



South Carolina's Coalition for Mathematics & Science

With support from S²TEM Centers SC

Present a Grant Opportunity for South Carolina Educators

Growing in STEM Grant Information Packet

www.sccoalition.org

We amplify the voices and impact of South Carolina's STEM Community



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Checklist & Worksheets

Use the following checklist to prepare for the Growing in STEM Grant Online Application.
All applications MUST be submitted via the online application.

✓	Step 1: Read overview and eligibility on website.
✓	Step 2: Decide on a project.
✓	Step 3: Review the Grant Information Packet. (<i>Yes, that's this document!</i>)
	Step 4: Prepare to submit your application by completing the Planning Worksheet and the Budget Worksheet
	Step 5: Once you have finished filling out your Planning Worksheets, go to the Growing in STEM Grants Online Application to enter your information into the online application.



Growing in STEM Grant General Information

All applications must be submitted by 5:00 pm on **December 4, 2026**.

Purpose

Have you been searching for a way to bring an idea to life that fosters learning and enthusiasm for STEM? Apply for a “Growing in STEM” grant now!

Eligibility

South Carolina PreK-12 educators in public and private schools or in out-of-school learning settings, with a great idea for a STEM project that can be completed by **April 28, 2028**. The project/unit should incorporate multiple aspects of STEM or STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts/Humanities, and Math) content along with supporting key Life and Career Characteristics and World Class Skills from [the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate](#).

Restrictions

Growing in STEM Grant funds:

- may only be used for the project that is described in the application; any changes to the project must be immediately communicated to the [Grant Committee](#) for approval.
- are intended to begin a new STEM project or expand an existing STEM project at a school site.
- may be used to pay an honorarium for a speaker or expert but may not be used as a salary supplement or honorarium for the recipient, or any school or district employee.
- may be used for materials and supplies to be used by student/community participants.
- may be used for participant transportation to and/or admission to a STEM learning event.
- may be used for food and beverage purchases for participants in a STEM learning event.
- are not intended to replace funding that is currently available through district, state, or federal budgets.
- may only be used in keeping with these guidelines and those of the grant recipient’s school/district.

For specific questions about a proposed project expense’s eligibility, please contact us: grants@sccoalition.org.

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Financial Guidelines

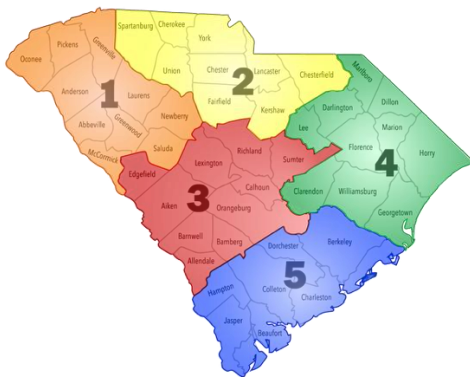
Grantees will receive up to \$2,500 and one (1) day of [REQUESTED](#), onsite STEM focused professional learning from S²TEM Centers SC Education Specialists (valued at \$1,500) that will directly relate to the funded project. Collaborative projects involving groups of educators may be considered. Groups should submit **ONLY** one proposal for the project. Both grant funds and the requested day of onsite professional learning must be used by **April 28, 2028**. Professional learning requests should be directed to [Tracey Campbell](#), Associate Director, as soon as possible after being acknowledged as a grant awardee.

Proposed projects sometimes exceed \$2,500. When completing the Project Budget for such proposals, please indicate the amount of non-grant funds that are required for the project. By stating these amounts, you are indicating that these funds are available and committed to your project if you receive Growing in STEM grant funds.

You are not required to request the full \$2,500. Return on investment matters in our review of your proposal.

Review of Proposals

A committee comprised of business and community leaders and educators will review proposals and recommend one awardee in each of the five S²TEM Centers SC regions. See map. Funding decisions will be announced by **February 12, 2027**.



NOTE: South Carolina's Coalition for Mathematics & Science (SCCMS) and S²TEM Center SC staff will not provide guidance or comment on a project's likelihood of receiving funding or feedback on submissions.

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Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) writing tools such as Copilot, ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and others is increasingly common among applicants seeking grants. SCCMS & S²TEM Centers SC recognizes that these tools can assist with idea generation, grammar correction, and does not view their use as inherently positive or negative. However, SCCMS & S²TEM Centers SC firmly believes that all professional reviews, critical thinking, and thoughtful analysis should be done without the use of AI.

Applicant AI Use

Applicants may use AI tools for Growing in STEM Grant applications. However, all use of AI, and details about how it was used, must be disclosed in the application. This includes any ideas or text created by AI. Should this information not be disclosed accurately, and use of these tools is identified, the proposal may be administratively withdrawn.

General Guidelines and Information

- Completed applications must be submitted by 5:00 pm on **December 4, 2026**
- Applications **MUST** be submitted online.
- Grant application **MUST** be pre-approved by Principal or organizational site leader. This person serves as a secondary contact once the grant is issued.
- Checks will be issued by Clemson University to the school or organization for distribution.
- Project funds must be utilized by **April 28, 2028**.
- A final report, including expense receipts, will be required by **May 26, 2028**.
- Proposals including substitute teacher costs, outside consultants, and/or field trips will be considered if the item(s) is an integral component of a larger strategy.
- Any non-consumable items become the property of the district or organization. If the grant awardee transfers or leaves the school/organization, purchased items **must** remain at the awarded site. The applicant is responsible for communicating a new contact to SCCMS/S²TEM Centers SC upon transfer or leave.
- If the grant cannot be completed, unused funds should be returned.

Grant Calendar

This is provided as a guide to outline the timeline associated with your grant should it be funded.

- August 31, 2026 – Grant application opens.
- December 4, 2026 - Grant application due by 5:00 pm.
- February 12, 2027 – Funding decisions announced.
- March 24, 2027 - Grant awardees recognized at STEM Education Day at the State Capitol.
- April 28, 2028 - Project completed and project funds utilized.
- May 26, 2028 – Final report submitted.

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Grant Presentation Tips

- Do not type your name or your organization's name in the body of the application narrative.
- Describe/define any specific educational terminology you will be using if it clarifies the purpose or scope of the project. Not every proposal reviewer is an educator.



Scoring Rubric

Your application will be scored by multiple judges based on the following rubric.

Category	Exemplary (3 pts)	Adequate (2 pts)	Needs Improvement (1 pt)	Missing (0 pts)
Connections to the Profile of the SC Graduate: World Class Knowledge	The proposal specifically describes the knowledge students will gain and provides context for the learning.	The proposal describes the knowledge students will gain but may lack context or application for the learning.	The proposal hints at knowledge students will gain and is clearly missing additional detail.	The proposal lacks any description of the knowledge students will gain.
Connections to the Profile of the SC Graduate: World Class Skills	The proposal is intentional about including opportunities for students to practice and reflect on skills.	The proposal generally has opportunities for students to practice skills during the project.	The proposal lacks identification or awareness of the skills, but a case could be made for their presence throughout the project.	It is unclear how the skills are supported by the project.
Connections to the Profile of the SC Graduate: Life and Career Characteristics	The proposal clearly articulates key life and career characteristics that will be observed and documented throughout the project.	The proposal identifies life and career characteristics that will be observed throughout the project.	The proposal generally speaks about life and career characteristics but does not apply them to the project.	The proposal does not mention any life and/or career characteristics.
Implementation of STEM Integration Categoriesⁱ	The proposal clearly, effectively , and completely addresses an identified approach to STEM integration.	The proposal addresses an identified approach to STEM integration but is lacking in completeness and/or has some areas of ambiguity.	The proposal addresses an identified approach to STEM integration but is mostly incomplete and/or is mostly ambiguous.	The proposal does not address any identified approaches to STEM integration.
Purpose and Goals	The proposal clearly states the project purpose and specific <u>deliverablesⁱⁱ</u> are identified.	The proposal states the project purpose, and deliverables are identified but lack some details.	The proposal is unclear about the projects purpose and/or deliverables.	The proposal does not identify projects purpose and/or deliverables.



Authenticity & Community Voice	The project is specific to the student population, highlighting community needs and/or data. AI may be used as a tool, but the narrative clearly reflects human design and local context.	The project identifies a community need but uses somewhat generalized language.	The project does not identify a community need and uses generic STEM justifications likely generated by AI.	The project lacks description of specific knowledge
Evaluation	<u>Indicators</u> ⁱⁱⁱ and methods for collecting evidence are clearly identified in the proposal.	Indicators and methods for collecting evidence lack some details.	Indicators and/or methods for collecting evidence deliverables are unclear.	No indicators, or methods for collecting evidence are identified.
Resource Stewardship	The number of anticipated participants and the depth of their engagement is clear and is an exceptional return on <u>investment</u> . ^{iv}	The number of anticipated participants and the depth of their engagement is clear and is an acceptable return on investment.	The number of anticipated participants is indicated, but the <u>depth of their engagement</u> ^{iv} is not clear.	There is no indication of how many participants will be engaged.
Fiscal Alignment	The budget is a direct reflection of the project; every line item is tied to a specific deliverable. Funding is used for project specific tools/activities.	Most budget items align with the projects purpose, though some costs lack a direct link to the project specific tools/activities.	The budget and narrative are loosely connected. A portion of the request is for general supplies or equipment without a clear plan for project specific tools/activities.	The budget bears little to no relation to the project narrative. The request appears to be solely for the purchase of general supplies with no plan for project specific tools/activities.



ⁱ **Integrated STEM Education:** Focuses on real-world problems and supports the development of twenty-first century skills, informing students about STEM careers. Review the Categories of STEM Integration:

- **Multidisciplinary Integration:** *Learn about the same topic in separate subjects.*
- **Interdisciplinary Integration:** *Learn across subjects through coordinated instruction.*
- **Cross-Disciplinary Instruction:** *Use skills from one discipline to strengthen another.*
- **Transdisciplinary Approach:** *Learn beyond disciplines by solving authentic, real-world challenges possibly with community partners.*

ⁱⁱ **Deliverables:** The intended, tangible acts made possible by the grant that are delivered to some number of participants. Check out these examples.

- **Example:** Are you helping students to gain content knowledge or develop specific skills, or maybe enhance certain characteristics that will help them succeed in a STEM career? *“Thirty, 4th grade students will participate in three coding lessons we will develop using the Ozobots purchased with grant funds.”*
- **Example:** Maybe you want to promote family involvement in students’ STEM interests? *“Twenty-three 8th grade students will present their Citizen Science research findings to 60 or more community members at our first annual STEM isn’t Just for THEM Night. Spaghetti dinners will be served to students and community members.”*
- **Example:** Maybe you want to give students a new experience to inspire or enhance their interest in STEM? *“Nineteen 11th grade environmental science club members will visit the Carolina Raptor Center. Following the visit, they will create a Go Fund Me page to support the Center’s care of three indigenous raptor species of their choice.”*

ⁱⁱⁱ **Indicators:** The evidence you will collect that indicates your program’s goals are met. Check out these examples.

- **Example:** Are you helping students to gain content knowledge or develop specific skills, or maybe enhance certain characteristics that will help them succeed in a STEM career? *“All thirty, 4th grade students participating in Ozobot coding lessons will be able to work in teams to program the robot to complete an obstacle course. We’ll provide a video of one team’s robot in action.”*
- **Example:** Maybe you want to promote family involvement in students’ STEM interests? *Community members at our first annual STEM isn’t Just for THEM Night will be asked to complete an exit survey to determine their interest in future STEM events.*
- **Example:** Maybe you want to give students a new experience to inspire or enhance their interest in STEM? *“Environmental science club members who visit the Carolina Raptor Center will identify and report on actions they individually take to support raptors or other environmental concerns.”*

^{iv} **Return on Investment:** The relationship between how much is spent, how many participants benefit, and the expected amount of learning effort expected of the participants (aka **Depth of Engagement**).



Generally speaking, the fewer participants who are served, the greater the expected depth of their engagement should be. Check out these examples.

- **Example:** *Using our total budget of \$2,500 from the grant and \$93.37 in school funds, thirty students will receive 120 minutes of coding instruction. We will have enough materials to repeat these lessons with all three classes of fourth graders next year. *Note the added Return on Investment because there is a plan for the materials purchased, and lessons developed to be used again.*
- **Example:** *Using our total budget of \$1,975 from the grant and spaghetti donated by the school, 23 students, 60 or more community members and 10 teachers will participate in an hour-long STEM isn't Just for THEM event. *Note the added Return on Investment because the activities to be funded in this proposal enhance student research previously done in the classroom.*
- **Example:** *Following our field trip to the Carolina Raptor Center, the Environmental Science Club will focus our next 5 meetings on researching raptors, developing our Go Fund Me campaign and promoting it on social media. *Note the added Return on Investment because the activities to be funded in this proposal will launch continued learner engagement after the funded event.*

Proposals that score well are specific in their description of Deliverable and Indicators and are clearly attentive to a strong Return on our Investment.