

## Grant FAQ

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### Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

All District 834 teachers and staff, PreK through 12th grade, including Adult Basic Education. You do not need a typical classroom to be eligible to apply.

### Where do I submit my idea?

Applications are online at [www.partnershipplan.org/classroomgrants](http://www.partnershipplan.org/classroomgrants).

# What does the grant proposal look like?

We've designed the grant proposal to be as simple as possible while still providing us with the information we need to fully understand your request. The proposal is submitted through an online form. A copy of the questions is provided at the end of this FAQ. Feel free to copy these and paste them into your own Word document if it helps you write your proposal.

# Do I need approval from my principal/the district?

Yes. All grants require the support of the school principal/building leader, AND all grants will be reviewed at the district level to ensure they are aligned with district goals.

# When are applications due?

Grant applications open July 1 and are accepted on a rolling basis until funds are exhausted. Once all available funds are allocated, no additional grants will be awarded for that academic year.

# When are funds available?

Because grant applications are accepted on a rolling basis, our goal is to review them at monthly board meetings (e.g., applications received by October 31 will be reviewed in November). Once approved, funds are typically available immediately.

Since some months may not include a board meeting, the application will ask when funding is needed. Please be as specific as possible so we can plan accordingly. Keep in mind that all grants must be reviewed by both the Grants Committee and the Board of Directors, so the approval process generally takes a minimum of 30 days.

# What types of grants do you fund?

Most of our grants fall into the categories below, but we welcome any idea that enhances learning in your classroom, school, or across the district.

- Classroom Grants: These are typically small-scale, innovative projects that enrich classroom instruction and engage students in meaningful learning experiences. These grants enable teachers to enhance their existing curriculum, often by incorporating hands-on activities or creative approaches that bring lessons to life and inspire a sense of wonder in the classroom.

- Big Impact Grants: These are typically large-scale initiatives that benefit a wide range of students, often across multiple classrooms, grade levels, or school buildings. These grants may be proposed by teachers, staff, or district leaders with a vision to elevate educational opportunities and drive meaningful, system-wide improvements. We currently have two main subsets of Big Impact Grants- Mental Health Initiative Grants and Literacy Initiative Grants. Applicants are usually invited to apply to these specific subsets since it has a separate line on our budget.
- Other: Not sure where your idea fits? Select “Other” on the application, and we’ll help categorize it.

## What is the typical grant amount?

While not a strict rule, Classroom Grants are typically under \$1,000, while most other grants exceed that.

## What are you looking for in an application?

The Grants Committee prioritizes proposals that enhance student learning and demonstrate added educational value beyond what is currently offered. While creativity and innovation are encouraged, applicants shouldn't feel limited by those terms as our definition of “innovative” is broad and flexible. Don’t let the pursuit of something “new” hold you back from applying.

Strong proposals feature engaging instructional strategies—ideally aligned with academic standards—that have the potential to benefit students both now and in future years. The committee also evaluates the project’s cost per student, sustainability, including long-term viability, and reliance on consumable materials.

Our goal is to bring **wonder** to the classroom, and we achieve this by funding ideas that will excite students and encourage them to engage and learn.

The best applications are clear, concise, and straightforward. A strong application will clearly state:

- What do you want to buy with the grant funds.
- Total project costs (including shipping fees and/or taxes).
- What the students will learn (tie it to standards if applicable).
- How the proposal impacts and benefits students.
- The measurement(s) you will use to know whether the project is successful or not.

## Are there expenses these grants can’t pay for?

Yes, but there aren’t hard and fast rules. Our general goal is to fund “the extras”. In general, we **do not fund essential classroom needs or things that are included in regular district or school budgets**.

Here are a few examples of things we do not fund- this is not an exhaustive list.

- Meals, snacks, or refreshments for students or teachers
- Transportation
- Per Diems
- Hotel fees
- Field trips
- Salary for the grant recipient, district employee, or for any substitute teaching costs, even if the work proposed in the grant is “outside” the employee’s typical workday. (*Dollars CAN be used to pay stipends for professionals employed outside of District 834, such as artists-in-residence.*)
- Building/room construction or supplies (ie, movable walls, light covers, paint, whiteboards, etc.)
- Furniture, including flexible seating and storage items
- Playground/Jungle Gym equipment
- Technology (unless it’s a pilot project outside the school district’s budget)
- Online Subscriptions or Curriculum (unless it’s a pilot project outside the school district’s budget, and if the district supports implementing the project on a larger scale, if the grant proposal outcomes are successful).
- Books to expand classroom libraries (Although we can fund book proposals that support student engagement and enhance standards, with a secondary goal of benefiting as many students and schools as possible).

As you can see from this list, we aim to fund creative, fun learning experiences that go beyond standard classroom resources. There are going to be ideas, even innovative ones, that fall to the district to support. Our dollars are intended to fund extras that are beyond the normal standards. If you’re unsure whether your idea fits, reach out—we’re happy to help. A small spark can lead to something great!

## I’m stuck. Can you give me examples of Classroom Grants you’ve funded before?

- **Elementary Math-** This project provided an elementary classroom with tools to teach math in a more hands-on way. While the items purchased may be considered “toys”, the project wasn’t about getting toys in the classroom or providing manipulatives for the kids to play with during downtime. This project was funded because the teacher had a multi-tiered and well-thought-out lesson plan designed to deepen students’ understanding of math concepts (tied to standards).
- **Elementary Science-** This project provided a 1st grade classroom with tadpoles and all the tools necessary to grow them into frogs. This project was funded because it brought a hands-on way to teach science while also teaching students new Spanish words.
- **Elementary Art-** This project was funded because the teacher created a lesson plan that enhanced her art education lessons to make them more engaging at every grade level. The project was funded because the teacher worked with the PTO to purchase required consumables and came to TPP for the

items needed to bring the lessons to life. The teacher not only presented a fun way to teach standards to young students but also created ways for the students to show off their projects to parents, teachers, and fellow students.

- **Middle School Special Ed:** This grant provided sensory tools for nonverbal special ed students. It was funded because it proposed a new way to interact with students and teach them at their level. Just like the Elementary Math example above, it wasn't toys for the classroom. Rather, it was an innovative project that used toys to teach lessons in a new way.
- **Middle and High School Science/Math-** We funded two similar grants in the secondary science/math category. One purchased birdhouse supplies for middle schoolers, and the other purchased velocity cars for 9<sup>th</sup> graders. In both cases, the projects were designed so students could learn a science/math concept hands-on by building and designing. They were funded because they turned a normal lesson into a hands-on STEM project, combining science, math, and art. In both cases, the projects were 100% consumable in the first year (we bought supplies for one year and knew it wasn't going to be replicated in future years with additional students). However, in both cases, TPP chose to fund these projects due to the small size of the grants compared to the number of students impacted.
- **Middle School Literacy-** This grant purchased picture books exploring indigenous cultural topics. While TPP does not typically fund books, this proposal was supported because it was tied directly to the lesson plan, and it impacted hundreds of students each year.
- **High School Math-** This grant funded a lesson combining art, math, and the Native American Culture by creating moccasins. It was funded because it was unique and innovative, and engaged students to learn a subject in a new way. While this proposal required more funds than the average grant and did not serve as many students as other grants, it created a unique learning experience for students.

## How does The Partnership Plan differ from a PTA or booster club?

Every year, we receive many applications that clearly show a need and benefit to students. While we often agree that these proposals would be useful, as a mission-driven nonprofit, we can only fund the proposals that provide enhanced education. As the Educational Foundation for Stillwater Area Public Schools, we stay focused on education and fund grants that allow the kids to learn something NEW or learn it BETTER.

A PTA, PTO, parent group, booster club, etc., is a great resource for the everyday items you need that make your classroom run better. They are going to be your best resource for playground equipment, wiggle chairs, wireless microphones, toys, games, whiteboards, field trips, etc. A grant from The Partnership Plan is best used when you require something that will enhance the education you provide or bring your lesson to life.

# What happens to equipment & materials purchased by The Partnership Plan?

Anything purchased as part of a grant from The Partnership Plan is property of the school and the district, not the individual applying for the grant. If you move buildings, you need to ask your building principal for permission to take items with you. If you leave the district, the items purchased with these grants must stay in your school/classroom.

## If my grant is approved, how do I access funds?

You will receive detailed instructions for executing your grant upon approval. As you are thinking about your proposal, please note that we prefer that grantees use typical district purchasing procedures and funnel invoices through the building secretary. If you cannot purchase items through a source approved by the district, contact us in advance of the application to discuss options. When able, we will work with unique circumstances, **but it MUST be approved PRIOR to purchase**, and we prefer to know about it prior to grant approval. Please note- per district policy, purchases can not be made in May or June.

## What are my responsibilities if I receive a grant?

Grantees are typically required to submit a short report or summary at the end of the project, which may include photos, testimonials, and measurable results.

# SAMPLE 2025/26 GRANT APPLICATION

- Your Email:

## Applicant Information

- Your first and last name
- Your phone number
- Additional Applicant(s) Information- *Please list here any additional applicants. Please tell us their name, phone, and email address.*

## General Project Information

- Type of Grant Request- *Please help us understand what type of grant you are applying for. If you don't know, you can select Other and give us a brief explanation so we can help classify it.*
  - Classroom Grant used to impact one or a few classrooms
  - Big Impact Grant used to impact many classrooms or multiple buildings or something else on a large scale
  - Mental Health Initiative Grant
  - Literacy Initiative Grant
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Funding timeline- *Tell us when you'd need to be able to access funds- either a specific date you'd need money available or a general timeline such as "ASAP," "by X month", "before the start of the second semester", by next school year, etc.*
- Project Title
- School(s)- *Please select from the options provided all schools/buildings impacted.*
- Grade(s)- *Please select from the options provided all grade level(s) of students impacted*
- Number of classrooms DIRECTLY impacted
- Number of students DIRECTLY impacted

## Budget Information

- Grant Amount Requested- *Please enter here the TOTAL grant amount you are requesting from The Partnership Plan. (If your proposal is for multiple years of funding, please tell us the amount you are requesting PER YEAR.)*
- Other funders?- *Does the program have support from other funding sources? If yes, please explain.*
- Itemized Project Budget- *Please provide an itemized list of expenses this grant would fund, including any shipping or additional fees. Please clarify if any budget line items will be funded by another funder or source.*

## Project Description

- Brief Project Description- *Explain how this grant will work. Answer questions such as: What do you want to accomplish? What will it look like in the classroom? How will the students benefit? And/or anything else you think is important for us to know? Brevity is encouraged, but please make sure that*

*you explain yourself enough that we understand what you are asking us to fund and why it's important to your classroom and/or students.*

- *State Standards- Please share how this grant request aligns with and/or enhances your current curriculum. List any MN State Standards that will be supported with this grant.*
- *Supports Curriculum- Please tell us how this grant request supports the current curriculum.*
- *Enhanced Education- How is this idea innovative, or how does it enhance learning in the classroom?*
- *Sustainability- What does sustainability look like? Answer questions such as: Can it be replicated at other schools/classrooms? Do certain things need to be purchased each year for it to keep going? Is it a trial grant where, if success is shown, the project could be sustained outside of our funding? Would The Partnership Plan need to fund this annually to keep it going?*
- *Success/Evaluation- How will you evaluate the success of this project? How will you show that the students have increased learning?*

### **Odds and Ends**

- *Building Support- My building Principal/Administrator has reviewed this request and will support the program if funded.*
- *IMPORTANT- Every grant cycle, there are a few applicants who think they've applied, but the application doesn't get submitted correctly. We cannot fund grants we don't receive. Once you have successfully submitted this application, you will get an automated email that says your proposal has been submitted, AND it will include a copy of your proposal for your records. If you don't get this, we didn't get your proposal. It is your responsibility to ensure we get your application.*
- *Photos/Eval- I will provide The Partnership Plan with photos, communication, and evaluation information if I am awarded the funding for this grant.*
- *Will you be emailing OPTIONAL Attachment(s)- This is not required. However, sometimes applicants have an attachment- video, budget, a Word document with links to websites, etc.- they want to send us because they think it helps explain the proposal. If you have something to send, please select yes here and then email it to Sara Martin at [martins@partnershipplan.org](mailto:martins@partnershipplan.org).*

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