunities.

An essential part of starting a lacrosse team is finding committed coaches and officials. Even if they have never played lacrosse, US Lacrosse's programs can train and educate interested and dedicated individuals to be knowledgeable coaches and officials. It is strongly recommended that every new team plan for future growth and accommodate this growth by identifying devoted coaches and officials for future seasons.

A safe and positive playing experience starts by knowing the rules and how to appropriately and effectively coach, officiate and play the game. Women's lacrosse differs greatly from men's lacrosse and should not be played or taught the same way. To keep things safe, all lacrosse participants have a responsibility to know the rules...parents and players included! Most injuries occur as a result of rule infractions. Know the rules and participate in US Lacrosse's campaigns for fair and safe play. [Men's & Women's Rules](#).

Please contact the Coaches Education and Training Department of US Lacrosse for information on how to find and train coaches. [Read more about USL's Coaching Education Program](#). Email cep@uslacrosse.org for assistance and guidance.

Please contact the Officials Education and Training Department of US Lacrosse for information on how to find and train officials. [Read more about USL's Officials Training Program](#). Email officials@uslacrosse.org for information and guidance.



Confirm insurance for organization, players, coaches and officials; establish a risk management plan.

Insurance is important for the safety and liability of all players, coaches, officials and program administrators and it is often a prerequisite to using fields or facilities. General Liability, Excess Liability, and Accident Medical and Catastrophic Medical insurance is a benefit for each Coach, Official and Player member of US Lacrosse for the term and category of their membership. Additional insurance such as Directors & Officers Liability, Equipment Insurance and Crime Insurance can also be purchased through the US Lacrosse insurance program.

US Lacrosse partners with Bollinger Insurance to provide exclusive on-the-field coverage for all US Lacrosse members. US Lacrosse and RPS Bollinger provide extensive Risk Management information that you need to protect your players and stay safe on and off the field.

Once your program is up and running, you should register your group with US Lacrosse. Registering your team or league with US Lacrosse means, in part, setting up and managing a group in your personal USLacrosse.org account and requiring all players and coaches to purchase and/or renew annual memberships in US Lacrosse. US Lacrosse registered groups can print off a **Certificate of Liability** to show proof of insurance, which many facilities need to see before you can use their fields. [Click here](#) for more information on how to register your group with US Lacrosse.

Please look through the menu options to learn more about the insurance programs and information available to US Lacrosse members.

- [General Information](#)
- [How to File a Claim](#)
- [Basic Accident Plan](#)
- [Catastrophic Accident Plan](#)
- [Liability Insurance Plans](#)
- [Additional Insurance Policies](#)
- [Indoor Lacrosse Information](#)
- [Risk Management Info](#)
- [How to Handle a Lawsuit](#)
- [How To Insure Your Team/League with US Lacrosse](#)
- [Club Liability Insurance for Transporting Players](#)
- [Certificates of Insurance](#)

For general insurance inquiries or questions about claims, please [contact RPS Bollinger directly](#).

RPS Bollinger

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Recruit players.

Regardless of what level of play you are trying to establish, you must demonstrate that you have a significant amount of people interested in participating in order to sell the need for a lacrosse team. Not only will you win support from possible sponsors and support staff, but the enthusiasm, dedication, and excitement generated from participants and their coaches will spark interest in others and ensure the future of your team or league. Convincing people to pick up a new sport can be a challenge and will not happen overnight; your patience, determination and drive will be vital during this step in the process of forming a new team.

Here are some ways to get players out on the field:

Post or hand out flyers in public places, in schools, at your local YMCA, parks and recreation departments, at sporting events, local businesses etc., or advertise in your local newspaper that you are starting a new team and include your contact information.

Conduct in school assemblies or demonstrations to introduce the sport to the students and get them excited about playing lacrosse. Use the free videos on the US Lacrosse website to learn how to teach lacrosse in a co-ed setting. [Click here](#) to access the videos.

Approach educators within your local school district about including lacrosse as a component of their physical education program. Use the soft-stick model – equipment and rules –to demonstrate the sport to teachers. This model is appealing to educators because the rules, which are outlined in the US Lacrosse Physical Education Curriculum, align with national standards as it was developed in partnership with the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE). Encourage the school to apply to the [US Lacrosse Soft-Stick Equipment Grant](#) if they need the equipment and lesson plans to start a PE lacrosse curriculum. Visit the [Physical Education section of the US Lacrosse website](#) for more information, or e-mail sportdevelopment@uslacrosse.org.

Advertise the start of your team on a website. You can create your own [USLaxTeams website](#) or use your local US Lacrosse chapter's website.

Hold an informal meeting one afternoon or evening. Demonstrate the sport, make your enthusiasm clear, and show promotional videos or clips from the [US Lacrosse You Tube Channel](#).

If teams already exist, or there are college teams in your area, arrange to have an exhibition game and advertise your project of forming a new team at the college game. You might even try to coordinate a demonstration during a break at a local amateur or professional sporting event. Use a PA announcement or hand out flyers in the stands about the formation of your team. Gather a group of interested players together to go see a college or professional game to introduce them to the game and the highest levels of competition - they will immediately be hooked!



Hold an informal, free “lacrosse day” or a clinic and invite players and parents to try the sport. Provide equipment for them if they don’t already have their own.

Contact local colleges or high schools that have teams to see if they need ball girls or ball boys on the sidelines for their games. Get players who are friends to do it together. They will tell their friends, and eventually it will seem like “everyone is doing it.” Not only will you recruit players, but they will learn a little bit about the sport while they are on the sidelines.

Talk to coaches and players who are involved in other sports and solicit them to participate in lacrosse if they are not already committed to a different spring sport. Lacrosse can be a great way to stay in shape for sports in other seasons.

You may encounter people who are concerned that your efforts to start a team may take players away from other spring sports such as baseball, softball, track and field, tennis, or spring soccer. Your creation of a team will create more overall sports opportunities for students. Encourage everyone to look at the benefits over time.

Secure equipment for players if they don’t already have their own.

[Here are some ways to get equipment for your team:](#)

Contact local retailers and see if they have overstocked equipment or would be willing to sponsor you team. Buying in bulk is always more cost-effective as well.

[Lacrosse.com](#) is an online retailer of lacrosse equipment. They have starter packages and can help you with team uniforms.

Use the soft-stick rules and equipment and to teach fundamentals to new players. This is great way to see who is interested in coming out to play on the “real” team. Parents like this as an initial step, before they buy all of the equipment for their kids. Apply to the [US Lacrosse Soft-Stick Equipment Grant](#) if your team needs sticks and balls for co-ed lacrosse.

Once your team is up and running, you may want to apply to the US Lacrosse First Stick Program. The US Lacrosse First Stick Program is a two (2) year partnership between US Lacrosse and awarded teams that is designed to deliver comprehensive team development resources-such as equipment, USL membership and coaching education-to expand participation beyond traditional boundaries.

The core purpose of the program is to create long-term partnerships between US Lacrosse and First Stick teams and to support the growth of lacrosse nationally, at all youth levels (U-19 and below) and at all stages of organizational development. This partnership will create self-sustaining programs that will operate by US Lacrosse national standards and best practices at the completion of the program. As US Lacrosse is committed to providing benefits and resources to assist in team development, each First Stick team is expected to remain committed to the First Stick program for two years.



US Lacrosse goals for the First Stick Program include:

1. To assist team organizers in developing boys' and girls' teams at the youth and high school level in their communities.
2. Break barriers to participation by providing free and/or discounted US Lacrosse resources.
3. Create self-sustaining lacrosse programs that operate under US Lacrosse national standards and best practices.

Click here for more information about the program - www.uslacrosse.org/firststick.

Your local [US Lacrosse chapter](#) may have local contacts for equipment or equipment to loan until you get off the ground. Contact your chapter to find out how they can help.

A word about used equipment: Passing old equipment down to youth players may be hazardous as the equipment may not fit, may be slightly damaged, and may predispose players to injury. The Risk Management/Insurance Committee has recommended, and US Lacrosse requires, that players must follow current and accepted rules of play, and use equipment that meets current and accepted safety standards, in order to qualify for insurance protection. This statement includes the wearing of NOCSAE-approved helmets at all levels of play.

Find other teams to play.

Once you have established your own team, your players will want to test their skills against another team.

Your local [US Lacrosse chapter](#) can put you in contact with other teams and leagues in the area. Make contact with a league and/or team organizer well before your season starts. US Lacrosse chapters will also have information about local and national tournaments, festivals and meetings. These events are a great way to meet other coaches and make your own contacts.

Transportation - If your players must arrive and depart practice by means other than a parent or carpool, keep in mind options for school or public transportation to practice locations. Renting a van or a school bus might be beneficial or necessary for games. If you do not have access to arranging school buses, check with your local parks and recreation department to see if they charter buses or vans. Keep in mind the [US Lacrosse Risk Management Manual](#) states that "no liability coverage is provided to parents, coaches, or volunteers while using any automobile to transport team members or volunteers to any practice, game or activity, except where officially designated by association."

Secure financial support and fundraising.

Now that you know what you will need to form a team, the next step is to finance this endeavor. Fundraising will be vital to the success of your team, and you will need to market and promote not only your team, but your fundraising efforts.

Collect Dues: Team dues may be necessary to support your team. Ideally, dues should be low as possible as to ensure interest and commitment from players and parents. However, make dues too high and you will lose interest, make dues too low and you will end up paying out of your own pocket. Once you've determined your budget, you can figure out if team dues will cover all expenses or whether you will need to plan for other fundraising to cover the difference. If you ask players for dues when they are excited about joining the team, they will be more willing to pay what you ask.

Solicit Sponsorship: Local sponsorship of a team not only helps defray costs, it can draw more attention to your team and your team activities. Businesses with whom parents or other volunteers have a connection, or who may have an interest in lacrosse or sports in general may be a good place to start. Offering advertising in newsletters, event flyers, and programs, as well banners at the event site or on your website, is usually an acceptable trade-off for sponsorship. Make sure to show adequate appreciation for sponsors with letters of thanks, plaques, special events, or doing volunteer work for them. Do everything you can to also promote your sponsor; most likely they will want you to wear their name on the uniforms. Businesses that have sponsored in the past may be more likely to sponsor again, so keep detailed records of contacts and contributions.

Solicit Grants/Monetary Donations: Solicit grants or funds from individuals, local agencies and organizations, retailers, corporations, foundations or the government. Keep in mind that if you are an established non-profit organization and a donor receives something of value in return for a contribution, the donation may not be fully deductible. This may apply to fundraising activities such as banquets, auctions, concerts, athletic events, and solicitations for contributions when merchandise or benefits are given in return for payment of a specified minimum contribution. If the donor receives or expects to receive goods or services in return for a contribution to your team, the donor cannot deduct any part of the contribution unless the donor intends to, and does, make a payment greater than the fair market value of the goods or services received. You should determine in advance the fair market value or any goods or services to be given to contributors; tell them when you publicize the fundraising event or solicit their contributions how much will be deductible (for more information see IRS Publication 1391).

Hold A Fundraising Event: Fundraising events work when someone makes it happen. That someone needs to be you working with your team, coaches, school and parents to make the difference. The secret is choosing a suitable fundraiser, establishing a sound organization, and plenty of participation by team members, parents, and boosters. Fundraising events are also a great team bonding exercise, and people who are excited and passionate about the team will make these fundraisers successful.

Special Considerations for Starting a Team at the Youth vs. High School Level:

Youth (15 and under)

- When recruiting players, remember - word of mouth rules! If some children enjoy and get into playing lacrosse, their friends will too.
- PARENTS: Parents are your best ally. Parents want to be involved in their child's activities, some may have more time than others, but all want the best for their son or daughter and want to see them excel. Find out if parents' professions can be of help to you. If a player's father or mother is a lawyer, ask him or her to help with the legality issues of establishing a 501 (c) (3) organization. Maybe a company a parent works for would be willing to sponsor the team?
- If you can keep costs of participation as low as possible you will have more luck recruiting participants and maintaining your team. Parents may be hesitant to significantly invest in a sport before knowing if their child likes it or will stick with it.
- Setting up multiple teams of multiple ages can be a logistical nightmare but it is extremely important that players be grouped close in age. Safety and quality of experience are at stake when considering how to combine youth players. Use the recommendations of the [US Lacrosse Age & Eligibility Guidelines](#). Also, other than when playing by non-contact rules in an educational skill development setting, do not combine male and female players. In addition to significant safety considerations, boys and girls deserve the opportunity to each play and progress in their own unique game.

High School Club and Varsity

- Establishing as a club team first is usually a successful step for a future varsity program. A club team that is well maintained by coaches and players demonstrates to athletic directors and principals that this is a worth while sport to sponsor. You also have taken care of most first steps in forming a varsity team when a club team is formed first.
- Committed interest from students and some parents must be demonstrated for the school (principal and athletic director) to recognize your efforts. Schools will listen to many parents voicing the same opinion. You should identify the largest possible number of parents who have "clout" at the school, i.e. PTA members, trustees, recent large donors, influential alumni, etc. In short, those individuals who can perhaps "get through" to the administration more easily will be most effective in making progress. Contact these people, discuss the merits of playing lacrosse, tell them how the school will not have to bear the start-up costs, invite their

comments and suggestions for implementing your plan. Invite them to join your group. Above all, request that they do not bring their influence to bear until your other groundwork has been laid.

- Meet with the school's principal first to propose having an informational meeting at the school in a gym, cafeteria, or library after hours. Principals may have more interest in new programs than athletic directors who may be hesitant to add another sport they have to manage with no additional resources or facilities available. If the informational meeting is successful and there is significant interest set up another meeting with the principal to move forward.
- Often schools do not have new club or varsity sports in their budgets so it is important for you to come up with a detailed budget and determine what the participants and sponsoring school will have to pay. US Lacrosse membership includes insurance for players, coaches and officials, if the team is not sanctioned by the school, and a certificate of insurance can be provided by Bollinger Insurance to secure field space. Understand where the principal/athletic director is coming from: no staff, no money, no fields, liability, traditional sports and scheduling. Find a common ground - kids - and provide the principal/athletic director with confidence that lacrosse is not going to be a burden.
- If you can get a teacher or a person affiliated with the school to serve as a team sponsor or school contact, you will establish positive ties that could be supportive when establishing a varsity team.
- Make it as easy as possible to say yes! Be organized and professional. Taking care of finding other teams to play, field space, officials, team equipment, and other necessities will alleviate some the headaches the school is anticipating. If the school is impressed by your organization, dedication and ability to get people (players, coaches, parents, and outside sponsors) interested then they are more likely to look on your proposal favorably. Work patiently with the administrators to clarify concrete issues, concerns, needs, and opinions so that you can move forward with resolutions.
- Be persistent but patient. Getting a sport sanctioned by a school may take years. Set long term goals. It takes planning on your part and the school's part to ensure that the team is established properly, is financially stable, and successful.