

How Do I Apply for a Great Idea Grant?

Applications for Great Idea Grants are available online only. The application can be completed on your computer. Print your completed application, obtain the required signatures and mail it to the Consortium office. Only the online application will be accepted.

Information About the Application Process

Send in only the original application with the required signatures. Be sure to keep a copy for your records.

Applicants are reminded that in addition to educators, community volunteers read the grant proposals. Avoid the use of acronyms, “buzzwords” or educational language that might raise questions or cause confusion.

Apply for the grant the semester before the program is to be implemented, whenever possible. For example, if you wish to implement a program in the Spring, please apply for the grant in the Fall. This shows a well-thought-out effort. If your grant is a Fall project, apply in the preceding Spring round.

The grant review process is anonymous. Applicants should not make any reference to themselves, their school buildings, communities, etc., in the grant narrative or in answers to other application. Proposals that don't honor this process will be returned for rewriting. Applicants are required to obtain the signatures of the building principal and superintendent on their applications. The signatures indicate administrative support for the grant request and its implementation should the proposal be awarded.

Archives of grants awarded in the past are available for review on our website. They may help spark ideas or provide a springboard for you to apply.

Applications will be returned if they are incomplete in any fashion – questions unanswered or required signatures missing. Missing and/or vague budgets, budgets not aligned with the narrative, or narratives that cannot be reviewed anonymously are reasons to return a proposal to applicants before review by the regional committee.

Deadlines for grant proposals are always the first Friday in October and the first Friday in February. **GRANT APPLICATION DEADLINES WILL NOT BE EXTENDED.** Applications postmarked prior to or on the date of the deadline will be accepted. (Your office postage meter is not the postmark.) Hand-delivered applications must be received at the Consortium office no later than 4:00 PM on the deadline date. Faxed applications will not be accepted. Applications that do not meet the deadline will be returned or may be held for the next round of grants at the applicant's request

Advice on writing a proposal is available by contacting the Great Idea Grants Coordinator, Patti Hoke, at phoke@tcfpe.org or at 412-678-9215.

GRANT "DO'S" • What Types of Programs Receive a Positive Response from Reviewers?

In the past, proposals that have won funding have:

- Emphasized active student learning and participation to broaden the educational experience of the students.
- Involved interdisciplinary and/or team-teaching by designing collaborative learning experiences.

- Involved others in the learning process (parents, peers, student mentors, community).
- Created partnerships with other school or community groups.
- Used non-traditional techniques or community resources.
- Broadened the cooperation between the community and the school.
- Become ongoing activities or have become permanently integrated into the curriculum.

GRANT "DON'TS" • What Generally Is Not Fundable

- Transportation • Field trips • Major equipment items • Assemblies • Incentives/prizes/t-shirts
- Continuing support for a previously funded program • Socials/parties as a culminating activity

The reviewers might consider these items if they are **integral** to the implementation of the entire program. Hypothetical example: The fifth grade social studies classes are dramatizing historical events for an in-school cable TV program. A camcorder is requested in this grant. Other grade levels will use this programming as a kick-off for their lessons in social studies and related disciplines. The requested camcorder, which generally would not be considered, is awarded.

What Definitely Is Not Fundable

- Salaries • Staff In-service Programs, Conferences, Professional Development • Substitute Teacher/Staff • Materials and supplies normally considered to be the responsibility of the school district, i.e., curriculum, textbooks, computers, and furniture.

An honorarium for a guest speaker or program might be funded if the experience is considered critical to achieving the desired impact on the students. Hypothetical example: A sign language demonstration (that requires an honorarium) was fundable because it initiated a program in which the students learned to sign in order to aid the hearing-impaired students to participate more fully at school assemblies and other school functions. An honorarium that would pay a consultant to teach students or provide an enrichment activity would be considered a salary.

Preparing the Grant Budget

- List all expenses for which you are requesting funds. Be sure to get the latest price quote available. Grants cannot be increased after they have been awarded.
- List the supplier for each expenditure.
- Include shipping and handling costs, if applicable.
- Include items paid for by other sources, as well as volunteer or free resources to be tapped. (This shows the program as a total picture.)
- Reminder: generally, transportation is not funded. Salaries are not funded, but an honorarium may be considered if important to the project (an honorarium cannot be more than 10% of budget request).
- If the budget can be prioritized, please do so.

Grant Narrative

This section of the application is your opportunity to share and sell your idea. Provide three or four sentences summarizing the proposed program. Note the purpose of the program in another sentence. If the program is designed to address a particular problem, state it here. Be sure your goal is clear and realistic. Show the big picture. More details should follow in the next paragraphs. Remember that the grant proposals are reviewed anonymously.

Next paragraphs should:

- Note what objectives/competencies will be achieved during the project.
- List samples of the types of lessons or activities you will use to meet your objectives. Show what the students will do.
- Note how the program is aligned with the PA State Academic Standards.
- Note any outside resources that will be tapped (i.e. community speakers, resources, parents, etc.).
- Be sure to shared how you plan to evaluate your project.

Do not use this narrative as a justification of items you will need to purchase. The Grants program does not make purchases; it funds ideas. However, items requested in your budget should be referenced in your narrative. If you are requesting math manipulatives there should be a reference to the activities or lesson where these items will be utilized.

At the close of your narrative, you should show your passion for your idea. If you are not excited about it, how will others fund it? If this project will be implemented only once, validate the impact (this is important) on the students/staff.

Application Check List

- Did you answer all the questions?
- Is the application completed so that it may be reviewed anonymously?
- Did you list all the items on your budget? (Awards cannot be adjusted at a later date.)
- Did you complete your project narrative?
- Do you have all the required signatures?

Applications will be returned if they do not meet the above criteria.