Welcome to the MINNDEPENDENT STEM Grant Program!

We are pleased to offer this grant opportunity to MEMBER SCHOOLS in partnership with our funders, the Schott Foundation, and Xcel Energy Foundation. Member schools must maintain membership with MINNDEPENDENT in the subsequent year to be eligible to receive grant funds. The STEM Grant Program supports the development of learning opportunities for students that:

1. Improve knowledge of science, technology, engineering and/or mathematics concepts—especially in multidisciplinary contexts;
2. Develop STEM skills and practices (e.g., Science and Engineering Practices and 21st Century Skills) as well as their abilities to use materials, tools, and technology to conduct investigations, engage in problem solving, and design solutions;
3. Enhance understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of STEM, the value of STEM skills and knowledge in the workplace, and relevance of STEM to everyday life; and
4. Increase awareness of and interest in post-secondary STEM education and careers.

Descriptions of the STEM projects that have received STEM Grant funding in the past are posted on the **MINNDEPENDENT STEM grant webpage.** Funded projects range from creatively simple to large and complex. Both approaches—and everything in-between—have provided new and impactful STEM learning opportunities for students in MINNDEPENDENT member schools. The key to a successful grant proposal is to clearly address the goals of the STEM Grant Program in a way that is authentic to your school and the students it will reach.

If you have any questions about the Grant Program or the application process, please don't hesitate to contact us. MINNDEPENDENT's STEM Advisory Committee and staff are here to help!

Lisa Vosbeek

Director of Development & Programs

lvosbeek@minndependent.org
651-424-4930

Beth Murphy

STEM Program Manager

bmurphy@minndependent.org
612-270-0194

MINNDEPENDENT STEM Grant Guidelines:
For projects to be implemented from
June 2023 to June 2024

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<mark>Please read these guidelines carefully</mark>

Visit https://minndependent.org/stem-grants/

for all grant program documents and resources.

Please direct any questions about the MINNDEPENDENT grant process to:
Beth Murphy, STEM Program Manager, bmurphy@minndependent.org, 612-270-0194, or
Lisa Vosbeek, Director of Development and Programs, lvosbeek@minndependent.org, 651-424-4930

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STEM Grant Types, Eligibility and Number of Awards per School, Post Award Process & Requirements

STEM Grant Types

Four types of STEM Grants will be awarded, as described below. The number of awards made, and the amount of each award will be based on total funding available and the degree to which each submitted proposal addresses the funding criteria. Each STEM Grant application will be reviewed with respect to the criteria for each grant type stated on the following pages.

Eligibility and Number of Awards per School

All MINNDEPENDENT member schools are eligible to apply for STEM Grants with the following restrictions:

1. **Must be a MINNDEPENDENT member school to apply and maintain membership in the subsequent year to receive grant funding.**

2. **Schools may submit one grant application per year.**

3. **Only schools that have not received prior STEM Grant funding are eligible for Starter Grants.**

4. **Any school that receives a STEM Grant and fails to submit a final report for a previously awarded STEM Grant is ineligible to apply for a STEM grant while the report is still outstanding.**

The proposed project may be for any grade(s) K-12. **Preschool STEM projects are not eligible for MINNDEPENDENT STEM Grant funding.**

NOTE: If your STEM Grant project includes building structures, interacting with protected animal or plant species, has safety implications for teachers or students, etc. you must show that you have a plan to comply with any applicable regulations and/or codes.

Post-Award Process & Requirements

☐ At least one representative of the school is expected to accept their STEM Grant award at the **Minnesota Private and Independent Education Awards on Sunday, April 28, 2024.**

☐ STEM grant agreement will be sent by email and must be signed and submitted to officially accept the grant award and initiate payment. **Schools must maintain MINNDEPENDENT membership in subsequent year to receive STEM grant payments.**

☐ Starter and Sustainability Grants are paid to the school in full upon receipt of paperwork. Innovation Grants are paid to the school in installments (2/3 upon receipt of initial paperwork and 1/3 upon receipt of implementation plan). **Implementation plans are due by September 30, 2024.** Community Partnership Grants are paid directly from MINNDEPENDENT to the Community Partner.

☐ Teachers listed on the STEM Grant application are expected to attend the MINNDEPENDENT STEM Education Conference in **August 2024 (date TBA).**

☐ All schools that receive STEM Grants are required to submit a final STEM GRANT IMPACT REPORT to **MINNDEPENDENT by June 30, 2025.** Instructions and a Survey Monkey link for grant reporting will be provided at a later date.

Application Questions Common to Starter, Sustainability, and Innovation Grants

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Note that all Letters of Interest and Grant Applications must be submitted via Survey Monkey. PDF copies of the Survey Monkey forms can be found on the MINNDEPENDENT *website for your reference. Because Survey Monkey entries may be lost if your application is not completed in one sitting, we strongly recommend that you prepare your Letter of Interest and Grant Application using word processing software and paste your responses into Survey Monkey when you are ready to submit.*

PROJECT DESCRIPTION [200 words maximum]
An overview of your project that includes the grade(s) of students to be served, subject areas covered, overall goal/purpose of project, and how it will benefit STEM education at your school. If your grant is funded, your project description will be published on the MINNDEPENDENT website.

OUTCOMES [200 words maximum]
List up to five student outcomes that you hope to achieve through this project.

EVALUATION & ASSESSMENT [200 words maximum]
Describe information to be gathered that will help you determine if outcomes are achieved.

PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES [200 words maximum]
A high-level work plan for the core activities or steps associated with developing and implementing your project. Include a timeframe and brief description for each activity.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS [200 words maximum]
1. List up to three academic standards that are most relevant to your project (include a one-sentence summary for each standard, not just a reference number).
2. Describe the top three STEM skills and/or practices that your project will help students develop.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION [200 words maximum]
MINNDEPENDENT aims to ensure that all students at member schools have access to high-quality STEM learning experiences. Thus, it is important that projects we fund incorporate research-based strategies and practices to include students from groups that have traditionally experienced achievement, access and/or opportunity gaps in STEM. This includes girls, students of color, low-income students, English language learners, students with learning differences, and students attending school in rural locations.

In your response to this question, please address how your proposed project will include strategies and practices to promote engagement, access, and achievement in STEM for all students—especially those from underrepresented and/or underserved groups.

To assist schools, MINNDEPENDENT has created a document called **Resources for Inclusive STEM Learning** which you can find on the **MINNDEPENDENT STEM Grant webpage**.

Types of STEM Grants: Starter Grants

Starter Grants — up to $1,500

Starter Grants are for schools that have not received funding through the MINNDEPENDENT STEM Grant Program in the past and are suitable for projects that will launch a STEM education effort at your school. Please note that schools are *NOT required* to begin with a Starter Grant—schools with well-developed projects are encouraged to consider applying for Innovation Grants.

A Starter Grant will be awarded for acquisition and implementation of curricula and/or educational materials. Teacher professional development costs and stipends for summer work associated with project planning and development are allowed and encouraged expenses. **Awarded grants will be paid in full upon receipt of the grant agreement, due June 7, 2024.**

Additional Starter Grant Questions
There are no additional questions for starter grants.

Starter Grant Scoring Criteria

10 points	Project Description
5 points	Outcomes
5 points	Evaluation & Assessment
10 points	Planning & Implementation Activities
5 points	Academic Standards
10 points	Diversity & Inclusion

45 points total

![MINNDEPENDENT logo]

Sustainability Grants — up to 20% of original grant, not to exceed $1000.

Schools may request a Sustainability Grant to provide additional funding for consumable materials needed to continue a STEM project that has previously received funding through the MINNDEPENDENT STEM Grant Program. A Sustainability Grant may be requested for up to 20% of the original grant award. Schools are eligible to receive one Sustainability Grant per original funded grant. **Awarded grants will be paid in full upon receipt of the grant agreement, due June 7, 2024.**

Additional Sustainability Grant Questions

PAST PROJECT SUCCESSES [200 words maximum]
Describe the successes of your prior STEM Grant project and evidence to support these claims, especially in terms of the impact it has had on teaching and learning.

SUSTAINABILITY [100 words maximum]
How funding of this project supports your school's long-term goals for STEM teaching and learning.

Sustainability Grant Scoring Criteria

10 points	Project Description
5 points	Outcomes
5 points	Evaluation & Assessment
10 points	Planning & Implementation Activities
10 points	Diversity & Inclusion
5 points	Past Project Successes
5 points	Sustainability

50 points total

Innovation Grants — up to $5,000

Innovation Grants will be awarded for projects that:

- Develop **authentic STEM learning opportunities** using an engineering design and/or scientific discovery framework. Multidisciplinary projects are encouraged.

- Are designed to **expand and improve a school's STEM offerings.**

- Align with relevant **academic standards** and **STEM skills**.

- Incorporate **formative and/or summative assessment or other form of program evaluation** to guide real-time project implementation, measure project success, and identify opportunities for improvement.

- Recognize the importance of **teacher professional development** by including training, mentoring, and/or summer stipends for teacher planning and development.

- Make **authentic and relevant connections** between STEM learning in school and the world beyond.

- Lay a **foundation for continuation, growth, improvement, and sustainability** of the proposed program.

- Are a **team effort of two or more teachers**, either from the same school or multiple schools. If the project involves more than one MINNEPENDENT member school, collaborating schools may apply jointly for a single grant, or submit separate linked grants. [If proposing a multi-school project, please contact the STEM Program Manager before the deadline to discuss.]

- Build **meaningful community partnerships** between schools and community organizations, such as nonprofits, higher education, other K-12 schools, STEM professionals, and/or businesses. Innovation Grant applications must include a **Letter of Commitment** from at least one community partner.

- **Awarded grants will receive a payment of two-thirds of the grant amount upon receipt of the grant agreement, due June 7, 2024. The final one-third of the grant amount will be paid upon receipt of the Implementation Plan documents, due Sept. 30, 2024**

Additional Innovation Grant Questions

IMPROVEMENT & SUSTAINABILITY [200 words maximum]
How will you use what you learn during project implementation to make improvements during the term of your grant? How will funding of this project support your school's long-term goals for STEM teaching and learning?

CROSS-DISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS [100 words maximum]
Describe how this project makes connections between science, technology, engineering and/or math or with other disciplines (for example: language arts, creative arts, social studies, religion, etc.).

CONNECTIONS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM [200 words maximum]
Describe how this project helps students make connections to their own lives, their communities, and/or the world, including STEM careers and post-secondary educational opportunities—as developmentally appropriate for the age of students involved.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS [100 words maximum]
List your community partner(s) and the role(s) they play in your project. Innovation Grant applications also require a **Letter of Commitment** from at least one community partner. High quality letters of commitment should be no longer than one page and clearly articulate who the partner is and the business/organization or school they represent plus one or more of the following:
- How and to what degree the partner will support and collaborate with you/your school.
- Why they think the project is important and why they are interested in being part of it.
- What expertise, resources, or commitment they bring to the project.

Innovation Grant Scoring Criteria

Points	Criteria
10 points	Project Description
5 points	Outcomes
5 points	Evaluation & Assessment
10 points	Planning & Implementation Activities
5 points	Academic Standards
10 points	Improvement & Sustainability
10 points	Diversity & Inclusion
5 points	Cross Disciplinary Connections
5 points	Connections Outside the Classroom
5 points	Community Partners, including Letter of Commitment

70 points total

![MINNDEPENDENT logo]

NEW in 2023-2024 - Types of STEM Grants: Community Partnership Grants (We Share Solar)

Community Partnership Grants (We Share Solar) — up to $3,500

Community Partnership Grants (We Share Solar) are for schools that are interested in launching a hands-on solar education, service-learning experience in grade 7 – 12. **Only schools that have not participated in the We Share Solar program in the past and eligible.**

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WE SHARE SOLAR PROGRAM

A Community Partnership Grant (We Share Solar) will be awarded for acquisition and implementation of virtual learning platform, teacher training and two solar suitcase kits, including lab materials and tools. **Awarded grants will be paid directly by MINNDEPENDENT to We Share Solar for participation during the 2024-2025 school year upon receipt of the grant agreement, due June 7, 2024.**

Additional Community Partner Grant (We Share Solar) Grant Questions
There are no additional questions.

Community Partner Grant (We Share Solar) Scoring Criteria

10 points	Interest Statement
10 points	Program Implementation Plan
10 points	Availability to attend a one-day in-person training in Minneapolis in August 2024 (Date, Location and Time – TBD)
10 points	Diversity & Inclusion
5 points	Cross Disciplinary Connections
5 points	Connections Outside the Classroom

50 points total

For projects to be implemented from June 2024 to June 2025

MINNDEPENDENT

Grant funds must be used between the time of grant award and June 15, 2025, unless an extension or alternate plan is approved. Any funds not spent by this date must be returned by June 30, 2025.

Funds May Be Used for:

- **EQUIPMENT, MATERIALS & SUPPLIES.**
  - ➢ **Non-consumable materials** such as tools, lab equipment or similar items that are not for one-time use. Any equipment that is of significant cost must be clearly justified as essential to the proposed project. Computer software, lab equipment, or maker space equipment directly relevant to the project may be included. Requests for non-consumable materials are typically made for Starter and Innovation Grants, in some cases, non-consumable materials may be justified for Sustainability Grants (for example additional sets of tools or curriculum materials to scale up a previously funded project).
  - ➢ **Consumable supplies** may be included, up to 20% of the total request for Starter and Innovation Grants. Sustainability Grants are often used to cover costs of consumable or replacement materials necessary to continue and improve a previously funded project.

- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** for teachers to develop instructional expertise, acquire knowledge or skills, or further their understanding in ways that are directly relevant to the project are strongly encouraged. Stipends may be included for one or more teachers to plan and develop STEM projects as well as fees for relevant workshops and other learning opportunities. Stipends awarded through STEM grants are paid at a rate of $25/hour and may not exceed $750 per teacher. Professional development is allowed for Sustainability Grants only in cases that relate to sustaining the original project, as opposed to extending it beyond its original scope. **Funds will be _considered_ for registration fees for teachers to attend a conference, training, or workshop only if it is directly related to the proposed project (fees to attend general STEM-related conferences are not allowed).**

Grant funds may _not_ be used for:

- General-purpose expenditures such as technology (general-use computers or tablets, projectors, smart boards, etc.) and furniture (such as desks, shelving, and general-use storage systems).
- Field trip, camp, or competition expenses for students, e.g., program or registration fees, tuition, room and board, and/or transportation.
- Fees or stipends for guest speakers, chaperones, etc.
- Expenses typically part of a school budget, such as teacher salaries or building renovations.
- Transportation, lodging, meals, car rental, and other travel expenses for teachers to attend conferences, workshops, seminars, etc.
- Fees for residencies or programs offered by museums or other organizations UNLESS they also include a teacher professional development component.
- Registration fees to attend the MINNDEPENDENT STEM Education Conference.

How to Apply

Note that all Letters of Interest and Grant Applications must be submitted via Survey Monkey. PDF copies of the Survey Monkey forms can be found on the MINNDEPENDENT STEM grant webpage for your reference, and Grant Application questions for each type of grant are also included in the descriptions of each grant type, above. It is strongly recommended that you prepare your answers to the Letter of Interest and Grant Application questions in advance using word processing software and copy and paste your answers into Survey Monkey when you are ready to submit.

Letter of Interest — Due Tuesday, January 16, 2024 by 6pm

Each school that intends to submit a STEM Grant Application must submit a Letter of Interest describing the preliminary project concept and plan. The Letter of Interest must be completed online and is available at the following link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8PJC77J

Grant Application — Due Tuesday, February 13, 2024 by 6pm

Each grant application must include a project budget in addition to the questions listed above. Innovation Grant applications also require at least one Letter of Commitment from a community partner. The MINNDEPENDENT STEM Grant application can be found here: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8P8PV8T

STEM Grant Guidelines, Application Forms, and Other Information
The following information is available on the MINNDEPENDENT STEM grant webpage:
- STEM Grant Calendar
- STEM Grant Letter of Interest PDF & Survey Monkey Link
- STEM Grant Application PDFs & Survey Monkey Link
- STEM Grant Budget Form
- Academic Standards & STEM Resources
- Resources for Inclusive STEM Learning
- Project descriptions for previously awarded STEM Grants

Letters of Interest & Grant Applications must be submitted via Survey Monkey.

Please direct any questions about the MINNDEPENDENT grant process to:
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