



21st Century Skills Grants FAQs

The following FAQs are intended to help you in deciding whether you are eligible for a Dare Education Foundation (DEF) grant, and then, to help walk you through the process. Please let us know if any additional information would have been helpful to you in this regard so that we may add that as well.

Who can apply?

Any *current Member(s)* of the Dare Education Foundation can apply – teachers, administrators, principals, parents, business leaders, other organizations – even Dare County students themselves!

My school has already received a DEF grant this year. Will you award another grant at the same school in the same school year?

While DEF strives to serve *every* school, *every* teacher and *every* student, sometimes we are not presented with applications from every school, yet we have grant funds remaining to award. In this situation, it is possible that one school that has put forth additional effort would also receive additional funding.

What kind of projects are you looking to fund?

DEF would like to be an innovative idea incubator for project-based teaching strategies that enhance and improve student achievement. Ideally, we would be able to take on the “risk” associated with a new project, allow a pilot to be put in place so that some data/outcomes could be collected, and then the program would have an opportunity to prove itself in order to determine whether it should be put in place district-wide. DCS would then fund any successful programs going forward.

However, given the current financial constraints, we understand that even successful programs are being cut. Therefore, DEF may, at its sole discretion, approve some programs that may not have the capacity to be replicated district-wide or undertaken as a program that is sustained by DCS. Even here though, we are looking for projects that, should they prove successful, could sustain themselves at the schools making the grant application. FFHS’ Furniture Building project is a prime example of this.

Funding Priorities

Generally, the Committee has given funding priority to projects that have the potential to impact student learning through combining key elements of one or more of the Content Areas with one or more of the Learning and Skill Mastery Areas as they are enumerated below. Also, projects that have broad impact, effecting learning for large groups of students, a school, or the district will be given priority.

Content Areas

- ★ Core Subject Content – The core subjects are still the core subjects. They are English/language arts; mathematics; science; foreign languages; civics; government and economics; arts; history; and geography.
- ★ 21st Century Content – The following content areas are critical to success in communities and workplaces and must be emphasized in our schools: global awareness; financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; and health and wellness literacy.
- ★ Life Skills Content – To prepare students for success once they leave the classroom, schools must deliberately, strategically, and broadly incorporate the following content: leadership, ethics, accountability, adaptability, personal productivity, personal responsibility, people skills, self-direction, and social responsibility.

Learning and Skill Mastery Areas

- ★ Learning and Thinking Skills – Students must know how to continue learning and make effective and innovative use of what they know. Students must graduate with the following learning and thinking skills: critical thinking and problem-solving skills; communication skills; creativity and innovation skills; and contextual learning skills.
- ★ ICT Literacy – Information and Communications Technology literacy is the ability to use technology to develop 21st Century content knowledge and skills. Students must be able to use technology media to learn so that they know how to think critically, solve problems, use information, communicate, innovate and collaborate.

What we don't fund:

- We do not provide funds to sustain programs that are already in place in the schools. If you have ideas for ways to substantially transform or improve upon a program already in place, so that it is essentially a new program, we would be happy to review your application. For example, when our guidelines would not have allowed us to fund additional instruments for the band programs as they existed at that time, we were able to fund a new Strings Orchestra, as that was a new initiative that happened to fit into a larger program. [If you have an existing program that needs sustainable funding, please contact our Executive Director so that she may explore alternate, outside fundraising sources with you.]
- Unless it is absolutely necessary to the teaching strategies being employed, as a rule, we do not typically fund travel, food, field trips or incentives. However, we have approved a grant that included purchasing informational books to be used as “incentives” in part of a larger overall Common Core-based literacy project. If you are planning to ask for any of these items, please discuss this with our Executive Director.

- We do not fund items that the DCS' system already funds or should fund, unless it is absolutely imperative to the project at hand. For example, we have denied a request for a class-set of graphing calculators without them being used in some larger, project-based context. However, we may approve the purchase of graphing calculators as part of a program such as the Carbon Footprint project where they were absolutely necessary for the students to make calculations that would: 1) be incorporated into a community-wide report; 2) increase students environmental awareness and social responsibility consciousness; and 3) be used for future community-wide environmental plans.

What is the maximum grant award?

The maximum grant award per application is \$2,000.

If it is feasible that your project can be built-out over one to three years in \$2,000 maximum increments, you may apply for a multi-year grant as outlined below.

If it is feasible to collaborate with another school on a project that benefits both schools in the same school year, each school can apply for a grant and possibly receive up to \$4,000 per year for their joint project. Please make it clear in the application that this is a collaborative project and please return both applications simultaneously.

How do your multi-year grants work?

You must note that it is a multi-year request (up to 3 years max) on your *original* proposal submission. This request must also include a breakdown of goals to be met each year. Your annual funding allotment will be approved subject to meeting these goals and availability of funds. Please note that the Committee recognizes that projects occasionally do not go as planned. A forthright evaluation is encouraged and does not mean an automatic denial of future funding, though continued funding would then be at the Committee's sole discretion.

What is the application process?

Potential applicants are required to contact our Executive Director, Elisabeth Silverthorne, via e-mail at Elisabeth@DareEducationFoundation.org or phone at 252-255-5545 to discuss their idea *prior to* the project's intended start date. (Further, DCS employees are required to have already presented the idea to their supervisor and/or someone at DCS Administration in order to determine whether there are any DCS funds that can be used to fund the program in whole, or in part.)

After that discussion, an application may be submitted by the deadline and must include a letter of support from the Principal of the school where the project will be implemented or the respective Director of Elementary/Secondary Instruction. The application will then be voted on by the DEF Grants Committee within two weeks of the application deadline. Once a decision has been reached, you will be notified of the Committee's decision in writing.

PLEASE NOTE: It is to your benefit to submit as early as possible to allow for our Executive Director to review the application and ask for any additional information that may be helpful prior to the Committee's meeting.

What is the deadline to apply?

We will have two application deadlines for the 2015-2016 School Year: September 7, 2015, for programs to be implemented in the Fall/Winter of 2015 or later; and January 20, 2016, for programs to be implemented in the Spring/Summer of 2016 or later.

However, please note that grants, including multi-year payments, can only be approved subject to funding being available. Therefore, please verify during the initial call with our Executive Director that funding still remains for the respective semester, year, etc.

Who can I contact for more information?

For more information, please contact our Executive Director, Elisabeth Silverthorne, at 252-255-5545 or via e-mail at Elisabeth@DareEducationFoundation.org.