

THE P.E.O. PYRAMID OF GIVING

by Kathy Soppe, Director of Finance/Treasurer, International Chapter of The P.E.O. Sisterhood

THE P.E.O. SISTERHOOD HAS A LONG AND RICH TRADITION OF PHILANTHROPY. For over 100 years, P.E.O.s have joined forces to support women's education through the International Chapter projects. In addition, state, provincial and district (s/p/d) chapters have established projects for scholarship funds and other worthy causes. Both International and s/p/d projects further the work of the P.E.O. Sisterhood and depend primarily on chapter and member support. Though most of the charitable work of P.E.O. is fulfilled through these projects, chapters also seek to raise awareness of P.E.O. through involvement in their communities.

The P.E.O. Finances and Service Policy states that the primary purpose of our chapters is to support the philanthropic projects of the P.E.O. Sisterhood. This not only reinforces our mission statement, but is also the basis for our IRS group exemption. In order to maintain this group exemption, chapters must illustrate support of our common purpose through use of their financial resources.

The P.E.O. Finances and Service Policy does not provide specific direction. Instead, it is a basic framework to raise awareness and encourage chapter discussion. In order to guide chapter decisions, consider the P.E.O. Pyramid of Giving, a three-tiered pyramid representing the three levels of contributions—International projects, s/p/d projects and local chapter interests.

A chapter should consider their giving on these three priority levels. **The base of the pyramid** represents the largest portion of a chapter's giving and this should be to the International Chapter projects. **The middle section of the pyramid** represents the contributions to s/p/d projects. **The smallest portion of the pyramid is the tip**—the portion of chapter giving that is available for local chapter scholarships and other community support. Though the exact amount or percentage of giving may be different among chapters, the shape of the pyramid should guide chapter decisions and help to focus support on the projects that are the strength of our Sisterhood.

Helen Keller once stated, ***“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”*** P.E.O. has proven the worth of this statement by helping **nearly 110,000 women** finance their education with **over \$347 million** through our International Chapter projects. Our concentrated efforts will ensure the continued success of the P.E.O. philanthropic projects, and more importantly—our shared mission to help women reach for the stars! ★

As of February 28, 2019,
OVER \$20 MILLION
WAS HELD IN LOCAL
CHAPTER ACCOUNTS.
THIS IS AN AVERAGE
OF OVER \$3,500 PER
CHAPTER, WITH 106
LOCAL CHAPTERS
HAVING A BALANCE
OF OVER \$10,000.



How much
is too much?

A GENERAL RULE IS TO
MAINTAIN ONE YEAR OF
OPERATING EXPENSES
IN THE LOCAL CHAPTER
TREASURY. UNLESS A
CHAPTER IS SAVING FOR
CONVENTION EXPENSES
OR A SPECIAL GIFT,
THERE SHOULD BE NO
REASON TO MAINTAIN
EXCESS FUNDS.