

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the purpose of the Three Pillars Initiative?

The Three Pillars Initiative (TPI) is a national 501(c)(3) philanthropy service organization whose mission is to create and distribute youth philanthropy education programs and curriculum to communities committed to preparing the next generation of philanthropic leaders. The program model provides robust learning experiences for high school juniors and seniors in fundraising, grantmaking and volunteering. Together, these components embody TPI's *Three Pillars of Philanthropy*.

What youth population is served?

Generation Z, born between 1996 – 2012 and 63 million strong, is the most diverse and likely the most well-educated generation ever. Given their elevated awareness of the world around them, the result of their access to a 24/7 virtual environment and their extensive social networks, they are better connected with each other than any previous generation at a similar age. It is important, as they come of age, that we provide this unique generation more effective tools to bring about positive social change through the power of philanthropy.

How are students recruited?

Participating high school student advisors and counselors play an important role. They are not only in a position to encourage students to submit an application but also help shape a diverse mix of student applicants based on such factors as gender, ethnicity, race, socialization, extra-curricular activities and prior volunteer experience. Advisors promote the program by making general announcements in homerooms or study halls, distributing TPI brochures and posting information on social media.

How are youth selected for the program?

At the beginning of each school year, interested high school juniors submit a written application for acceptance into the program for which they are asked to make a 2-year commitment, i.e. their junior and senior years. All student applicants are also personally interviewed as the final step in the selection process. Typically, 25-30 juniors are accepted each school year.

What are the major program components?

TPI's original curriculum written exclusively for high school juniors and seniors consists of thematic learning modules focused on fundraising, grantmaking and volunteering. The junior year cohort program focuses on the art, science and business of grantmaking. Students design an RFP, receive funding proposals submitted by area nonprofits, conduct site visits, analyze site visit results and reach consensus on how to allocate grants. The senior year cohort focuses on the art, science and business of fundraising. Students organize a year-long fundraising campaign which includes writing appeal letters, doing personal asks and creating fund raising events. Each cohort engages in volunteer services during both years.

How much money is typically raised and distributed?

After the program startup phase, at the completion of the third year, the total minimum fundraising goal is approximately \$50,000 and the minimum grantmaking goal is \$30,000. Each succeeding year, the excess of funds raised is invested in a designated fund which pays for program expenses and grant distributions. As the fund grows through successive fundraising campaigns, grant distributions can be increased. The program is financially self-sustaining after the third year. In a mature program, it is not unusual for teens to consistently raise over \$100,000 during the campaign year.

What do the teens learn?

Teens learn the art, science and business of philanthropy framed around the following themes: the history of American philanthropy, scope and scale of the public charity sector, concepts of social change, root cause analysis, effective grant writing, effective grantmaking, charitable fund investment management, personal solicitation, giving circles, donor segmentation, crowd raising, writing a case for support, social enterprise, corporate social responsibility and the interconnectedness of government, business, nonprofits and philanthropy. Much of the learning utilizes simulated exercises, role play and hands-on experiences.

Who teaches the students?

The learning modules and accompanying community outreach activities are specifically designed to be taught by adult community volunteer Philanthropy Mentors. Philanthropy Mentors are typically individuals in the community whose volunteer activities, nonprofit board service, personal philanthropy or civic/governmental roles have been broadly demonstrated. This would include volunteers who happen to be fundraising or grantmaking professionals as well. They might also have an aptitude for youth development having been a parent of teens either currently or previously. The intergenerational nature of the program adds value to the experience by providing a milieu in which a non-judgmental, mutually self-actualizing climate is provided.

How many Philanthropy Mentors are needed?

Depending on the total number of teens in the program, 4-5 Mentors are typically needed for each cohort. Each Mentor works in a team of 5-6 students. Mentors for the first junior cohort move ahead with their students into their senior year of the program. Thus, additional mentors for the next junior cohort, who will also move ahead with their students in their senior year, would be required. After their second year, Mentors are encouraged to work with the next new cohort of juniors and move ahead with them in their senior year, and so on.

Who actually runs the program?

A Program Coordinator organizes, coordinates and directs all aspects of the program. This person might be a fundraising professional, nonprofit executive or an experienced community volunteer such as a long-serving local board member. The time commitment is approximately 8-10 hours per month during the school year. In addition, initial pre-launch activities related to planning or starting the program would require approximately 30-40 hours of the Program Coordinator's time.

When does the program begin and end?

Typically, the program timeframe mirrors the high school academic year, beginning in August/September and ending in May/June. The learning modules are designed to be delivered at monthly sessions of approximately 2 ½ hours in length. Community fundraising activities, site visits to applicant organizations and volunteer activities occur between the sessions. In certain cases, a new program can launch in mid-school year in January and run through May. With this option, the learning modules are taught in bi-monthly sessions in sequence with community outreach activities.

When and where are the program sessions held?

Regular 2 ½-hour program sessions are typically held on a mid-weekday evening, or a Saturday, in a space that can easily accommodate the total number of students and mentors. Providing food and drinks at each session is highly recommended. Other considerations in selecting a venue include the accessibility of A/V hookups and WiFi connectivity, availability of round or rectangular tables with chairs and storage space for program supplies and equipment.

How is success of the program measured?

Documenting the effectiveness of any program is best achieved through the application of an objective, outside evaluator. At TPI's request, the Lily Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University has developed a unique, online survey instrument that is used exclusively to measure the effectiveness of the *Three Pillars* program model. The survey itself is administered by Qualtrix in partnership with the School of Philanthropy who analyzes the data against impact indicators.

How do programs get access to the TPI curriculum?

The program curriculum learning modules are available exclusively from Three Pillars Initiative through a licensing agreement. There is an initial license fee for the junior cohort edition and for the senior cohort edition. Thereafter, there is an annual license renewal fee which includes access to the fully updated edition of both junior and senior cohort curricula each year.

What technical assistance and training is available to launch the program?

Per the licensing agreement, Three Pillars Initiative staff provide, at no extra charge, ongoing guidance and technical assistance to local program leaders that includes help with pre-launch planning and organizing, training and orientation of mentors and program consultation throughout the school year. If travel is necessary and approved, reimbursement of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred by TPI is required.

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