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**GREAT IDEAS GRANTS PROGRAM**

What is the Great Ideas Grant Program?

The Great Ideas Grant Program is designed to encourage and support innovative teaching strategies to:

* infuse new elements of creativity into their classrooms
* extend student learning beyond the limitations of existing curriculum materials
* to strengthen ties among the classroom, other teachers, parents, students and the larger community
* enhance student learning in ways otherwise not be possible within the District budget or with any other funding source

**Who is Eligible?**

* full or part-time teachers employed by the Helena School District are eligible to apply for Great Ideas Grants
* applicants may apply as individuals or as part of a group
* support personnel, students, parents, administrators, and community members and/or organizations may partner with teachers, but may not submit a grant as the primary applicant

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 remain with the classroom/grade or revert to the Foundation. All grant applications must be approved by the school principal.

Grant Amounts

* $1,250 for individual grants
* $5,000 for collaborative grants involving multiple classes and/or schools

Occasionally, 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 projects and use grant funds.

**How Many Grants Will Be Awarded?**

Up to $40,000 is awarded to teachers in the Helena School District each year. The number of awards depends 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](http://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.

What Type of Grants Will be Funded?

* all projects must be student-centered
* pilot projects: projects that may have District or school-wide implications once the grant period is 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 classrooms
* community collaboration: projects that combine school improvement activities with area business and/or community partners

**Grant funds may be used for the following:**

* materials and experiences that enhance learning beyond that which is publicly funded.

**Grant funds may NOT be used for:**

* monetary awards for students
* district-provided textbooks and technology
* workshop or professional development fees
* stipends for District employees for activities outside school hours
* substitute teachers during the working day unless teachers are away from school with a class involved in the grant project
* not current or past programs for which funding is no longer available nor ongoing programs for which future Foundation funding will be needed

**Applications must:**

* have clear, understandable project goals and outcomes
* relate to district, state or national standards which should be identified
* clearly describe what students will know and/or be able to do as a result of the project
* show a clear project plan and project timeline
* 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; *the Foundation encourages applicants to shop locally when possible*
* explain how programs will be sustained following the grant period if applicable
* have an evaluation component
* include signatures of the school administrator and all those who will be involved in the project, including District facilities manager if the project alters the physical environment of the classroom/school.

*Questions regarding specific project ideas are answered at two annually available grant workshops – see Great Ideas Grants page or the HEF online agenda for dates and times*

**How Are Grant Applications Reviewed?**

Grants applications will be reviewed anonymously by a committee of community representative volunteers. The review process follows a standard protocol determined by the Foundation. *See the rating form used by the Selection Committee*

**It’s Easy to Apply!**

The grant application and instructions are available online at [www.hefmt.org](http://www.hefmt.org/) You may email your completed application to greatideas@hefmt.org . Late applications will not be accepted. Grant workshops are scheduled for each granting cycle to assist applicants in understanding the funding criteria. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact the HEF office at (406)443-2545

*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 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.**