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Uniforms, Concert Wear & Accessories

EXCLUSIVE FRUHAUF UNIFORMS REPRESENTATIVE · MI · WI · MN

Funding New Band Uniforms

A Director's Grant & Funding Guide for Michigan, Wisconsin & Minnesota

Serving school music programs since 1976 · Updated October 2026

Start here: the honest picture

Most national music-education grants fund instruments, not uniforms.

Programs like Mr. Holland's Opus, Fender, and Classics for Kids are built around putting instruments in students' hands, so a uniform request to them is usually a wasted application.

Uniforms get funded a different way. Successful programs combine three or four sources: a district contribution, booster fundraising, community sponsorships, and one or two targeted grants that list equipment, supplies, or wardrobe as eligible costs.

This guide focuses only on sources that can realistically pay for uniforms in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Every grant changes its rules yearly, so confirm current eligibility with the funder before you apply.

Think in years, not dollars

A set of marching uniforms should serve your program for 10 to 15 years. Frame every request around that lifespan, and the number stops looking scary.

The uniform funding stack

The district almost always carries the largest share; grants and sponsors close the gap.

Two public campaigns show the pattern:

Program	Total cost	District / school share	Raised by boosters and community
Jersey Community HS Band (IL)	$56,000 for 95 students	$40,000	$16,000
Horizon HS Marching Band (CO)	$108,000 for 200 uniforms	Most of $88,000, with the parent association	$20,000

Build your plan in this order:

1. **District or capital budget.** Ask early whether uniforms can go in a capital, sinking fund, or bond-funded replacement cycle. This is your anchor dollar.
2. **Booster organization.** A 501(c)(3) booster group can accept tax-deductible gifts and apply to foundations that do not fund schools directly.
3. **State arts grants.** Michigan and Minnesota both have programs with equipment or capital categories.
4. **Local funders.** Community foundations, service clubs, and corporate store grants.
5. **Sponsorships and crowdfunding.** Sponsor-a-uniform campaigns turn a large number into many small, personal gifts.

A typical gap of $15,000 to $25,000 is realistic to close with steps 3 through 5 over one school year.

Michigan

Michigan's best uniform opportunity is the MACC Experience Support grant's equipment category, worth up to $30,000.

Program	Who applies	Amount	Uniform fit	Notes
MACC Experience Support — Facility Enhancement & Equipment	PreK-12 schools and districts	Up to $30,000 (FY25 guidelines)	Possible — confirm uniforms count as "equipment"	Peer-reviewed and competitive. Tie uniforms to public performances: parades, games, community concerts.
MACC Mission Support — Facility & Equipment	501(c)(3) arts nonprofits	Up to $30,000	Possible for community or youth bands	Your booster club likely does not qualify unless its IRS code is arts-focused.
MCACA Arts Equipment & Supplies Grant	Individual K-12 schools, through regional administrators	Up to $1,500	Good for accessories: gloves, shakos, garment bags, guard wear	One grant per building per year; not two years in a row; paid as reimbursement.

MACC guidelines and deadlines are posted at michigan.gov/arts. Applications have historically closed in late winter for the following school year, so start in the fall.

For the $1,500 grant, Wayne County schools apply through CultureSource; Oakland and Macomb through the Anton Art Center; Livingston, Monroe, and Washtenaw through the Arts Alliance. Other counties: ask MACC for your regional administrator.

Minnesota

Minnesota has the strongest uniform precedent of the three states: Legacy Amendment arts money has paid for performance uniforms before.

The Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund flows through Minnesota's regional arts councils, and each council runs its own grant rounds. Two public examples:

- A Central Minnesota capital arts grant from the Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund paid to replace worn uniforms for the Saint John's Boys' Choir.
- Lake Region Arts Council awarded $12,500 to Pelican Rapids Public School in a 2024 Legacy round, where organizations could request up to $12,500.

How to approach it:

1. Find your regional arts council (Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council, Lake Region Arts Council, Central Minnesota Arts Board, and others cover the state by county).
2. Ask which grant category covers equipment, capital, or wardrobe. Names and limits differ by council.
3. Expect a "no supplanting" rule: Legacy money generally cannot replace what the district already budgets. Position the grant as the piece that completes the project, not the whole purchase.
4. Some councils require a nonprofit applicant. If so, apply through your booster club.

Search past awards in your county at legacy.mn.gov to see what your council has funded.

Wisconsin

Wisconsin's state arts grants are a weak fit for school uniforms, so Wisconsin programs should lead with local funders.

Program	Fit for a school band	Why
Wisconsin Arts Board Creation and Presentation	Low	Supports schools only for an ongoing, community-run performing arts series, and requires a 1:1 match. The FY27 deadline was October 8, 2026.
Wisconsin Arts Board Creative Communities	Low to moderate	Project-based arts education funding, not equipment. FY27 rounds closed in February and March 2026. Ask staff whether a community-performance project could include costume or wardrobe costs.

Where Wisconsin programs usually find uniform money:

- **Community foundations.** Most Wisconsin counties and larger cities have one, often with youth or arts funds that accept school requests.
- **Service clubs and local corporations.** Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, credit unions, and hometown manufacturers.
- **The booster club.** A 501(c)(3) booster opens doors to family foundations that cannot fund a school district directly.

Funders in every state

Local money is the most reliable uniform money, because local funders see your band on the field every Friday.

Source	Typical range (estimate)	Who applies	How to win it
Walmart Spark Good Local Grants	$250–$5,000 per store	K-12 public and nonprofit private schools	Each Walmart, Sam's Club, and distribution center reviews its own requests. Apply to every location your students' families shop at.
Community foundations	$1,000–$10,000	Schools or booster 501(c)(3)s	Call the program officer first. Ask about youth, arts, and "field of interest" funds.
Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Optimist clubs	$500–$5,000	Usually the booster club	Offer the band for a club meeting or event. Personal connections decide these.
Local businesses and credit unions	$250–$10,000	Booster club	Pair the ask with recognition: a sponsor patch program, banner, or program ad.
Crowdfunding (GoFundMe, school platforms)	Varies	Booster club	Works best for the final gap, with a clear goal and deadline.

Walmart applicants need a Spark Good account and verification through Deed before applying, and grants run in three application windows a year. An organization can hold up to 25 submitted or approved applications at once.

DonorsChoose is useful for small accessories, but projects buy from the platform's vendor list. Custom uniforms from a specialty manufacturer generally will not fit that model, so use it for gloves, garment bags, or guard supplies.

Federal Title IV-A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment) funds can support well-rounded education, including music. Whether uniforms are an allowable cost is a district decision, so ask your business office before counting on it.

Fundraising ideas

Alumni are the most reliable source of booster donations for uniforms, and they give most when they can see the new design.

The strongest campaigns also sell one uniform at a time, not one $60,000 project.

The alumni design appeal

Orefice has seen many programs raise booster donations by sending alumni sketches or photos of the uniforms they plan to buy. A picture turns an abstract budget line into something former members can see themselves in.

1. **Get the design first.** A rendering is the centerpiece of the appeal, so book your design consultation before you start fundraising.
2. **Build the list.** Booster records, past programs, yearbooks, alumni social media groups, and class reunion organizers.
3. **Show old and new side by side.** A photo of the current uniform next to the new design, with its age: "Our uniforms are 16 years old."
4. **Make the ask specific.** Sponsor one uniform, half a uniform, or one accessory piece, each with a dollar amount.
5. **Set a deadline.** Tie it to your order date so donors know when their gift matters.
6. **Report back.** Send a photo of the band's first performance in the new uniforms, with a thank-you.

A simple opening for the letter or post

"You marched in these. Help the next generation march in these." Follow it with the two images and the goal.

More ideas that work

Idea	How it works	Tip
Sponsor-a-uniform	One uniform's cost becomes a gift level	Recognize donors with a name label inside the jacket, as the Liberty Lions Band Boosters do.
Retired-uniform keepsakes	Pieces of old uniforms go to higher-level donors	One program offered commemorative pillows made from its retiring uniforms. Check your district's disposal policy first; some districts control how old uniforms are sold or given away.
Business match	A local business matches community gifts up to a set amount	A match plus a deadline is the fastest way to move undecided donors.
Halftime or concert ask	A short announcement with the new design on the scoreboard or in the program	Put a QR code to the donation page on the screen and in the program.
Senior night and family letters	Parents and grandparents give in honor of a student	Offer "in honor of" recognition in the unveiling program.
Unveiling event	A set date to reveal the new uniforms	Donors give to be part of the moment; invite alumni and sponsors first.

Idea	How it works	Tip
Donor recognition banner	Sponsor names on a banner at the stadium or band room	Works well for business sponsors who want visibility.

Car washes and restaurant nights build community but rarely raise more than a few hundred dollars. Use them for engagement, not as the plan.

Keep a simple donor list as you go, especially alumni. It becomes your starting base for the next replacement cycle.

Timeline: start a year ahead

Order by spring to have new uniforms on the field in August.

Most bands want new uniforms in August or September, so the funding work starts the fall before.

AUG–OCT
The year before

Plan

- Document uniform age and condition, with photos for grant narratives.
- Ask the district about capital, sinking fund, or replacement-cycle dollars.
- Book a free Orefice design consultation and request a grant-ready quote.

OCT–FEB

Apply

- Submit MACC (Michigan) or regional arts council (Minnesota) applications; confirm each deadline.
- Apply to every nearby Walmart location and your community foundation.
- Launch the sponsor-a-uniform campaign and alumni design appeal.

FEB–APR

Commit and order

- Track grant decisions; close the gap with a business match or crowdfunding.
- Approve the final design and collect student measurements.
- **Place the order. Earlier orders protect your delivery date.**

MAY–AUG

Deliver and thank

- Production and delivery; confirm current lead times with Orefice.
- Hold an unveiling event and thank every funder and sponsor publicly.
- File grant reports on time to stay eligible for future rounds.

Grant deadlines fall months before award decisions. A program that starts in spring is usually a full season late.

Writing a winning uniform request

Reviewers fund impact and durability, so show both in numbers.

Do the cost-per-year math

Divide the total by the uniform's service life and the number of students served. Example using a typical range of $600 to $700 per uniform, for a complete marching uniform before accessories: 100 uniforms cost $60,000 to $70,000. Over 12 years that is $5,000 to $5,833 a year. If 100 students wear them each year, that is **about $50 to $58 per student per year**.

Tell the reviewer what they need to hear:

1. **The need.** Age of current uniforms, condition, and sizing gaps. Photos of torn seams and mismatched pieces are persuasive.
2. **The reach.** Number of students, plus every public appearance: games, parades, festivals, competitions, community concerts.
3. **The plan.** Total cost, every funding source, and what this grant completes. Funders like being the final piece.
4. **Durability.** Expected lifespan, care plan, and storage. Washable fabric and replaceable parts strengthen this.
5. **Recognition.** How the funder will be thanked publicly.

Attach a formal vendor quote. Most applications require one. A quote with line items, fabric specs, and a delivery date reads as a ready project, not a wish.

Budget accessories as separate line items. Some small grants fit gloves, shakos, plumes, or garment bags better than full uniforms. Separate lines let each piece be funded on its own.

How Orefice LTD helps you get funded

Orefice LTD has outfitted school music programs since 1976 and is the exclusive Fruhauf Uniforms representative for Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. We help with the paperwork that wins grants:

- **Grant-ready quotes** with line items, fabric specifications, and production timelines.
- **Letters of support** on Orefice LTD letterhead.
- **Design renderings** you can attach to applications, donor letters, and alumni appeals.
- **Timeline planning** so your funding, design approval, and production line up for the season you need.
- **Line-item budgets** that separate uniforms from accessories, so smaller grants can fund the pieces they fit.

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Start with a free 30-minute design consultation

Most funders want to see a real design and quote, and the best time to start is a full year before you need uniforms.

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Grant programs, amounts, and deadlines change every year. Information in this guide was current as of October 2026; always confirm eligibility and dates with the funder before applying. Orefice LTD is not affiliated with any funder listed.