



STEM and Technology Gap Funding Grants for California K-12 Teachers

How to find classroom funding and write eye-catching grant applications to support innovative STEM projects



Creating 21st Century Classrooms on an Outdated Budget

As STEM and Career and Technical Education (CTE) requirements become more demanding, teachers are expected to create innovative curricula without extra funding.

Schools across the country continue to emphasize the importance of preparing students for a career in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math). 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

Source: [Economics and Statistics Administration](#)

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. Students need hands-on experience using these tools to be successful in their careers. Unfortunately, many technical tools are expensive to purchase, and schools in California face funding challenges.

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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 how to streamline the grant writing process.

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

National grants: SolidProfessor has compiled a comprehensive list of grants available for teachers across the country.

California Gap Funding Opportunities

We've scoured the internet to find STEM and technology grants available year-round to California educators.

This guide helps you get an early start on funding opportunities and prepares you for available grant applications later in the year.

The Eastman Foundation Grant

- **Deadline:** Available Year-Round

Description: Through the Eastman Foundation, applicants can receive financial support for sustainable community improvement. The funding focuses on the foundation's interests, such as economic success, social well-being, and environmental integrity. Contributions are for one year unless otherwise specified.

The Dwight Stuart Youth Fund

- **Deadline:** Available Year-Round

Description: The Dwight Stuart Youth Fund supports educational enrichment programs that provide a well-rounded experience for young students. These programs help students develop skills and inspire learning. They also teach respect, responsibility, self-discipline, patience, integrity, tenacity, and teamwork.

Weyerhaeuser Giving Fund

- **Deadline:** September 30

Description: The Weyerhaeuser Giving Fund supports U.S. and Canadian communities where they have a significant presence. It has operations in Richmond and Virginia Timberlands. Other communities the Weyerhaeuser Giving Fund serves range from rural to metropolitan, focusing on affordable housing; education and youth development; environmental stewardship; human services; civic and cultural growth; workforce development; and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Petaluma Educational Impact Grant

- **Deadline:** October 2

Description: The Petaluma Educational Foundation (PEF) is a privately funded nonprofit organization that aims to raise money to benefit education in the Petaluma community. PEF has awarded more than \$8 million to students and schools through its Impact Grants and scholarships for over 40 years.

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: The [Visions Loves Educators Classroom Program](#) frequently uses 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

4 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.

5 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."

Your Pocket Guide to Emotion-based Writing

- Explain your connection to the project you are getting funding for

Tip: Anecdotes work well for this step

- Describe how you currently serve students' academic needs
- Emphasize why the current system isn't working
- Demonstrate how you can solve the problem
- Show how this funding can create the desired outcome

Tip: Use a lot of "you" language to make this section seem more personal to the reviewer

6 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.

7 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.

Just like you, SolidProfessor is passionate about educating the next generation of engineers. Through our online engineering training courses, we help students and teachers familiarize themselves with the engineering design 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?

Engineering design software programs are not easy to keep up with! Even if a student has a basic understanding of how to use an engineering software solution, there's always so much more to learn and

explore — not to mention keeping track of any new updates. Our team of professional engineers dives deeply into 20+ engineering design 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 theory. And you can rest assured that all tutorials are current and vetted by leading industry experts.

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.

SolidProfessor can integrate with any LMS

SolidProfessor is an LTI-certified organization, which means we can integrate with any learning management system (LMS) when you purchase a site license. Through this integration, you have the ability to

- Keep all assignments in one place
- Monitor students' progress right from your LMS
- Automate the grading process

If you'd like to learn more about our LMS integration, contact our team or read our [blog post](#).

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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