STEM and Technology Grants for California K-12 Teachers

How to find classroom funding and write eye-catching grant applications to support innovative STEM projects
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Schools across the country continue to emphasize the importance of preparing students for a career in STEM. Looking at the past and future growth of STEM jobs, it's no wonder why this is a crucial initiative.

**The STEM Career Boom**

- **21.4% growth** over the past decade in STEM occupations vs 4% growth in the overall job market
- **9% estimated growth** in STEM job market from 2014-2024
- **STEM workers earn on average 29% more** than non-STEM counterparts

However, to best prepare students for a STEM career, teachers have to keep up with the shifting requirements of the workplace. And in the 21st century, STEM jobs increasingly rely on the use of technology and software solutions. Unfortunately, many technical tools are expensive to purchase, and schools in the state of California face funding challenges.

California spends approximately **$10,291 per student** vs the national average of **$12,252 per student**

In K-12 spending as a share of state economy, **California ranked 37th**

Source: California Budget and Policy Center

External funding can help schools purchase the tools they need to meet state standards and prepare students for a career in STEM

Private organizations and foundations have mobilized to fill the funding gap and help teachers get access to the tools that support innovative STEM curricula. However, we recognize that teachers already have more than a full-time job, which leaves very little time to search for grants, research their requirements, and write the application.

This guide will shorten that process, providing teachers with a list of grants available for California schools, important requirements, and tips for streamlining the grant writing process.
We’ve scoured the Internet to find STEM and technology grants available for teachers in the state of California. Some of these organizations only accept applications from teachers in certain districts or areas of the state, which we’ve called out with the tag “district-specific.” The rest of the grants listed accept applications from teachers throughout California, and these opportunities are marked with the “statewide” tag. The applications appear in order of application deadline, and any grants that accept applications on a rolling basis are at the end.

### District-Specific

**Arcadia Educational Foundation Mini Grants**
- Applications accepted Nov. through Jan. 17
- [Grant website](#)
- They provide mini grants totalling approx. $25,000
- Available for the Arcadia Unified School District

The Arcadia Educational Foundation’s purpose is to raise funds for the Arcadia Unified School District. AEF runs the annual summer school program and offers $25,000 in teacher grants each year.

**Kinder Morgan Foundation**
- Applications accepted the 10th of every other month, starting in January
- [Grant website](#)
- Grants are between $1,000 and $5,000
- Available for schools in communities where Kinder Morgan has operations

Kinder Morgan’s goal is to help today’s science, math and music students become the engineers, educators and musicians who will support their diverse communities for many years to come.

**SBCEO Teacher Innovation Grants**
- Applications due Jan. 25
- [Grant website](#)
- Grants are $500
- Available for Santa Barbara County Education Office teachers

The Teacher Innovation Fund provides grants for Santa Barbara County Education Office teachers to creatively explore new ways of helping students learn. Teachers can use the grant money for enriching curriculum, developing a new project, participating in professional development, and more.
DISTRICT-SPECIFIC

California Retired Teachers Association Grants (CalRTA)

- Applications accepted at three times throughout the year: Feb. 6, Sept. 12, Nov. 7
- Grant website
- They provide 25 grants of $100 each

Three times each school year, CalRTA sponsors teacher grants to support classroom activities. There is a 30-second entry form, and funding is provided no strings attached.

DISTRICT-SPECIFIC

Community Foundation for Monterey County — Community Impact Grants

- Applications accepted the first Friday in February and August
- Grant website
- Grants amounts are between $12,001 and $50,000
- Available for schools in Monterey County

The Community Impact Grants fund area projects that have the potential to accomplish meaningful results and impact one of their funding priority areas, which includes children and youth (ages 0-5 and grades K-12).

STATEWIDE

W.M. Keck Foundation — The Southern California Program

- Applications due Feb. 15 for a June decision or Aug. 15 for a December decision
- Grant website
- Grant amounts range between $100,000 to $1 million
- Available for schools in the greater Los Angeles area

The Southern California Program seeks to promote the education and healthy development of children and youth, strengthen families and enhance the lives of people in the greater Los Angeles area through its support of organizations that provide arts and cultural enrichment, civic and community services, early childhood and pre-collegiate education, and healthcare.

DISTRICT-SPECIFIC

Community Foundation for Monterey County — Small Grants Program

- Applications accepted the first Friday in March and September
- Grant website
- Grant amounts are between $5,000 and $12,000
- Available for schools in Monterey County

The Community Impact Grants fund area projects that have the potential to accomplish meaningful results and impact one of their funding priority areas, which includes children and youth (ages 0-5 and grades K-12).
The Eastman Foundation Grants
- Application due July 31
- Grant website
- Grant amounts not specified

The Foundation believes in creating educational opportunities that help prepare and inspire students to excel. By leveraging their resources and strategic initiatives, they can maximize the collective impact of educational initiatives focused on science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM).

Palm Springs Unified School District Foundation
- Application due Sept. 18
- Grant website
- Grants range from $500 to $2,500
- Available for Palm Springs Unified School District

These grants are all about giving students the skills they need to get 21st century jobs, giving them the analytic and creative capacity to succeed in classrooms and life beyond graduation. Grants have funded everything from puppet theaters, science labs, and 3D printers to theatrical scrims for auditoriums, digital imaging laptops, and field trips.

Berkeley Public Schools Fund Classroom Grants
- Application open Aug. 15 through Sept. 30
- Grant website
- Grants worth approximately $500,000
- Available for Berkeley Unified School District

Berkeley directly supports teachers as a means to help students succeed. The Classroom Grants are designed to set teachers up with the materials they need. In evaluating grants, they look for a clear and detailed description of the project, its budget, and how the funds will be used.

PEF Impact Grant Program
- Application deadline is Oct. 1
- Grant website
- Grants are approximately $15,000
- Available for Petaluma area schools

The PEF Impact Grant Program funds enriching academic experiences for area schools in response to major budget deficits throughout the California school system. Since the organization’s inception in 1983, PEF has awarded $3,382,665 to Petaluma schools through the annual PEF Grant Program.
**DISTRICT-SPECIFIC**

**Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) Competitive Grant Program**
- Application open Aug. 22 through Oct. 17
- [Grant website](#)
- Grants can be up to $500,000
- Available for each of the 11 California County Superintendents Educational Service Association service regions

The purpose of the SSAE Competitive Grant Program is to encourage and support eligible districts and public charter schools to increase the capacity of school districts to provide all students with access to well-rounded educational opportunities; support safe and healthy students; and/or support the effective use of technology.

**California Credit Union Teacher Grants**
- Application due Oct. 19
- [Grant website](#)
- 20 grants of up to $500
- Available for Los Angeles and San Diego county teachers

This grant is designed to assist educators by funding innovative learning opportunities for their students. Schools benefiting from last year’s program used the funds toward initiatives such as special education, business concepts, solar energy, water conservation, and literacy.

**Weyerhaeuser Giving Fund**
- Application due Oct. 30
- [Grant website](#)
- Grants are at minimum $1,000
- Available for schools in Fontana, Long Beach, Sacramento, and Stockton

Weyerhaeuser supports communities where they have a significant presence or business interest. The majority of their funding is in four focus areas: education and youth development, affordable housing and shelter, environmental stewardship, human services, civic and cultural growth.

**Monterey Peninsula Sunrise Rotary Club’s Project Helping Hands**
- Application open Sept. 1 through Nov. 30
- [Grant website](#)
- Grants provide approx. $500 per classroom
- Available for city of Monterey public school teachers

Teachers from Bay View Academy, La Mesa Elementary School, Monte Vista Elementary School, Foothill Elementary School, Walter Colton Middle School, and Monterey High School are encouraged to submit grant requests for the purchase of materials, the support of specific projects, or to support general enhancements of students’ educational experiences.

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**STATEWIDE**

**Corning Incorporated Foundation Grant**
- Applications accepted on a rolling basis
- [Grant website](#)
- Grant amounts not specified

The Foundation puts specific focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) and STEAM (which includes the arts) curricula, as well as workforce development programs that lead to productive career paths for young adults.

**DISTRICT-SPECIFIC**

**Dean Witter Foundation**
- Applications accepted on a rolling basis; decisions make quarterly
- [Grant website](#)
- Grant amounts not specified
- Available for schools in Northern California

The Foundation funds promising academic projects in Northern California schools that are replicable across educational institutions; cultivate meaningful advances in the delivery of curriculum; inspire educational leaders to improve schools; and are evidence-based.

**DISTRICT-SPECIFIC**

**Dean and Margaret Lesher Foundation**
- Applications accepted on a rolling basis
- [Grant website](#)
- Grants amounts cannot exceed 35% of the school’s total budget
- Available for schools in Contra Costa County

The Foundation is dedicated to improving the quality of life in Contra Costa County through educational and cultural endeavors and to support children and strengthen families.

**DISTRICT-SPECIFIC**

**Dwight Stuart Youth Fund**
- Applications accepted on a rolling basis
- [Grant website](#)
- Grant amounts not specified
- Available for schools in Los Angeles County

The mission of the Dwight Stuart Youth Fund (DSYF) is to support organizations in Los Angeles County that provide direct services and experiences to underserved children and youth so they can gain the values, skills, and confidence to achieve their potential.
DISTRICT-SPECIFIC

KLA-Tencor Foundation Grants
- Applications accepted on a rolling basis
- [Grant website]
- Grant amounts not specified

Available for schools located in communities where KLA-Tencor employees live and do business, which includes Hayward, CA and Milpitas, CA.

STATEWIDE

SolidProfessor Technology Grant
- Available year-round
- [More information]
- Every school receives a significantly discounted membership to SolidProfessor

Engineering students are expected to know more now than ever. SolidProfessor helps connect the dots between theory and software to set students up for success in the workforce. Online training courses are provided at an extremely discounted price for classrooms, schools, and school districts.

DISTRICT-SPECIFIC

Wells Fargo California Grants
- Application deadlines depend on the school's region in California
- [Grant website]
- Grant amounts not specified
- Available for specific counties in the following regions: Central Valley, East Bay Inland and Greater San Jose, Greater Los Angeles and Coastal, Greater San Francisco, Inland Empire, Northern California, Orange County, and San Diego

This funding supports organizations that promote academic achievement for low- and moderate-income students, with an emphasis on K-12, encouraging access to technical, postsecondary education opportunities. These grants also help providing training for teachers and administrators working with low- and moderate-income students.

Additional Resources
- **StemFinity**: This website provides a list of STEM grants for each state and at the national level.
- **GrantSpace**: Find examples of winning cover letters, letters of inquiry, letter proposals, proposal budgets, and full proposals.
- **Grammarly**: Get access to free editing software to ensure applications are error-free.
- **Grant Geek Blog**: Brush up on grant writing tips and tricks through these educational blog posts from professional grant writers.
7 Tips for Writing a Winning Grant Application

This grant writing guide will help educators streamline the grant writing process and create quality proposals in less time.

Let’s face it: Grant writing isn’t anyone’s favorite task. It takes time, coordination, and data analytics, and there’s no guarantee that anything will come out of all that work. With practice and a strong grant writing strategy, however, educators can streamline the writing process by thinking strategically about the grant application before putting pen to paper. These tips are designed to help educators create high-quality grant applications and win funding without spending months on each application.

1. Start with local grants and work your way up to the national level

When searching for grant opportunities, educators should prioritize grants designated for their specific district and get broader from there. The more localized the grant, the better chance a teacher has at obtaining that funding. There’s usually less competition and, in many cases, teachers benefit from a more personal relationship with the grant provider.

2. Focus the grant application on creative, innovative projects

While most educators’ classrooms would likely benefit from new colored pencils, better light bulbs, and other day-to-day supplies, those aren’t the types of requests that win funding. Granters tend to choose innovative projects that will have a measurable impact. The more creative a project is, the easier it will be to get grant providers excited about funding it.

Example: An educator is requesting funding to purchase a specific eLearning tool. Rather than forming an application around the tool itself, the educator explains that they want to fund an immersive engineering design course that gives hands-on engineering training to their students. At the end of the course, the student is prepared to take the software’s certification exam, getting them even closer to a career in engineering.

3. Incorporate the granter’s frequently used keywords in the application

Educators should pay close attention to the phrases and words frequently used by the granter and incorporate those terms into their application. This signals to the grant reader that the application aligns with their primary goals. It also helps the application stand out in a search, as the granter will often sort through applications based on the key terms that are most important to them.

Example: In the California Credit Union Teacher’s Grant, they frequently use the phrase “innovative learning opportunities.” Incorporating “innovative learning opportunities” into the application a few times will help the reviewers know that the application aligns with their key goals.

Common Keywords in Classroom Grants

STEM, STEAM, innovative, professional development, underserved communities, career in STEM, career-readiness, college preparation, workforce development programs, pre-collegiate education, youth development, solutions, diverse communities, enriching curriculum, evidence-based
Consider the granter’s level of expertise when writing the application

Teachers need to get a good grasp on who their audience is so they can tailor their application based on the reviewers’ familiarity with education terms and acronyms. If acronyms and industry terms must be used in an application that will be reviewed by a non-industry board, teachers should provide a quick explanation of each term.

Create an emotional connection to the project

When reviewers have to look through hundreds, maybe thousands, of grant applications, the ones that really stand out are those that create an emotional response. Writers can use our simple template “Your Pocket Guide to Emotion-based Writing” to get started.

Example: “I grew up in an underserved community, and I never expected to get a postsecondary education until I met my 7th grade science teacher. She created the most amazing, hands-on lab experiments and I was hooked. Fast forward 15 years, and now I’m that science teacher who wants to generate a passion for learning in my at-risk students and introduce them to careers in STEM. However, because so many STEM fields rely on technology, it’s difficult to make sure my students are career-ready without having those technologies in the classroom. A 3D printer would enable my students to use a wide range of STEM skills — in particular, math and engineering design — in a way that’s fun, engaging, and hands-on. By providing the funding for our 3D printer, you can help students get excited about STEM and set them up for success in their career and in life.”

Make sure the application is proofread multiple times

Grant applications are long and complicated, and most of the time, they require multiple reviews before they are ready to submit. The writer should have at least one other person proofread for grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure.

Tip: There are a couple ways technology can help with the proofreading process. Copy and paste text into Google Translate, set both sides to English, and have the bot read the copy out loud. This is a great way to detect any awkward phrasing or typos. Writers can also download the Grammarly plug-in. Copy and paste all text into a Grammarly document, and the site will find the grammar and spelling errors missed by the traditional Microsoft Word spell check.

Learn from each application and keep at it

Very few grant writers will get funding for every project they apply to. However, each application can provide insights into what works and what doesn’t, informing the writing of future applications. Not sure why a grant application didn’t get accepted? Reach out to the primary point of contact and ask what could have been improved in the proposal.
How to Take Advantage of SolidProfessor’s Technology Grant Program

SolidProfessor provides in-depth, online training courses that align with current industry standards.

At SolidProfessor, we’re passionate about educating the next generation of engineers. Through our online engineering training courses, we help students and teachers familiarize themselves with the engineering practices used in the industry today. Teachers can choose from 5,000+ SolidProfessor courses based on the age and skill level of their students, their goals, the type of engineering software they’re using, and more. Our SolidProfessor Technology Grant Program ensures that schools across the country can afford our training courses.

What is the SolidProfessor Technology Grant Program?

SolidProfessor provides schools access to our Library of online courses for approximately 90% off the regular price. The SolidProfessor Technology Grant Program is currently being utilized by classrooms, schools, and school districts across the country. Our courses integrate into Project Lead the Way Curriculum, and they can be customized based on users’ unique needs.

How does this grant benefit teachers and students?

To put it simply: Engineering software programs are not easy to understand! And even if a student or teacher has a basic understanding of how to use an engineering software solution, there’s always so much more to learn and explore. Our team of professional engineers dives deeply into each of the software programs to create our educational materials. Students can embark on a course dedicated to teaching a specific concept or they can learn about broader engineering theories.

Expert tip: SolidProfessor provides training courses that prepare students for industry certifications, giving them an instant head start when they move on to their postsecondary education and the career field.

Contact Us About the SolidProfessor Technology Grant

Find out how SolidProfessor’s Technology Grant can benefit your school. Simply contact us for more information and to get a free demo.

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