****

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

**Commitment to Excellence in Science, Technology,**

**Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)  
GRANT APPLICATION**

**COMPETITION #15 / 2024-2025 Cycle**

**As funded by Act 529 of 2001 through the Arkansas  
Committed to Education Foundation and**

**administered by The Arkansas STEM Coalition   
(ACEF License Plate Funds)**

**APPLICATION DUE DATES**

* **APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE: Thursday, August 1, 2024**
* **APPLICATIONS DUE: Friday, September 20, 2024, by 5:00 PM**
* **FUNDING NOTIFICATION DATE: Monday, September 30, 2024**
* **FINAL REPORTS DUE: Sunday, June 30, 2025, by 5:00 PM**

**Electronic Submission ONLY in a single electronic file   
(except for specific pages indicated) must be emailed to:**

[**Grants@ArkansasSTEMCoalition.com**](mailto:Grants@ArkansasSTEMCoalition.com)

**Commitment to Excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Grant**

The Arkansas STEM Coalition is requesting applications for the Commitment to Excellence in STEM Grant to promote STEM education in Arkansas’s grade 3-6 classrooms. The purpose of the Commitment to Excellence in STEM Grant is to help bridge the technology divide that exists in Arkansas public schools, particularly in schools serving third through sixth grades, by recognizing schools through technology-based incentives.

Funding for these grants is made available through the sale of special “Committed to Education” license plates that are offered by the Arkansas Department of Finance & Administration and are purchased by Arkansas vehicle owners each year. A portion of the funds received for each license plate are deposited with the Arkansas Committed to Education Fund (ACEF). ACEF has partnered with The Arkansas STEM Coalition to create and administer the Commitment to Excellence in STEM Grant program in order to disburse the license plate funds collected to deserving schools. In keeping with the original purpose of the funding in Act 529 of 2001, the Arkansas STEM Coalition has developed a grant process to distribute the funds. Each year, The Arkansas STEM Coalition releases a Request For Applications (RFA) which sets out that year’s available funding, eligible entities, grant parameters, deadlines, and application requirements.

The amount of funding available for each cycle will be equal to the amount received by The Arkansas STEM Coalition from ACEF the prior July 1-June 30 that is earmarked for grant funding, plus any funds that were not awarded from the previous cycle. For the 2024-2025 cycle, this includes grant funds received from July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024 of $85,000.00 plus unawarded amount of $3,064.99 from the 2023-2024 cycle, for a total available of $88,064.99.

Applications will be reviewed and scored using a consistent rubric, which is attached to the application, with applicants scoring based on various eligibility and demographic criteria as well as their completed applications. Awards will be announced based on the stated schedule, with the amounts and names of grantees made public. NOTE: Any application scoring below 70.0 points will not be funded.

The equipment and materials purchased with grant funds will be used by Arkansas students during hands-on learning activities in order to develop better knowledge of and a deeper understanding of concepts in physical, life and earth sciences, mathematics, technology, engineering, and other STEM subjects. Professional Development (PD) will be secured by the applying entities in order to increase the teachers’ content and instructional skills in the STEM areas needed to fully utilize the equipment and materials purchased with grant funds. PD will be provided at the school site, in the student classrooms, and/or offsite.

**Applications will be accepted from the following eligible entities:**

* ALL public school districts and public schools in Arkansas that serve third, fourth, fifth, and/or sixth grades are eligible to apply, either through a STEM Center, as individual schools, or in collaboration with a public school district.
* Only ONE application per school will be accepted, either through a STEM Center or from the public school or public school district.
* Each public school included in an application must teach at least one of the following grades: third, fourth, fifth, or sixth. Public schools that teach at least one of these grades are eligible, regardless of which other grades are taught or not taught at that school or district.
* The below University STEM Centers are eligible to apply, on behalf of individual public schools or on behalf of public school districts:
  + A-State Delta STEM Education Center (Arkansas State University)
  + A-State Rural STEM Education Center (Arkansas State University)
  + ATU STEM Education Collaborative (Arkansas Tech University)
  + Lewis “Tony” Finley STEM Center (Harding University)
  + The STEM Center at Henderson State University (Henderson State University)
  + Southern Arkansas University STEM Center for K-12 Education (Southern Arkansas University)
  + STEM Education Center (University of Arkansas at Fort Smith)
  + UA Little Rock STEM Education Center (University of Arkansas at Little Rock)
  + UAM STEM Center (University of Arkansas at Monticello)
  + Mathematics and Science Pre-College Center (University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff)
  + UCA Institute for STEM Professional Development and Education Research (University of Central Arkansas)
* NO entity will be eligible to apply if they have retained unspent funds from prior year awards that have not yet been returned to The Arkansas STEM Coalition. Once funds have been fully spent and accounted for or have been returned, entities may become immediately eligible as long as other eligibility requirements are met.
* NO entity will be eligible to apply if they have any outstanding report(s) due to The Arkansas STEM Coalition from prior funding cycles. Once all outstanding report(s) have been submitted to The Arkansas STEM Coalition, entities may become immediately eligible as long as other eligibility requirements are met.

**NOTE: If you represent a higher education STEM Center in Arkansas and would like to become an eligible entity, please email us at Grants@ArkansasSTEMCoalition.com or call us at 501-425-9995.**

**Award Limits:**

* The total amount of funding available for the 2024-2025 funding cycle is $88,064.99. The amount of actual funds awarded may be slightly less or slightly more, in the sole discretion of The Arkansas STEM Coalition, based on a variety of factors. Any funds from this cycle that are not disbursed may be rolled over to the 2025-2026 funding cycle.
* There is not a limit on the number of schools that may be included in any single application, whether the applying entity is a STEM Center or a school district. However, each school must be individually eligible in order to be included in any application.
* There is no minimum request amount for individual schools or for combined applications.
* There is no maximum request amount for combined applications, but the maximum requested amount per school is $10,000.00. This is not an average. Each school’s individual budget request may not exceed $10,000.00, including costs for professional development (either paid through grant or taken as a Professional Development Consulting Fee).
* Each school’s budget request may include up to 15% of the total award (up to $1,500 if requesting the full $10,000) for the applying entity to provide Professional Development, which should be reflected in the budget. Please note:
  + This does not mean you can request $10,000 in equipment plus $1,500 for professional development; the entire budget request must not exceed $10,000.
  + The only way to get the full $1,500 for PD is to ask for the full $10,000 award with $1,500 for PD and $8,500 in equipment.
  + You can calculate the maximum amount you can request for PD by filling in the highlighted cells on the first tab of the budget spreadsheet (Calculate & Check PD).
* If more than 10% of the total award is being requested for PD, the budget must include an itemized list of expenses, and reports will be required to itemize these expenses and provide receipts showing purchase/expenditures for each item.
* If you are requesting 10% or less of your award amount for PD, this can be considered a PD Consulting Fee. You do not have to itemize expenses on your budget, and you will not need to provide receipts showing purchase/expenditures for each item. The total allowable amount for a PD Consulting Fee is 10% of the total award (up to $1,000).
* The lowest scoring limit for funded applications is 70.0 points. Any application scoring below 70.0 points will not be funded.

**Provisions:**

* Schools that have not been awarded this grant in the past, whether individually or through STEM Centers, will be given priority during the scoring process as indicated in the included scoring rubric.
* Funds awarded for materials and/or equipment must be used to purchase tangible materials and/or equipment that directly affects student learning in STEM areas. Examples of items allowed include lab equipment (i.e. microscopes, proscopes, beakers etc.), science kits which include equipment and resources, technology equipment or software (i.e. netbooks, probeware, GPS, etc.), mathematics manipulatives, makerspace supplies and equipment, robotics equipment and kits. These are examples; specific materials and equipment must be listed in a proposed budget included in the application.
* Consumable materials are allowed, but priority will be given to projects that provide lasting, durable materials and/or equipment that will be used over multiple years.
* Purchases that are NOT allowed include, but are not limited to:
  + Time-Limited memberships
  + Field trips
  + Competition entry fees
  + Any intangible item(s)
  + Paying salaries or consulting fees that are not PD-related (you MAY pay somebody to conduct PD)
  + Indirect Costs
* Funds awarded for professional development may be used to:
  + purchase and/or reproduce professional development and/or teacher training materials, such as books, handouts, manuals, etc.
  + pay registration fees for instructors to attend professional development classes, conferences, and/or workshops.
  + pay for instructors to travel to professional development classes, conferences, and/or workshops.
  + pay mileage expenses incurred to attend professional development. Mileage should be paid at the State of Arkansas rate at the time the travel is made. A template for mileage reimbursement will be provided, but any invoice for mileage may be used that includes: date(s) of travel, starting and ending odometer readings for each trip (using a trip meter is acceptable), starting and ending address(es), and reason for travel. Invoices based on mileage estimates WILL NOT be acceptable. Do NOT attach Google Map/MapQuest directions to invoice in lieu of actual mileage.
  + pay other approved costs, which must be explained and described in the application and approved as part of the award. If you have questions about allowable costs, email Grants@ArkansasSTEMCoalition.com, or call 501-425-9995.
* Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis, with scores compiled through a uniform scoring rubric, a copy of which is attached to this application. Scoring will be based on the submitted application from each school, with weight and/or additional points given to schools that show evidence that:
  + They have not received this grant in the past. For schools that have received this grant in the past, a weighted score will be based on how long ago the grant was received, with schools that have never received the grant, or have not received it recently, receiving the most points and schools that have received the grant most recently receiving no points.
  + Schools are uniquely in need, and that funding is unlikely without this grant funding. Scoring will be weighted based on each district’s Free & Reduced Lunch percent as well as each school’s School Letter Grade and School Improvement Status.
  + Equipment purchased will serve multiple grades and larger percentages of students.
  + The equipment and materials purchased are lasting and durable, and will be used over multiple years.
* Any application scoring below 70.0 points will not be funded.
* Individual schools will be scored and awarded separately, regardless of the Applying Entity. Therefore, an application may include three schools, but one, two, or three may be awarded grant funds depending on each school’s individual application score.
* Funds awarded will be distributed to the applying entity – a STEM Center, an individual school, or a school district – unless an agreement is made between the applying entity and The Arkansas STEM Coalition to have items purchased directly by The Arkansas STEM Coalition.
* Provisions for The Arkansas STEM Coalition to purchase materials and/or equipment, and to have it delivered to schools, will be agreed upon at the time awards are accepted by the applying entities, and may be subject to a written grant agreement between the entity and The Arkansas STEM Coalition. This agreement may include limited vendors and other factors and/or parameters that are more limiting than listed in this RFA.

**Things that will get your application booted (as in, we will not read it or score it):**

* Asking for more than $10,000 per school, including professional development (for combined applications, it is for each individual school – NOT an average per school!)
* Asking for more than 15% of award for professional development
* “Signatures” that are typed or e-signed rather than handwritten. NO ELECTRONIC/E-doc signatures will be accepted!
* Not turning in a Grant Assurance Form
* Not having correct signature(s) on Grant Assurance Form
* Not turning in a Letter of Support from your Superintendent, if required
* Not having correct signature(s) on your Letter of Support from Superintendent, if required
* Turning in ANY part of application late (late is after 5:00 PM on September 20, 2024, no matter what and with no exceptions)
* Sending Zip files, files that can’t be opened in Microsoft Word, or files on Google Drive that we can’t access immediately

**APPLICATION CHECKLIST**

**Use this checklist to make sure that you have included all parts of the**

**application for EVERY District and EVERY School that is participating.**

* **Applicant Information Sheet**
* **District Information Sheet**
* **School Information Sheet**
* **Project Timeline & Standards**
* **Project Narrative**
* **Proposed Budget**
* **Grant Assurance Form SIGNED BY YOUR PRINCIPAL**

**DO NOT send individual pages of the completed application, except for:**

* **Budget Spreadsheet (if using Excel workbook)**
* **Grant Assurance Form (may be sent separately)**
* **Superintendent Support Letter (if required, may be sent separately)**

**The completed application should be in a single combined file (PDF preferred) containing ALL REQUIRED ITEMS from Application Checklist. If you send Zip files or files that can’t be opened in Microsoft Word, your application may not be considered! Google Drive links are acceptable to single combined files; however, we must have immediate access to Google Drive files.**

**The complete application package must be EMAILED to** [**Grants@ArkansasSTEMCoalition.com**](mailto:Grants@ArkansasSTEMCoalition.com) **no later than Friday, September 20, 2024, at 5:00 PM. Late applications will not be considered. No exceptions. If your email is received one minute late, the application will not be considered. If all parts are not received by the deadline, the application will not be considered.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Application Due Date** | **Application Review Period** | **Award Notification Date** | **Grant Period** | **Equip Purchase Deadline** | **PD & Expense Deadline** | **Final Report Due** |
| 9/20/2024 by 5:00 PM | 9/20/2024-9/29/2024 | 9/30/2024 | 9/30/2024-5/31/2025 | 4/1/2025 | 5/31/2025 | 6/30/2025 by 5:00 PM |

**Commitment to Excellence in Science, Technology,   
Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Grant**

**APPLICANT INFORMATION SHEET**

**(complete ONE for each application)**

**APPLYING ENTITY INFORMATION**

**(Checks will be written to Entity Name and mailed to Mailing Address)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Applying Entity Name** |  |
| **Applying Entity is** | 🞏 an Individual School ~~🞏 a School District 🞏 a STEM Center~~ |
| **Applying Entity Mailing Address** |  |

**Applying Entity Contact Names & Information  
(This is who we will contact with questions or if we need additional information regarding your application)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Main Contact Name** |  |
| **Main Contact Direct Work Phone** |  |
| **Main Contact General Work Phone** |  |
| **Main Contact Cell Phone** |  |
| **Main Contact Email** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Backup Contact Name** |  |
| **Backup Contact Direct Work Phone** |  |
| **Backup Contact General Work Phone** |  |
| **Backup Contact Cell Phone** |  |
| **Backup Contact Email** |  |

**DISTRICT INFORMATION SHEET**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **School District Name** |  |
| **School District LEA #** |  |
| **Superintendent’s Name**  **(MUST MATCH GRANT ASSURANCE FORM)** |  |
| **Superintendent’s Email** |  |
| **Superintendent’s Phone Number** |  |
| **School District PHYSICAL Address (included for auditing/review purposes)** |  |
| **School District MAILING Address** |  |
| **School District General Phone Number** |  |

**SCHOOL INFORMATION SHEET**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **DISTRICT Name** |  |
| **Participating School Name** |  |
| **Has this School been known by another name since 2010? If so, what other name has it had?** |  |
| **Has this School merged with another school since 2010? If so, what school did it merge with?** |  |
| **Participating School LEA#** |  |
| **Participating School PHYSICAL Address (must include for auditing and review purposes)** |  |
| **Participating School MAILING Address** |  |
| **School phone number** |  |
| **Principal’s Name (MUST MATCH GRANT ASSURANCE FORM)** |  |
| **Principal’s Email** |  |
| **Principal’s Phone Number** |  |
| **In what type of environment will equipment be used?** | 🞏 Regular classes 🞏 After-School 🞏 GT Breakouts  🞏 Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| **Participating Grade Levels (for this school ONLY)** | 🞏 3rd 🞏 4th 🞏 5th 🞏 6th 🞏 Other Grades (list): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| **Has this school received this grant in the past? If so, what year(s)?** |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Estimated Number of Students and Teachers Affected (report by Grade)** | | | |
| **Grade Level** | **# Students Enrolled** | **# Students Affected** | **# Teachers Affected** |
| 3rd Grade |  |  |  |
| 4th Grade |  |  |  |
| 5th Grade |  |  |  |
| 6th Grade |  |  |  |
| Other Grades |  |  |  |
| **TOTAL:** |  |  |  |

**PROJECT TIMELINE & STANDARDS**

|  |
| --- |
| **Participating School Name:** |

**Complete the chart below to indicate the timeline for implementation of equipment purchase, distribution, and usage as well as PD. This timeline should guarantee that the project will be completed and the final grant report will be submitted by the reporting deadline!**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Person/People Responsible for Performing Activity** | **Estimated Start Date** | **Estimated Completion Date** |
| Purchase Equipment |  |  |  |
| Distribute Equipment to School |  |  |  |
| Provide Professional Development |  |  |  |
| Start Using Equipment |  |  |  |
| Submission of Final Grant Report |  |  |  |

**List the Arkansas Academic Standards (Student Learning Expectations, Student Performance Expectations, etc.) for Science, Mathematics, Computer Science, or other STEM-related areas that are pertinent to this grant request. The Disciplinary Core Ideas (DCI) should be included below, if applicable. You may add more lines if needed, or attach a separate list if you have the applicable standards in another file or format.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Academic Standard (SLE, PE, etc.)** | **Academic Standard Text** | **DCI Number and Text, if applicable** |
|  |  |  |
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**PROJECT NARRATIVE**

**Include a Project Narrative for each Participating School. The Project Narrative should be a MAXIMUM of one page, typed or handwritten. You do not need to restate the questions.**

|  |
| --- |
| **Participating School Name:** |

**The Project Narrative must include the following information, either in Q&A or narrative form:**

1. Give an explanation of what you want to buy, what you want to do, and why you want to do it.
2. Explain why your school/students need this equipment, why it is important to your classroom and/or project, how it will support your school’s STEM instruction, and how it aligns with the curriculum, instruction, and/or standards you plan to utilize. Include any research-based learning strategies you will be using (inquiry-based, 5-E, student-centered learning, etc.).
3. Explain any professional development needed, how it will be provided, and who will provide it.
4. Explain why you need this funding and why other funding is not available. If you are requesting to purchase consumable items, you must explain how you will sustain future funding.

**The Project Narrative MAY (but does not have to) include additional information, such as:**

1. Goals and Objectives you have identified for your curriculum and instruction
2. Related assessments you plan to administer to students
3. If you have applied for other grants to support this project, and if you have been denied or received any other funding
4. Grade levels and vertical alignment with other teachers and areas
5. Any other information you believe is relevant and compelling

**PROPOSED EXPENSE BUDGET**

**INCLUDE ALL EQUIPMENT, MATERIALS, AND PD BEING PURCHASED FOR THIS SCHOOL  
NO INDIRECT COSTS ARE ALLOWED**

**COMPLETE AND ATTACH THE SPREADSHEET TEMPLATE PROVIDED FOR SINGLE SCHOOLS (or complete the below)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Participating School Name:** | | | | |
| Professional Development Expenses:  🞎 We are not requesting funds for Professional Development.  🞎 We elect to take a Professional Development Consulting Fee of up to 10% of the total award, listed below as a single line with a single dollar amount.  🞎 We are requesting between 10-15% of total award for PD. We have itemized PD expenses below. | | | | |
| **Equipment/Material (in detail – include link to purchase if at all possible)** | **Vendor Name / Source** | **Price Per Unit** | **# Units** | **Line Total** |
|  |  | $ |  | $ |
|  |  | $ |  | $ |
|  |  | $ |  | $ |
|  |  | $ |  | $ |
|  |  | $ |  | $ |
|  |  | $ |  | $ |
|  |  | $ |  | $ |
|  |  | $ |  | $ |
|  |  | $ |  | $ |
|  |  | $ |  | $ |
|  |  | $ |  | $ |
|  |  | $ |  | $ |
|  |  | $ |  | $ |
| **Estimated Tax IF GETTING QUOTE, MUST INCLUDE TAX!** |  | $ |  | $ |
| **Estimated Shipping IF GETTING QUOTE, MUST INCLUDE TAX!** |  | $ |  | $ |
| **TOTAL EQUIPMENT EXPENSES  (must add exact line totals)** |  | **$** |  | **$** |

**REMEMBER: MAXIMUM REQUEST IS $10,000 PER SCHOOL, INCLUDING PD!  
If you don’t include tax and shipping, you may not have enough money to purchase requested items!**

**GRANT ASSURANCE FORM**

**2024-2025 Commitment to Excellence in STEM Grant Award**

**We, the below-signed person(s) who represent(s) the Applying Entity, Participating Schools, University STEM Center, and/or associated University, agree(s) to the following conditions:**

* All funds used to purchase equipment and/or materials for Participating Schools must be spent by April 1, 2025. Funds for Professional Development must be spent by May 31, 2025.
* All funds will be spent as listed in the application budgets, and will be used for STEM-related equipment and/or materials to be used in 3-6 grade classrooms, for expenses related to providing professional development, and for other expenses as indicated on included budgets.
* Any changes will be agreed upon in writing by both parties.
* Final Narrative Report and Final Financial Report with copies of receipts are due by June 30, 2025 by 5:00 PM. Templates will be provided for these reports.
* NO indirect costs are allowed.

**School Principal Signature Date**

**School Principal Printed Name**

**This Grant Assurance Form MUST BE SIGNED by your Principal. Typing in a name or using an e-signature is NOT acceptable. (name must match application pages)**

**The Grant Assurance Form may be submitted in separate parts, but all parts must be  
submitted by application deadline of September 20, 2024, at 5:00 PM!**

Assurance Form may be emailed separately to [Grants@ArkansasSTEMCoalition.com](mailto:Grants@ArkansasSTEMCoalition.com) or a paper copy may be mailed to The Arkansas STEM Coalition, Attn: Grants, P.O. Box 3142, Little Rock, AR 72203. FORM MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE STEM COALITION NO LATER THAN Friday, September 20, 2024, at 5:00 PM. **We are not responsible for postal delays.**

**Appendix: SCORING RUBRIC**











