

Money Saving Recommendations for the All-Star Community

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USASF Parent Action Committee

All-Star Financial Suggestions



USASF Parent Action Committee Economic Mission Statement

The USASF Parent Action Committee has gathered information from parents and professionals in an effort to provide a wide scope of financial suggestions and strategies during this economic time.

Our ideas encompass the entire all-star cheerleading industry with our focus on easily implemented procedures and ideas. It is our hope that these recommendations encourage the industry as a whole to work in conjunction with one another to decrease costs and allow a wider range of athletes and their families to continue to participate in the sport of all-star cheerleading.

The Parent Action Committee would like to thank all of the parents and other members of the all-star community that contributed suggestions. Special thanks to the members of fierceboard.com for their participation.

Economic Recommendations for Parents

Parents' ability to capitalize on resources regarding fundraising and travel options can assist in defraying costs for their athlete. Families working in partnership towards the common goal of financial savings can make the endeavor fun and successful.

1. Utilize Fundraising Options Offered by Your All-Star Program and USASF

Take advantage of every fundraising opportunity for your athlete. Many all-star programs offer a variety of fundraising projects to their families. Be creative and flexible with your fundraisers. Not all will be as successful as others but it is important to remember that your all-star account will be paid with either your money or fundraiser money. Every dollar that you are able to fundraise offsets the amount that you must contribute.

Sponsorships for applicable teams and programs are another way to raise funds. Small businesses and corporations will sometimes sponsor individual athletes or teams in exchange for advertising opportunities i.e., t-shirt or website logo placement.

These sponsorships are sometimes tax deductible for the donor. Please consult your gym administration to be certain your gym or booster club qualify.

In addition to fundraising opportunities offered by your program, financial opportunities are available for outgoing senior all-star cheerleaders. Per the USASF website:

The USASF (United States All Star Federation) encourages the positive life benefits of all star cheerleading and dance that stay with an all star cheerleader or dancer as they pursue their future. High school seniors, who have been involved in all star cheerleading and dance and are pursuing a higher education, may apply for this scholarship to assist the start of their new lives. The USASF believes that continued effects of the character, sportsmanship, work ethic and teamwork shall follow all star cheerleaders and dancers in their education endeavors. The purpose of this program is to support and guide dedicated and talented athletes through this transition. As well as recognize the hard work and efforts that have developed success for them to this point. The USASF's mission in maximizing the number of participants benefiting from the positive life benefits in all star cheerleading and dance, supports athlete's around the world. The College Scholarship Program provides athletes support in applying these benefits to a College/University Degree. The athlete can contribute to the community around her and pursue an education with aid and encouragement.

Additional information on this scholarship opportunity is available at www.usasf.com/programs/scholarship.

2. Formulate and Commit to a Travel Budget

For many parents the majority of their expense during the season is due to travel and accommodation expenses. These expenses can be significantly lowered by developing a personal travel budget and allowing flexibility with regards to travel standards.

As you are evaluating your travel schedule for the season, it is important to strategize as to the ways to save financially before and during travel. Preparedness and planning ideas for your travel can include:

- Redemption of hotel points for rate discounts or complimentary rooms.
- Share accommodations with other athletes/families.
- Opt for a clean, mid-priced hotel choice.
- Reserve accommodations that offer complimentary breakfast and/or shuttle services.
- Join discount programs and use frequent flier discounts, AAA, military discounts or hotel reward discounts when available.
- Carpool to conserve fuel costs.
- Choose accommodations within walking distance to venues to save on parking fees.
- Purchase flights off season. Early or late flights are often less expensive. Flights purchased last minute can sometimes double in cost.
- Set a distance of 4-6 hours and commit to driving to competitions within that distance instead of flying.
- Ask for gas and restaurant gift cards in place of holiday gifts.
- Have a tail-gate party at competitions and recruit people to bring a food item. This saves money on food and gas and serves as a bonding activity for families.

Economic Recommendations for All-Star Programs

All-Star programs assistance in reducing costs for their families will encourage the continued growth of their program. At this juncture, all-star cheerleading is often viewed as a luxury as opposed to a need and is often the first financial sacrifice to be made from families' budgets.

Working in conjunction with your families to provide a quality and affordable program stimulates the potential opportunity for new talent while negating the stigma that all-star cheerleading is financially taxing and unattainable for many.

Information gathered from current and former all-star cheer parents provided us with the following suggestions that we hope will improve program enrollment and stimulate the sport:

1. Provide Flexible Payment Options

As family budgets differ greatly, offering payment options increases the chances of affordability. A standard monthly all-inclusive payment allows families to budget accordingly without unexpected charges or fluctuating payment amounts. Discounts for pre-payment of tuition and fees is also appreciated by many and encourages timely payment remittal.

2. Resources and Information for Fundraising Opportunities

Providing fundraising resources and information to your program is vital for affordability. Enlisting the help of parent volunteers to organize a fundraising program encourages participation and the common goal of fundraising success. A program that begins early in the season allows parents to begin the fundraising process well in advance. Examples of successful fundraisers are:

- Bake sales
- Golf Tournaments
- Silent auctions
- Raffles/contests
- Car washes
- Item sales
- Referral program in which athletes receive monetary compensation to their accounts.
- In house scholarship opportunities with donations from local companies.

3. Decrease Unnecessary Expenditures for Families

Budget conscious uniform options are appreciated by many parents. As uniforms and practice wear are a large expense for all-star athletes, any financial savings in these areas is appreciated:

- Organize a sale of pre-owned uniforms, warm-ups and bags. As these items are often used for one season prior to being outgrown, a savings of at least 50% can be expected when purchasing pre-owned items.
- Allow athletes to choose budget appropriate footwear that meet gym guidelines for aesthetics and safety.
- Reuse uniform designs for more than two seasons.
- Eliminate the purchase of required practice wear and t-shirts are other ways for families to save. Consider allowing your athletes to wear coordinating items that they currently own. *Feedback reflects that while parents appreciate t-shirts from memorable events, they expressed that these items were unnecessary and pricey.*
- Provide in house choreography and music for teams when appropriate.

4. Allow Families Travel Flexibility

As family budgets differ greatly, allowing flexibility in travel accommodations and transportation can often provide financial savings for travel competitions.

Families will often search for accommodations within their price point and utilize points or hotel program discounts to reserve their rooms. Hotels offering free breakfast and hotel shuttle service are selling points to families as well.

5. Provide Opportunities for All Athletes to Advance Their Talent

Schedule monthly clinics at a minimal cost per cheerleader to assist athletes who are unable to afford the tuition of multiple classes. These clinics could provide instruction in place of private lessons and additional classes.

Many cheerleaders wish to grow their skills, but as finances are limited, their opportunities are limited as well. Providing inexpensive clinics allow your athletes to be exposed to new skills they otherwise may not be able to practice during the season.

Economic Recommendations for Event Producers

Event producers providing a venue and competition with consideration given to the families and spectators in attendance encourage loyalty to their brand.

The majority of feedback received reflects that families appreciate a quality competition experience that is sensitive to various economic levels.

- Eliminate competitor gifts if the costs of those items increase registration fees or spectator fees.
- Procure less expensive venue for regional and smaller national competitions.
- Opt for venues with free parking when available.
- Discount prepaid spectator fees or offer family/multiple purchase discount tickets.
- Offer a substantial discount for young children.
- Allow parents to video and photograph their athlete while continuing to offer purchase options of professional photographs.
- Reduce extra performances or time filling entertainment if these performances result in increased fees.
- Award 1-3 trophies/plaques per division instead of 10-20.
- When available, provide venues that allow food or drink to be brought in.

USASF Parent Action Committee Members

Name	Gym/State	Screen Name
Bill Presson <i>Chairman</i>	ACE Cheer Company Alabama	ACEDAD
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Darla Glazebrook	Gyme Tyme Kentucky	CheerFanatic
Susan Gutierrez	Twist & Shout Oklahoma	McLovin
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Kris Parrish	Rockstar/CEA South/North Carolina	Mousemom
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