

# Ridgewood Education Foundation

## Classroom Mini-Grant Application

### FAQs

1. *Who may apply for mini-grants?*

Principals, teachers, students, parents, and RPS departments are eligible to apply and to receive grants. In fact, REF encourages applications from students, as well as integrated interdisciplinary, cross-department, cross-grade level, multi-school, and team projects.

2. *Where do I find an application?*

Classroom mini-grant applications may be downloaded from the REF website, [www.ridgewoodeducationfoundation.org](http://www.ridgewoodeducationfoundation.org)

3. *What are the grants committee's core review questions?*

The grants committee begins its review of each classroom mini-grant application by asking the following questions:

- Does the application address innovative instructional methods?
- Does it enhance the existing Ridgewood Public Schools curriculum?
- Does it expand the education experience of the students?
- Is the project exceptional and/or innovative?
- Does the project create enrichment opportunities?
- Can the project be replicated or shared throughout the district?

With respect to a particular application, if the committee finds that the answers to these questions are affirmative, then it proceeds with a funding discussion.

4. *What are the reasons grant applications are not selected for funding?*

Generally, grant projects are not selected for the following reasons:

- Proposal did not specifically tie into RPS curriculum.
- Proposal was for "equipment" without substantial tie to a project.
- Project was too expensive.
- Project did not involve enough students or student involvement was insignificant.
- Application was incomplete as it lacked a comprehensive budget and/or timetable.
- Proposal was really for professional development not a classroom project.
- Project had already started.
- The amount of available funds was too low.
- The "mix" of projects in that particular cycle was not varied.
- Project was for an after-school or lunch club without classroom tie-in.

5. *Does the Foundation fund the purchase of equipment, such as electronics, instruments, or furniture?*

The answer is: It depends. REF usually does not fund requests for equipment alone under the mini-grant program. However, if the equipment requested is integral to or supports an "innovative instructional methodology," then REF may choose to fund that application, provided that all other criteria have been met.

6. *Does REF fund after-school programs? Lunch programs?*

REF funds such programs, **IF** the project is part of an accredited course with potential to reach a substantial number of students.

7. *Does the Foundation fund textbooks?*

The Board of Education has the responsibility for providing students with textbooks that are used as part of the RPS basic core curriculum, but the Foundation has funded the purchase of textbooks for programs that have expanded upon the core curriculum.

8. *Does REF fund stipends, or travel and subsistence expenses for professional staff?*

No. REF is prohibited by school law from funding stipends of teachers already on the RPS staff, including those hired as part-time employees. Teachers may apply for professional development expenses (except for tuition) through REF's Alumni Teacher Development Fund (ATDF) programs. Instructions for applying for a grant from our ATDF are found at the REF website, [www.ridgewoodedfoundation.org](http://www.ridgewoodedfoundation.org).

9. *May I submit a request for my school that has already been funded in another school?*

Yes! If a grant project is successful in one school, we encourage other teachers to initiate a similar grant request for their respective schools.

10. *May the same grant project be repeated in my school each year?*

While REF is pleased to see the success of grant projects, teachers in such situations are encouraged to find other funding because the project, once it has been repeated in succeeding years, appears to have become part of the core curriculum. REF does not fund the RPS 'core curriculum.'

11. *May I re-submit a grant application that has been previously rejected?*

If an application addresses the reasons that it was not selected the first time it was submitted, then, yes, re-applications are encouraged. Also, applications not selected solely due to lack of available funds are encouraged to re-apply in a later cycle.

12. *May I proceed with my project before I am awarded funding?*

Yes – but such applicants run the risk that REF may not choose to fund the project. Further, REF cannot make any assurances that any project will be funded until the Ridgewood Board of Education formally accepts the grant monies. Projects initiated prior to this date run the risk of not being funded.

13. *Who can help with grant ideas?*

Students are your first resource and are terrific at brainstorming ideas. You may also seek out your school's HSA Representative to REF to discuss your idea, or any of REF's trustees. You may also contact the REF Executive Director, Rebecca Taylor Silbernagel, at [rsilbernagel@ridgewood.k12.nj.us](mailto:rsilbernagel@ridgewood.k12.nj.us) to discuss any grant questions or ideas.

14. *To whom do I submit my grant application?*

Grant applications may be submitted on or before the cycle application deadline to the REF office, located on the second floor of the Ed Center, 49 Cottage Place, Ridgewood. Completed applications may also be submitted via USPS mail to REF, P.O. Box 575, Ridgewood, NJ 07450. The instructions on the application include the deadline. A completed application must be submitted in hardcopy, with the original signatures rendered in ink.