



Great Ideas Grant Program

What is the Great Ideas Grant Program?

The Great Ideas Grant Program is a cornerstone of The Helena Education Foundation's mission to enrich education in the Helena Public Schools. It is designed to put money directly into the hands of classroom teachers, helping educators take ideas for innovative teaching strategies and make them a reality. Specific goals include:

- supporting and encouraging teachers to infuse new elements of creativity into their classroom;
- helping teachers extend student learning beyond the limitations of textbooks;
- encouraging teachers to strengthen ties between the classroom, other teachers, parents, students and the larger community;
- providing funds for projects to enhance student learning that would otherwise not be possible within the District budget or with any other funding source.

Who is Eligible?

All full or part-time teachers employed by the Helena School District are eligible to apply for Great Ideas Grants. Support personnel, students, parents, administrators and community members are encouraged to partner with teachers, though they may not submit a grant as the primary applicant. Applicants may apply as individuals or as part of a group. Educators within specific grades as well as across grade levels, subjects and schools are encouraged to collaborate. There is no limit to the number of applications that may be submitted by individuals or groups.

If a grant recipient transfers within the district during the grant period, the funding may travel with the teacher. If a grant recipient leaves the district, the funding will be left with the school and classroom or revert back to the Foundation. The decision will be based on the ability of the school or teacher to continue the project.

Grant applications must be approved by the school principal.

It's Easy to Apply!

The application process is available online or you can print the application and send as an attachment to hef@mt.net by the deadline. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact the HEF office at (406)443-2545. Individual assistance is available prior to each application period for potential applicants to understand the funding criteria and how to prepare a high quality application.

Grant Amounts

Individual grant recipients may receive up to \$1000 while collaborative grant recipients may apply for funding up to \$3000. Occasionally, due to unclear requests on the grant application or requests to adjust budget items, grant recipients may receive only partial funding and will be asked to revise their budgets.

NOTE: Grant recipients will not be reimbursed for any costs of the project above the grant award or for those expenses or items not included in the proposed budget.

Grant Period:

Grant recipients have 12 months from the time of the award to complete their project and use grant funds. Funds not used by that time will be returned to the Foundation and redistributed through the application process.

How Many Grants Will be Awarded?

Up to \$40,000 will be awarded to teachers in the Helena School District each year. The number of awards will vary depending on the total funds requested, the quality of the applications and the funding available.

When are the Grant Applications Due and When are Awards Given?

Please visit www.hefmt.org for upcoming application deadlines or call 443-2545. Successful applicants will be notified within 45 days of the grant application deadline. No funds will be made available prior to the announcement of grants awarded.

How Are Grant Applications Reviewed?

Grants applications will be reviewed anonymously by a committee of volunteers determined by the Board of Directors of the Helena Education Foundation. The committee may include: Foundation Board members, Honorary Foundation Board members, Foundation donors, community members and educators within the Helena School District. The review process will follow a standard protocol determined by the Foundation. No quotas will be set by school, grade or subject matter and each application will be evaluated individually and on its own merits, subject to the grant application format and grant review criteria below.

See page 4 for the attached rating form used by committee members.

On What Criteria Will Grants Be Awarded?

Priority will be given to projects that:

- Are new projects, not current or past programs for which funding is no longer available;
- Promote effective and innovative teaching and challenge teachers to improve student performance;
- Show evidence of teacher growth and development as a professional educator;
- Show collaboration with other teachers, parents, business, and/or community individuals or groups;
- Are not ongoing programs for which Foundation funding will be needed;
- Are student centered.

Applications must:

- Have clear, understandable project goals and outcomes and a reasonable plan;
- Relate to district, state or national standards which should be identified;
- Clearly describe what students will know and be able to do as a result of the project;
- Show a timeline and a clear plan to assess student performance;
- Describe how project results will be shared with other educators;
- Include budget items that are reasonable and directly support the activities explaining how grant funds will be spent;
- Explain how programs will be sustained following the grant period;
- Have a comprehensive evaluation component; Include signatures of the school administrator and all those who will be involved in the project.

What Type of Grants Will be Funded?

- Pilot Projects: projects that may have District or school-wide implications once the grant period of over.
- High Risk Student Programs: projects that focus on helping students at high risk.
- Classroom Projects: projects for improving student performance in a classroom setting, including collaboration with other teachers, parents, etc.
- School Collaboration: projects that combine collaboration between grade levels and a classroom activity or an entire school activity.
- Community Collaboration: projects that combine school improvement activities with area business and/or community partners.
- Peer Mentorships: experienced teachers partnering with early career teachers to develop innovative teaching activities.
- Business Mentorships: partnerships with business mentors to increase teaching effectiveness through training and hands-on learning.

What may grant funds be used for?

Grant funds may be used for the following:

- materials and supplies that cannot be acquired by any other means such as those normally funded by the Helena School District;
- books;
- audio-visual materials;
- computer software and peripherals;
- equipment;
- local field trips;
- honoraria for experts who work with students

Grant funds may NOT be used for:

- monetary awards for students;
- District-provided textbooks and materials, computers;
- workshop or professional development fees;
- stipends for District employees for activities outside school hours;
- substitute teachers during the working day unless teachers are out with a class involved in the grant project.

NOTE: Equipment and other materials purchased with grant funds (other than those consumed during the project) become the property of the Helena School District. Findings, publications or other scholarly works that are generated as a result of a funded project are the property of the grant recipient(s).

Standards for Service

The Helena Education Foundation set these service standards for the grant program. We will:

- Assist all applicants whenever possible to develop a high quality application through grant writing workshops or individual assistance by phone or in person.
- Treat all applicants with courtesy and efficiency.
- Respond to inquiries and correspondence promptly.
- Provide clear and accurate information about our policies and procedures.
- Promptly acknowledge receipt of your application.
- Ensure that all eligible applications are reviewed thoughtfully and fairly.

We welcome your comments on how we are meeting these standards.

Helena Education Foundation Great Ideas Grant Review Form

Application No. _____ Funding Requested: \$ _____
Project Title: _____

	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Comments
Section 1: JUSTIFICATION (20 pts)			
A. Project Need	10		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic need and target population • Special or unique need 			
B. Purpose of Project	10		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipated impact and how will improve student achievement • Link with curriculum and school goals 			
SECTION 2: RELEVANCE TO GOALS (40 pts)			
A. Creativity and Innovation	15		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different from usual classroom approach • New elements of creativity 			
B. Extension of Student Learning Beyond Class	10		
C. Collaboration	10		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative partners and their roles • Why selected and what do they add to the project 			
D. Availability of Other Funding	5		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigated other sources • Why District funds not available 			
SECTION 3: PROJECT DESCRIPTION (25 pts)			
A. Design	20		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities to accomplish project • Calendar & timeline of major activities • How integrated into curriculum • How use materials budgeted for • Types of personnel and strengths 			
B. Budget: Itemized budget, sources, in-kind donations, total budget requested	5		
SECTION 4: EVALUATION, DISSEMINATION, FUTURE PLANS (15 pts)			
A. Evaluation: Measurement of success, assessment of student progress, benchmarks	5		
B. Dissemination: How share with colleagues; use by others; how can share what is learned	5		
C. Future Plans for Expansion, Replication	5		
TOTAL POINTS	100		