

Portsmouth Schools Foundation Innovator Grants

(A mini-grant for innovation in education)

2026–27 Guidelines and Application

1. PURPOSE

The Portsmouth Schools Foundation (PSF) Innovator Grant Program provides funding to support **creative, innovative projects that enhance student learning and engagement** within Portsmouth Public Schools.

The program is designed to help PPS educators bring ideas to life that may extend beyond resources available through traditional school or classroom budgets.

Projects should directly benefit PPS students, address an identified need, and demonstrate the potential to positively impact teaching and learning. PSF especially encourages ideas that introduce new approaches, experiences, resources, or strategies that could potentially be replicated or expanded.

2. WHO MAY APPLY

The 2026–27 Innovator Grant Program is open to **Portsmouth Public Schools teachers and staff**.

You may apply individually or as part of a team. If more than one person is involved, please choose one **Project Director** to serve as the main contact for the grant.

3. GRANT AWARDS

PSF plans to award up to eight (8) Innovator Grants of up to \$500 each.

Applicants may request any amount up to \$500 based on the needs of their project.

Grant funds must be used for the project and expenses included in the approved application.

4. HOW TO APPLY

Applications must be submitted through the online PSF Innovator Grant Google Form: [\[insert Google Form link\]](#).

Applications Open	Tuesday, September 1, 2026
Application Deadline	Tuesday, November 3, 2026, 4:00 PM
Committee Review	November 4 – December 11, 2026
Award Notification	December 18, 2026
Grant Distribution	Early 2027

Late or incomplete applications may not be considered.

5. APPLICATIONS GUIDELINES

To help us fairly review each project:

A. Complete all required questions in the online application. When answering the **Project Narrative** questions, please do not include your name or your school's name. This allows reviewers to focus on the project itself. We recommend keeping each narrative response to approximately **150–250 words**.

B. Your project must directly benefit Portsmouth Public Schools students.

C. If you are applying as a team, choose one Project Director who will serve as the main contact and oversee the grant.

D. You may request up to **\$500**. Grant funds must be spent on the items included in your approved project budget.

E. Include a clear, itemized budget showing how you plan to use the funds. If your project will also receive donated materials, other funding, or in-kind support, please include that information.

F. Grant funds may not be used for:

- Salaries or stipends
- Refreshments
- Materials, equipment, or services already available through Portsmouth Public Schools
- Transportation

G. As part of the application process, please review your project with your **principal/director and receive their support**. A Principal/Director Support Confirmation is required for each application. You may visit the PSF website to **send the online confirmation form directly to your principal/director**, or **download the form and have your principal/director sign it** for you to upload with your application. Your principal/director will confirm that the requested materials or services are not currently available at your school/site, that grant funds can be managed through the appropriate school activity account, and that they support you sharing your project with other PPS educators if awarded.

H. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

6. HOW APPLICATIONS WILL BE REVIEWED

Applications will be reviewed by a committee using a **100-point scoring rubric**. Reviewers will consider:

Points	Evaluation Criteria
20	Project Need & Alignment <i>Does the project address a clear student or school need and connect to the School Improvement Plan?</i>
25	Creativity & Innovation <i>Does the project offer a creative or innovative way to enhance the student learning experience?</i>
15	Goals & Objectives <i>Are the project's goals clear, specific, and measurable?</i>
15	Budget & Use of Funds

Points	Evaluation Criteria
	<i>Is the budget clear, reasonable, and connected to the project?</i>
10	Cost-Effectiveness & Student Impact <i>Does the project make good use of the funds based on the number of students who will benefit?</i>
15	Evaluation Plan <i>Provides a clear and practical plan for measuring project success.</i>
100	TOTAL

Portsmouth Schools Foundation 2026–27 Innovator Grants

APPLICATION FORMAT

Here's What You'll Need

The online application will ask for the information below. You may find it helpful to draft your longer responses ahead of time and then paste them into the application.

PROJECT TITLE

Choose a short title that clearly identifies your project. Your project title will be used during the review process instead of your name.

1. PROJECT NEED & ALIGNMENT

What need or challenge will your project address? How does your idea connect to your school's School Improvement Plan?

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION — CREATIVITY & INNOVATION

Tell us about your project. What will students actually do or experience differently because of this grant? What makes your idea creative or innovative?

3. GOALS & OBJECTIVES

What is the main goal of your project? What specifically do you hope to accomplish? Include goals that you will be able to measure.

4. BUDGET & USE OF FUNDS

Tell us how you plan to use the grant funds. Include each item you plan to purchase and its estimated cost, including shipping and tax when applicable.

Maximum request: \$500

5. COST-EFFECTIVENESS & STUDENT IMPACT

How many students will directly benefit from this project? The application will also ask you to provide the approximate cost per student.

6. EVALUATION PLAN

How will you know if your project was successful? Tell us what you will look at or measure and when you expect to see results.

PREPARE TO APPLY — CHECKLIST

Before you begin, have the following ready:

- ☐ Project title
- ☐ Grade level(s) and subject area(s)
- ☐ Approximate number of students who will directly benefit
- ☐ Responses to the six project questions above
- ☐ Itemized project budget (up to \$500)
- ☐ Approximate cost per student
- ☐ Information about any other funding, donated materials, or support
- ☐ Principal/director's name and email address

- ☐ Principal/Director Support Confirmation completed and submitted
- ☐ Optional: website links, catalog pages, or images showing materials you plan to purchase
- ☐ Submit by 4:00 PM on Tuesday, November 3, 2026

Applications not following these guidelines may be disqualified.

If You Are Awarded a Grant

By submitting this application, you agree that, if awarded, you are committing to the following in accordance with PSF's deadlines:

1. Complete a brief Project Director's Evaluation sharing the results of your project. Due date: May 3rd, 2027
2. Submit a Financial Report and receipts showing how grant funds were spent. Due date: May 3rd, 2027
3. Use grant funds only for approved project expenses. If something in your budget needs to change, simply contact the PSF Executive Director for approval before making the change.
4. Provide a brief project display, including a description and photos, to help PSF showcase your work.
5. Allow PSF to share information about your project to highlight innovative work happening across Portsmouth Public Schools.
6. Participate in a future PSF event or opportunity to share your project with other educators and the community.

Questions? Contact Michelle Reddick, Executive Director

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