



TEACHER GRANT 2026-27 GUIDELINES & APPLICATION

GRANT OVERVIEW

Ithaca Public Education Initiative (IPEI) grants are intended to support direct experiences for students. In evaluating grant applications, considerations will be given to projects that intend to support one or more of the following:

- Joyful, creative learning opportunities
- Deepening of content knowledge and critical thinking
- Social justice and equity
- Affective growth (ex. empathy, agency, wisdom)
- Innovative, inspiring education

IPEI's Teacher Grants provide funding of up to **\$1750** during the academic year to Ithaca City School District (ICSD) teachers to implement an innovative educational project that directly enhances student learning and/or supports student achievement. Proposals must be designed in collaboration with at least one community partner, a person or organization without whom this grant could not occur and who provides expertise or experiences different from those of the classroom teacher.

Teacher Grant funds are intended to be primarily used to cover the community partner's Contract Services (ex. workshop fees, supplies provided by community partner, etc) related to the applicant's project but may also be used for other expenses including Supplies purchased through the school district. **Teacher Grants are not meant for teacher professional development.**

Grants will be awarded three times during the **2026-27** school year, using the following deadlines for application submissions:

- **Monday October 5, 2026**
Applicants and school principals are notified about funding decisions by Thursday Nov. 5, 2026.
Any funded projects must be completed by June 1, 2027 with a final grant report due on June 30, 2027.
- **Monday January 25, 2027**
Applicants and school principals are notified about funding decisions by Thursday March 4, 2027.
Any funded projects must be completed by June 15, 2027 with a final grant report due on June 30, 2027.
- **Monday March 29, 2027**
Applicants and school principals are notified about funding decisions by Thursday April 29, 2027.
Any funded projects must be completed by Dec. 1, 2027 with a final grant report due on Dec. 30, 2027.

Applications are due by midnight of each deadline day and must be submitted through [this Google Form](#).

A copy of the application will be sent to the applicant as well as the applicant's school principal.

Any questions should be directed to ipei@ipei.org.



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GRANT REVIEW PANEL & CRITERIA

A panel of local community members including IPEI Board members, past ICSD teachers, ICSD students, and community volunteers with insight provided by representatives of the ICSD administration and/or the Ithaca Teachers Association will review grant applications and make recommendations for funding with the highest priority given to applications that:

- Clearly articulate student learning outcomes and goals
- Demonstrate a strong tie between the project being funded and the classroom or school curriculum
- Clearly articulate the role and impact of the community partner
- Involve project-based or hands-on learning experiences for students
- Offer an innovative idea, approach, or resource to enhance student learning
- Show an intention to support one or more of the following: joyful, creative learning opportunities; deepening of content knowledge and critical thinking; social justice and equity; affective growth (ex. empathy, agency, wisdom); innovative, inspiring education
- Exhibit potential for long-term impact (how might this project serve as a model for other classrooms/schools?)

IPEI will give preference to applicants who have been awarded less than 3 IPEI grants in the past, if all applications recommended for funding exceed available funds in any given grants cycle.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE GRANT

IPEI funds project-related materials or contract service fees for visiting community members or organizations. **Requests for basic materials as part of your classroom or department should be submitted to the district through Department Chairs or School Principals.** Principals will be made aware of all grant applications as soon as they are submitted.

1. Applicants for Teacher Grants must be ICSD teachers.
2. Applicants must apply with a community partner or partners. The community partner(s) must be identified prior to the grant deadline and contact information included in the application.
3. Applicants may only be awarded only one Teacher Grant per school year. Once that grant is concluded and the final summary report has been submitted, an applicant may apply for another grant in the following school year. Applicants whose applications are not awarded are encouraged to apply again in a future grant cycle.
4. IPEI Teacher Grant applicants may receive up to 3 years of funding for the same project.
5. If funds are available, separate requests for the same project for multiple classrooms will be considered; however, the supporting rationale will be needed as well as the principal's approval.
6. The following are **generally not supported by IPEI Grants** (IPEI reserves the right to make exceptions in some cases):
 - a. Professional development
 - b. Food (unless there is a direct tie to student learning such as cooking food together to learn about a community's culture or growing an edible garden)

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- c. Prizes
 - d. Equipment such as TVs, computers, tablets, etc. which are typically available through the school district
 - e. Payments to other ICSD teachers
 - f. Funding for overnight field trips
 - g. After school programs and clubs
 - h. Summer projects
 - i. Transportation costs
 - j. Extension of an approved grant that is not completed, into the following year
 - k. More than 3 years of funding for the same project
 - l. Acquisitions or activities that are normally funded by the school district
7. Grant funds must be used only for the purpose stated in the approved application request. Once awarded, any significant adjustments to the budget or project scope must first be approved by IPEI.
8. Funds not expended within a year of grant award notification are to be returned to IPEI.
9. Applicants and school building principals will be notified via email regarding the decision of whether or not their application is approved for funding (see page 1 for notification dates for each grants cycle).
10. Funds disbursement and purchasing process:
 - a. Approved projects will be sent a Grant Contract to complete and sign. The Grant Contract must be completed in order for funds to be released for your project.
 - b. Funds will be managed through the ICSD Business Office. Applicants work with their school's office staff and the ICSD Business Office to create Purchase Orders.
 - c. Please note, your project may be eligible for BOCES State Aid Return either through [Arts-in-Education](#) or [Exploratory Enrichment](#). Eligible projects will allow for ICSD to receive return funds to use for future BOCES-aidable expenses. This process will require an additional form from the applicant which will be coordinated with the ICSD Business office.
11. Any durable materials or equipment purchased with IPEI grant funds become the property of ICSD.
12. Fees or honorarium, to compensate for services provided negotiated between the applicant and any partner, should not exceed \$100 per hour. Consideration will be given to fee requests in excess of that cap on an individual basis *if a separate letter of rationale is provided*. Whenever possible, fees paid to community partners will be made utilizing the BOCES State Aid Return process. Partners should contact BOCES to complete the necessary tax paperwork to become a vendor.
13. A Grant Summary Report must be submitted electronically within 30 days of completion of the awarded project. Failure to submit a final report by report deadline will jeopardize future grant applications.
14. IPEI reserves the right to publicize information about the awarded application and project. Applicants are expected to acknowledge the Ithaca Public Education Initiative (IPEI) in any publicity related to their awarded project. IPEI encourages awardees to invite IPEI staff and Board Members to events related to the awarded project.



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GRANT APPLICATION

[Apply Here!](#)

IPEI strongly recommends that applicants create a rough draft document where you can respond to the questions below and then copy and paste them into the above Google Form application when the time comes to apply. Click [here](#) to make a copy of the [26-27 IPEI Teacher Grant Application Worksheet](#) to use for your draft.

Applicant Information:

1. Are you an ICSD teacher? Yes/No
2. Name:
3. Job Title:
4. Subject Area:
5. Grade Level(s):
6. Email Address:
7. Personal Phone Number (should not be school's number):
8. Have you received an IPEI grant in the past? Yes/No/Unsure

School Information:

9. Name of School:
10. Name of Principal:
11. Email of Principal:

Community Partner Information:

12. Community Partner Name:
13. Address of Community Partner:
14. Community Partner Phone Number:
15. Community Partner Email Address:
16. Community Partner Website (or link to their bio and resume or CV):

Project Information: Short answer:

Please respond to the following questions using 1 sentence or less

17. Title of project:
18. Describe the project in one sentence (this description will be included in any publicity regarding your grant):
19. Grade level(s) actively involved in project (this may be different from grades who may watch a final product or performance or otherwise be involved indirectly):
20. Total number of students actively involved in project (this may be different from number of people who may watch a final product or performance, attend an open house where students will share about the project, etc.):
21. If this project will engage more than one classroom, please list the names and grades of the other teachers involved.

Project Information: Longer answer

Respond to the following questions using no more than 250 words for each numbered question.

NOTE: ANY PERSON or PRODUCT involved, paid, or purchased in the budget section responses should also appear in this narrative section.



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22. Learning Goals

In your response, please address the following in no more than 250 words total:

- a. What student learning goals will this project support?
- b. How will the project activities align with the intention of IPEI grants to support **at least one** of the following: joyful, creative learning opportunities; deepening content knowledge and critical thinking; social justice and equity; affective growth (empathy, agency, wisdom); or innovative, inspiring education?

23. Project Scope

In your response, please address the following in no more than 250 words total:

- a. What will students actively make or do with the community partner as part of this project?
- b. How much time will the community partner spend with students and for how long? (ex. "Community partner will conduct 10, 45-minute sessions each week with students starting in December and culminating in a 1 hour showcase in mid-May")
- c. How many hours of work is the community partner putting into the project? (ex. "7.5 hours of direct instruction with students, 5 hours of planning time, 3 hours of meeting time with teachers, and 3 hours for the culminating showcase for a total of 18.5 hours")
- d. Will there be a presentation or showcase at the end of this project? If so please include a proposed date/time.

24. Community Partner

In your response, please address the following in no more than 250 words total:

- a. Why did you choose your community partner?
- b. What skills or expertise will this partner bring to the project?

25. Curricular Connections

In your response, please address the following in no more than 250 words total:

- a. What curriculum or grade-level standards will this project address? *Include at least one specific curriculum goal or grade level standard connected to this project.*
- b. How will this project enhance your teaching of this curriculum and/or address this grade-level standard?

26. Additional Project Funding (required for IPEI-awarded projects seeking 2nd or 3rd year funding)

If you are submitting this grant for a second or third year of funding for a previous project, identify lessons learned from past experience, specific changes and/or improvements for this year's iteration, and/or any relevant information to aid in the grant review panel's decision to award additional project funding.

Project Budget Overview

ANY PERSON, ORGANIZATION or PRODUCT mentioned in the prior narrative that needs to be purchased as part of your IPEI Teacher Grant project should also appear in the project budget. Complete this section carefully, identifying where and how IPEI grant funds will be used if approved.

Please note the following:

- The budget expense categories align with those of the district budget office. It is anticipated that most budget expenses will fall under the Supplies or Contract Services categories.



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- IPEI believes in the value of supporting local economies and requests that grant recipients work to identify, whenever possible, local and small businesses who can supply requested materials first before utilizing large corporate chains or retailers.
- Whenever possible, fees paid to community partners should be made utilizing the BOCES State Aid Return process to maximize funding. Community partners will need to contact BOCES to complete the necessary tax paperwork.
- Fees or honorarium, to compensate for services provided negotiated between the applicant and any partner, should not exceed \$100 per hour. Consideration will be given to fee requests in excess of that cap on an individual basis *if a separate letter of rationale is provided*.

27. **Amount requested from IPEI not exceeding \$1750: \$**

28. **Estimated total project budget: \$**

29. **Other Funders** (required if the estimated total project budget is more than the amount requested from IPEI)
If the estimated total project budget is more than the amount requested from IPEI, please write in source(s) of additional funding, amount(s) of funding, and indicate if the funding is either confirmed or pending (ex. PTA, \$500, confirmed).

30. Would you accept partial funding for this project?

If yes, what is the minimum amount you can accept to be able to continue with this project?

31. **Budget Narrative**

In your response, please address the following in no more than 250 words total:

- a. What will IPEI Teacher Grant funding be used for? Include specific details and rationale related to community partner hours, supplies, supply vendors, etc.

32. **Itemized Project Budget:** IPEI provides up to 5 Expense Item Lines within the application.

What are you paying for? Expense Items should be unique to each vendor (ex. Ace Hardware, Buffalo Street Books, etc).

- Ex. If you would like to buy multiple books from the same bookstore, you can enter the word "Books" here and provide more detail in the expense detail question.
- Ex. If you plan to buy art supplies from the same store, you can enter "Art supplies" and share more detail as to what kind of supplies (15 sets of watercolor paints, 50 sheets of watercolor paper, etc) in the expense detail question.
- Ex. If you intend to have a visiting individual or organization who will supply materials and include project admin and hours within their fee, you can enter "Fee for Services" and provide details about their services in the expense detail question.



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Expense Item <i>(What are you paying for?)</i>	ICSD Expense Category <i>(Supplies, Contract Services, or Other)</i>	Cost	Anticipated Vendor <i>(Who/where are you paying/purchasing?)</i>	Expense Detail <i>(Details including a brief description, number of items, and optional link to the item)</i>
<i>Example: Service Fees</i>	<i>Contract Services</i>	<i>\$1750</i>	<i>Amazing Organization</i>	<i>Includes \$500 for student science kits for 50 students; a total of 8, 1-hr workshops, and 10 hours of prep and meeting time.</i>

Application Submission Procedure

In submitting this grant application, you are confirming that this application has the approval of all involved parties including the building principal(s) and teachers involved.

Following submission, you and your school's principal will receive a digital version of your application form.

Please allow 2 business days for this form to appear in your email inbox. Contact ipei@ipei.org with any questions.

By affixing a digital signature to your application, you acknowledge agreement with the terms related to the IPEI Teacher Grants as listed in this Guidelines and Application document.