

# Remote Learning Innovation Fund



St. Louis is preparing for one of the most significant disruptions to our way of life and our education system in recent history. As schools prepare to close, families and educators are working diligently to ensure young people in our city are safe, cared for, and positioned to learn. In the face of these immense challenges, we see remarkable ingenuity. Schools are setting up students to learn in remote and personalized ways. Families are weaving learning into day-to-day life. Entire communities are rallying together to share resources and care for those who need it most. This compassion and innovation is not only addressing immediate needs, but providing a glimpse into what's possible when we harness our energy to think beyond our current conception of school. As our community rallies together, The Opportunity Trust commits supporting and shining a light on these efforts.

**We have secured an initial fund of \$25,000 to fuel these urgent efforts to support and accelerate learning for students in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.** We will be offering \$1,000, \$2,000, \$5,000 grants to individuals and teams who are launching ideas to address the full range of student needs— from academic to social-emotional— while out of school in the coming weeks.

## What are the criteria for the grant?

The idea **supports an urgent need for students**, particularly those who are underserved during this time.

Is **clear on the outcomes** it seeks to achieve.

There is a **path to be implemented** in the near term and has the necessary support and capacity to execute it well.

It's an idea that the **others can learn from and potentially replicate**— i.e. it's scalable and the resources will be shared openly.

Represents an **innovation or practice that could endure** or evolve beyond school closures.

## How do you apply?

We will be accepting these on a rolling basis beginning March 25th. Our aim is to have a simple and efficient process in order to provide rapid lift to the work that is underway and necessary in our community.

[You can complete the application here.](#)

Once we receive it, we will aim to review and follow up with any questions in the week that follows.

You can complete the application here. If you have any questions, email Mia Howard at [mhoward@theopportunitytrust.org](mailto:mhoward@theopportunitytrust.org).

“When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me,  
‘Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.’”

—Mr. Fred Rogers

## What are some ways educators and families are getting creative right now?

KIPP's STEM team is creating five [“create at home” challenges](#) ranging from robotics to performance and inviting submissions from students nationally. Each week they'll give a \$25 amazon gift card to five of the best student projects for that week's create at home challenge.

Educators are running twice-a-day mindfulness moments and circles to help young people (and their parents) find moments of peace and process this experience as a community.

Schools are leveraging (now) free platforms like Zoom to host virtual classes, do 1:1 sessions with students who need special education services, to tee students up to prototype their ideas and get feedback (including from members of their community like grandparents who live far away).

Khan Academy and Pixar launched a [“Imagineering in a Box”](#) offering in which you can try your hand at designing amusement parks.

For more resources and sparks of ideas, check out this evolving list that we have been compiling. Missing something great, let us know by emailing \_\_\_\_\_

## Diligence + Progress Monitoring Process

Application Review	Grant Agreement	Disbursement of Funds	Progress Monitoring
<p>Libby will pull down the latest applications every Friday by 12 pm and circulate to the TOT team.</p> <p>Team will hold 2:30 - 3:30 pm on Mondays each week for review, discussion, and decision-making. Mia, Eric and Rob will meet but invitation is extended to the entire team if they want to participate.</p> <p>Mia will follow up with promising applicants via Zoom if there are clarifying or probing questions.</p>	<p>Mia will notify grantees about the status of their application once a decision is reached.</p> <p>She will issue a <a href="#">grant agreement</a> to each grantee and execute it on Docusign. Sample Email</p>	<p>Mia will communicate requirements for disbursement of funds to all grantees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Executed grant agreement</li><li>• W9</li><li>• Bill.com setup</li></ul>	<p>Mia will reach out to grantees within two weeks of disbursement to capture progress + emerging insights.</p> <p>Invite guests to join our slack instance and keep in touch with them there. They can ask us and each other questions and share what they're learning on the <a href="#">#remote-learning-resources</a> channel.</p> <p>Libby will capture the journey grantees are on to bring remote learning capabilities to their schools and school systems and make resources shareable.</p>

### Sample Grant Notification Email

We are excited to announce that you/your org is a grantee in our Remote Learning Innovation Fund. We will provide an initial grant of [insert amount] to fund the activities described in your grant proposal.

Our hope is that our support will not only impact the type and quality of learning that your students experience at this time but that the insights and learnings you will have had along the way can be shared with others facing the same challenges and opportunities across the region. Given that, we would love for you to 1) plan to codify and chronicle your journey--keep a folder with resources, take some footage of how it's playing out, etc and 2) be ready to synthesize some learnings and advice along the way. We can figure out a low-lift way to do this (ex: capture written reflections, hop on a call with a member of our team), but want you to keep this orientation of helping others build from your work as you dive in.

### Next Steps

1. Review and execute the attached agreement on Docusign. You will receive a separate email from Docusign to countersign the agreement.
2. Upon execution, you will receive an email from our Bill.com system inviting you to set up an ACH profile for direct payment or to enter additional information to receive a paper check.
3. Submit a completed [W-9](#) to [njohnson@theopportunitytrust.org](mailto:njohnson@theopportunitytrust.org); cc: [mhoward@theopportunitytrust.org](mailto:mhoward@theopportunitytrust.org)

Once the above steps are complete, you can expect disbursement in 10-14 days. We will set up a time to chat periodically about progress so we can provide thought partnership and learn what's working best as we share what's possible with others.

