

## **FMCCS Grant Program**

### **Tips for Completing Applications**

These tips are designed to help you fill out your FMCCS Grant Application. Our recent survey showed that many teachers had questions; hopefully, you will see that once you have an idea for a grant, the application is easy and quick to complete. Read on for tips about each section of the application.

#### **Project Title**

Sounds easy, right? But applicants often struggle with just the right title. Do not think too hard on this. Pick something that accurately describes your project and makes it easy to remember what it is about.

Examples: Garden Renewal and Composting; Literacy-Based STEM and Novel Engineering Equipment; Cadaver Lab Field Trip for Anatomy and Physiology Students; Math Club at University Elementary

#### **3-6 Sentence Summary of the Project**

This summary gives us a snapshot of your project and is often shared with donors, community partners, and social media networks. This summary comes early in the application, and some may find it easier to complete at the end of the application process. After completing the other sections, you may find it easier to describe the project more succinctly. Our recommendation – if this seems hard to do, move on and come back to this one!

#### **Number of Students Impacted Annually/One Time**

A benchmark for FMCCS is how many students we help annually. Knowing the number of students your project will impact helps us evaluate our overall reach annually. Some grants may reach lots of students with a one-time project, while others reach a smaller number of students. Your best guess is fine. Consider average class, grade, and school sizes. More isn't always better. We always consider the quality of the impact in addition to the quantity.

#### **Who Will Your Project Serve? (Target Population)**

This information helps the grant reviewer to quickly see who will benefit from your project. It helps to be specific but succinct. What grade levels will benefit from the project? Will it be one class or all classes in a grade level? Will it be members of a specific group?

### **Investment Priority**

This question helps us categorize the grant request by subject area/topic. Sometimes we have specific funding for certain categories, and this helps us identify where your grant might fit. Remember there are two separate applications for the Curriculum Enrichment Grants and the Small Science & Environmental Grants. If your project is related to a science or environmental field and is less than \$1000, please use the Small Science & Environmental Grants application instead of the Curriculum Enrichment Grant application.

### **Total Budget Amount vs. Amount of Funding Requested**

We need to know how much money your total project will need as well as how much money you are requesting from FMCCS. Often, these are the same amount, but sometimes they are different. For example, you might have a project that will cost \$8,000 in total, but you are asking for \$5,000 from FMCCS and \$3,000 from another source. In that case, you would enter \$8,000 for the total budget amount and \$5,000 for the requested amount. Later in the application, you will upload a budget document, and explain your planned funding sources.

### **Detail your project, need, and how funds will be used to impact educational opportunities for students.**

This is also known in grant writing as your case for support. This is your chance to tell us all about your project. What do you plan to do, how do you plan to do it, and why do you want to do it? Let us know what educational standards your project will cover. If there is research supporting what you want to do, we are excited to hear about it, but describe it briefly in your own words. Pretend you are telling a friend about your idea. How would you describe it as if you were telling a story?

Specifics such as school development plans, grade level educational standards and/or research-based information help the committee better understand the educational need your project will achieve. We strongly recommend that you include this type of information to strengthen your case for support. If you are writing an Elementary Library grant this is required. Please do not upload or provide links to lengthy research or documents. **We want your words, thoughts, and ideas.**

### **Expected Outcomes and Goals**

This is your vision of what you expect students will gain because of your project. This is your chance to really detail the “why” of your project. Be specific, but also paint a broad picture of the mark you hope your project will leave.

**How will you measure your goals and success of this project?**

By measuring outcomes, you can more clearly see if the work you are doing is accomplishing the goals you intend to achieve. Please use quantitative data and describe the measurement tools you will use to define student improvement, value, and results of this grant.

Example #1: 30 students will be engaged in our environment by observing wildlife in its natural habitat. They will learn the names of local birds and write about them in creative stories.

Example #2: DIY books are extremely popular in our library, but we have a limited number. This grant will expand the number of books while tying into curricular needs. These books will be used in library lessons with “how-to” challenges to engage students. Measurement tools include circulation numbers, hold, and ongoing requests. It is expected that each book will impact 15 to 20 students annually.

We receive lots of questions about this part of the application. Do not let it intimidate you! We are looking for ways that you will know if your project was successful or not. This could be testing scores, but it does not have to be. If you are asking for learning materials for your classroom, you could reflect on students’ engagement in the room or activities before getting the materials, a few weeks in, and then after having them for a few months and note any changes. You could ask students to complete a survey before and after the project to measure what they have learned. Think of the basic question: How will I know if my project was successful?

**Define the timeline for implementing and accomplishing your stated outcomes. Include in your timeline if your project investment is sustainable and will be used for students beyond the year of implementation.**

Here, we would like to know the major milestones of your project – how long will it take to implement, when will it be implemented and completed, and what are the major steps along the way? It is helpful for us to know if the project has components that will be used beyond the initial year. For example, a project that contains funding for a field trip would not have components spanning into subsequent years, but a project that will purchase books for a classroom would if the books are to remain in that classroom and be used again. For grants submitted in the spring cycle it is especially important to know if the project is for the following school year.

**Please upload any additional information that may help define your project, specific goals, or objectives.**

This is an optional place for you to upload anything you feel will help us understand your project or its goals. Examples of items that have been uploaded: a news or journal article related to your project and inspiration, an idea board you created, photos. This is not required, but you are welcome to share additional information.

## **Grant Budget**

You will download a **budget template spreadsheet**, complete it, and upload the completed file to the system. There is a link to click on to open the template – once you do that, save it as a new file and add your information as requested. A few tips to remember: FMCCS is a tax exempt organization, so you should not include sales tax in your budget; remember to include shipping if applicable; if you're requesting funding from other sources, make sure to enter your entire budget, then subtract the amount from other sources to show the total you are requested from FMCCS; the total requested from FMCCS on your budget sheet must match your application.

There is also a place to **explain why your total budget may be different from the amount you are requesting from FMCCS**. Some common reasons are: you have applied for multiple grants, your school's principal has agreed to pay a portion, your school's PTO has agreed to pay a portion.

We would also like to know **if you have explored other funding sources**. Please tell us if any other funding sources are secure or potential.

A particularly important question we ask in the budget section is **to what extent the project is achievable if you are not awarded the full amount requested from FMCCS**. As you know, we often have more money requested than we have available and need to make tough decisions about where funds are allocated. Are there parts of the project that could happen with limited funding (e.g., we could go on the field trip, but wouldn't be able to do the follow-up activity afterwards)? Could you decrease the number of items needed (e.g., while 10 robots would be ideal, we could still work with 8)? The more we can understand these nuances of your project and budget, the more flexibility the committee can have when allocating funds. Sometimes, it makes the difference between not funding the project at all (because they could not decide if a partial amount would be useful) and funding it partially (because there was clear information about partial funding possibilities).

## **Submissions**

You can save your work and return to complete the grant application. When your grant is complete you sign your name and submit the application. Your application will be pending until your building representative and principal acknowledge their notice to review the grant. In the application you will input the names and emails of your building representative (if you are not sure, you can look it up [here](#)) and principal. Please double check the email to make sure it is correct.

Emails will be sent to the building representative and principal letting them know a grant has been submitted and providing them with instructions on how to approve your grant at the close of the grant cycle. Building representative and principal reviews are required for the grant to be reviewed by the committee.

It is a good idea to confirm with your building representative and principal that they received this email and are aware of the approval process. It is possible the email may fall into SPAM by the server.

**One final tip**

Please check your applications for grammar and spelling mistakes.

**Questions?**

FMCCS is happy to answer any questions you may have about completing the grant application. Send us an email at [FMCCS@mccsc.edu](mailto:FMCCS@mccsc.edu), or contact Krista Freedman at [freed0kri@mccsc.edu](mailto:freed0kri@mccsc.edu).

You can also find helpful resources on our webpage including examples of grant applications, FAQs on using the online system, and titles of previously awarded grants: <https://mccsfoundation.org/grant-resources/>.