



How Do I Apply for a Great Idea Grant? _

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

Information About the Application Process

The grants process is competitive. Limited funds and high standards set by the reviewers mean some requests may not be approved. When this happens, the committee tries to provide feedback to help the applicants understand its decision. Grant requests may be redeveloped and submitted again for a later round.

At times, partial funding for grants may be awarded. If this occurs, specific guidelines will be given regarding the use of the funds. Applicants may refuse a grant award if the guidelines cannot be met or if they feel that partial funding would change the intent of the proposed project.

All grant applications are reviewed anonymously. Applicants should not make any reference to themselves, their school buildings, communities, etc., in the grant narrative or in answers to other application questions that would jeopardize the anonymous review process.

The reviewers read photocopies of the original applications with the personal sections deleted.

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.

Send in only the original application with the required signatures. Be sure to keep a copy for your records. Applicants are required to obtain the signatures of the building principal and superintendent on their applications. The signatures represent support of the grant request and its implementation if the proposal is awarded.

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.

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.

Only the new online application will be accepted. All previous versions of the application will be returned to the applicants.

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 the applicants before its review by the regional committee.

Deadlines for grant proposals are always the first Friday in October and the first Friday in February. THE GRANT APPLICATION DEADLINES CANNOT 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 are not accepted. Applications that do not meet the deadline will be returned or may be held for the next round of grants if the applicants request this.

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 Have Received 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 celebrating a project's 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 Cannot Be Funded Under Great Idea Grants?

- 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.

Remember that the grant proposals are reviewed anonymously. Make no reference to yourself, colleagues, your specific school/district, or anything that might taint the anonymous process. Proposals that don't honor this process will be returned for rewriting.

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 lessons where these items will be utilized.

The narrative for your proposal is broken down into several questions. Please answer each question as clearly and directly as possible.

√ Question 1:

Note the goal/purpose of your project/program. Give an overall description of what you will do and what you hope to accomplish.

√ Question 2:

Why do you want to do this project? What need(s) will be addressed?

√ Question 3:

List samples of the types of **lessons or activities** you will use to meet your objectives. Show what the students will do. Give details here. This is where you want to show that your idea is well thought out and developed.

√ Question 4:

Note how the program is aligned with the **PA State Academic Standards**. Be specific. Do not just list the standard number(s).

√ Question 5:

Note any outside resources that will be tapped (i.e. community speakers, resources, parents, etc.). This helps show the big picture of your program.

√ Question 6:

Be sure to show how you plan to evaluate your project. Evaluation is important. If possible, you want to collect data to show the value of your program and its impact on student learning especially if you hope to have your school district or another group fund your efforts in the future.

√ Question 7:

Here, add any other information about your program that was not covered in the previous questions. If this project will be implemented only once, validate the impact (this is important) on the students/staff. Also show your passion for your idea. If you are not excited about it, how will others fund it?

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 all the narrative sections for your project?
- Do you have all the required signatures?

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