

FY 2026 Small Grants Guidelines

We believe educators, support staff, & administrators are key partners in advancing our shared mission: to ensure all students succeed in school. We provide small grants to strengthen these collaborations, close the opportunity gap, enhance educational opportunities for students & staff, & tap talent & diversity in MCPS.

Apply Today!

Visit us at www.mcpsfoundation.org/grants.

Timeline

If a date falls on a weekend or MCPS office closure, the date moves to the next business day.

Round 1

- Through September 15: Applications
- October 10: Notification
- October 15: Acceptance deadline
- October 31: Payment distribution

Round 2

- September 16 – December 1: Applications
- January 10: Notification
- January 15: Acceptance deadline
- January 30: Payment distribution

Funding Opportunities

Individual School/Office Grant

Up to \$2,000 to implement a new project in a single school/office

Multiple Schools/Offices Grant

Up to \$5,000 to implement a new project in multiple schools/offices

Special Opportunity: The Scaling Success Grant

This year, the MCPSEF is providing a special opportunity with the goal of accelerating progress towards our mission, by scaling successful projects. The Scaling Success Grant provides additional funds to replicate a successful project from one school or office to another.

Up to \$3,000 to replicate a successful project in another school/office by partnering with a coach, including:

- Up to \$2,500 for the project, to the applicant's school/office to replicate & implement the project.
- \$500 for the coaching stipend, to the original project lead for guidance & other resources.

All Scaling Success Grant project leads and coaches must meet with MCPSEF prior to applying.

Questions?

240-740-3216 | Ed_Foundation@MCPSMD.org | www.MCPSFoundation.org/Grants
[Book time for a one-on-one conversation.](#)

Eligibility Requirements

- The applicant must be the project lead – including being responsible for the overall success and logistics of the project, being the primary point of contact, and submitting the final report.
- Multiple applications per school/office are allowed.
- Applicant & project lead have completed all required components of any previous MCPSEF projects.
- Applicant & Project Lead is an MCPS employee.
- Project & funds benefit the MCPS school community.
- Project/related work is not in the school/departmental budget.
- Project must align with MCPSEF's:
 - Mission: To support student success in MCPS.
 - Vision: A student's circumstances should not predict their ability to achieve.
- Project can use/commit funds by end of current fiscal year (June 30th).
- Principal/supervisor and other necessary MCPS entities have approved project.
- Funds **cannot** be used for:
 - Indirect costs, overhead, grant administration, or similar items.
 - Lobbying & other political activity, as defined by IRS restrictions on 501(c)(3) organizations.
 - Religious purposes.
 - Technology that is:
 - Not in line with the Department of Digital Innovation's (DDI) priorities/policies (*e.g.*, personal computers for students such as iPads, certain software such as IXL).
 - Not approved by the DDI &, if needed, Office of General Counsel & Division of Procurement.
 - Field trips that do not follow MCPS regulations &/or have not yet received MCPS approval, including signed required forms.
 - Funding other organizations, such as local nonprofits/Parent Teacher Student Associations. However, MCPSEF encourages grantees to collaborate with other organizations.
 - Staff time that is:
 - Unapproved by principal/department head.
 - Compensated at rates different than union guidelines/by another funding source.
 - For regular hours/duties.
 - For professional development.
 - For an individual tutoring program.
 - Noncompliant with policies, including Conflict of Interest & Community Use of Schools.

Additional Guidance for Scaling Success Grants

Engaging coaches helps new project leads access resources from successful projects, including the expertise of a previous project lead, budgets, outreach materials, project plans, community engagement strategies, training materials, logistical guidance, curriculum, and procurement tips.

All Scaling Success Grant project leads and coaches must meet with MCPSEF prior to applying.

- Project Leads
 - You may propose a coach partnership & project, select from the list on [our Small Grants webpage](#), or contact us for ideas.
- Coaches
 - If you have implemented a successful project that you would like to help replicate at another school/office, send your name and a three- to five-sentence description of the project, its target participants, and its impact.
 - While you may share your interest at any time before the application deadlines, please let us know as early as possible to facilitate matches.
 - While we encourage previous grantees to share their interest, the original project does not have to be a previous MCPSEF grant.
 - You must be willing and able to provide support and share your resources throughout the grant process, including but not limited to:
 - Sharing your original application.
 - Helping the Project Lead draft the new application.
 - Sharing resources from your original project, including:
 - Outreach materials and strategies.
 - Curriculum.
 - Links and other information regarding purchases.
 - Planning documents.
 - Budgets.
 - Being available for:
 - A planning meeting, two check-ins, and a closeout meeting (at minimum).
 - Requests for feedback and support as needed.

Selection Criteria

Reviewers will make funding decisions based on strength of each consideration below.

- Alignment with MCPSEF:
 - Mission: To support student success in MCPS.
 - Vision: A student's circumstances should not predict their ability to achieve.
- Primary goals & activities clear & achievable.
- Project reaches students, staff, caregivers, & communities in ways that directly contributes to equity in school community, such as projects designed to address accessibility needs, build cultural competency, ameliorate financial barriers, and close other opportunity gaps.
- Project improves student learning outcomes.

Application Components

MCPSEF seeks to ensure its applications are easy and quick to complete. Applications include:

- Brief narratives, including:
 - Project goals.
 - Activities.
 - Alignment with MCPSEF priorities
 - For Scaling Success Grant applicants, a description of how the Project Lead will collaborate with the Coach & replicate the project.
- Timeline
- Team, including identification of primary project lead
- Impact measurements, including demographics of primary project participants
- Budget
- Uploads, including:
 - Approval from principal/supervisor for project
 - For applications with paid staff time for MCPS staff, a signed form indicating principal/supervisor approval
 - For applications with field trip, a signed approval form from principal/central office, per MCPS regulations
- *The MCPS Form 280-60 is not required for MCPSEF Small Grants.*