

WHAT IS A MINI-GRANT?

The Education Foundation of Oconee County, Inc., housed within the Oconee Chamber of Commerce, has developed a program offering mini-grants to Oconee County teachers and support staff who wish to implement creative and innovative educational projects for which funding is not available through regular school sources.

Mini-grant monies may be used to purchase materials, supplies, equipment, etc., necessary for the successful completion of the project. Specialized educational trips will be considered only if they are an integral part of the proposed project. Mini-grant funds may not be used as personal honoraria for the applicant, other teachers, or other school personnel.

Funds acquired through the Chamber mini-grant program must be used for a specific, outlined project, and must be approved by your principal/administrator.

HOW MINI-GRANTS ARE AWARDED

Mini-grant applications received during the award cycle will be reviewed by an independent panel of judges with experience in education but not associated with any Oconee County school participating in this grant program. The grant award process is designed to provide funds for special programs responsive to classroom needs and to the desire to know and learn.

Those applying for mini-grants may request up to \$1000 in funding for their individual project.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Any individual or group of teachers, counselors, media specialists, resource teachers, administrators, or educational support staff members (i.e. lunchroom employees, bus drivers, etc.) employed in any SACS accredited public or private school in Oconee County is eligible to apply.

HOW TO APPLY

The mini-grant guidelines are short and easy to complete.

Submit information under Project Guidelines by the deadline of April 3, 2026. We must have your email or hard copy and total project cost, at the Chamber to be considered.

Additional applications may be downloaded at:

<https://www.oconeechamber.org/education/mini-grants>

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR PROPOSAL

The following guidelines must be followed. Proposals not meeting the criteria will be disqualified.

1. All proposals must be typed on 8-1/2" x 11" paper.
2. Proposals must include a title page.
3. Have your principal/administrator sign off on the project.
4. Follow the sample outline and respond to every item as completely as possible.
5. The proposal is to not exceed ten (10) pages including the title page.
6. Please DO NOT STAPLE YOUR PROPOSALS.
7. If you wish to provide information not requested in the outline but that you feel would promote a better understanding of your proposal, it should be shown as "Supporting Documents" in your outline.

PLEASE DO NOT MENTION ANY NAMES OR INCLUDE ANY PICTURES IN YOUR PROPOSAL THAT WOULD IDENTIFY THE APPLICANT, THE SCHOOL, THE PRINCIPAL, OR THE CLASS INVOLVED OR YOUR APPLICATION WILL BE DISQUALIFIED.

PURPOSE

The Mini Grant Program exists to fund innovative, creative, and student-impacting educational projects that extend beyond traditional funding sources and directly enhance learning in Oconee County schools.

Projects should:

- Demonstrate innovation or creativity
- Address a clearly defined student need
- Include measurable outcomes
- Show responsible stewardship of funds
- Be scalable, sustainable, or replicable when possible

Maximum Request: \$1000

RULES & REGULATIONS

1. Eligibility

Open to any certified teacher, administrator, counselor, or educational support staff member employed by a accredited public or private school in Oconee County.

2. Anonymous Review

Program Description must NOT include:

- Applicant name
- School name
- Principal name
- Identifying photos
(Failure to comply results in disqualification.)

3. Allowable Expenses

Grant funds may be used for:

- Instructional materials
- Supplies
- Equipment
- Technology
- Program-specific field experiences (must be integral to instruction)

Grant funds may NOT be used for:

- Personal compensation
- Stipends
- Food (unless directly tied to curriculum)

4. Project Timeline

Projects must:

- Begin within 90 days of award
- Be completed within the academic year
- Submit a final evaluation + financial report

5. Financial Accountability

Recipients must:

- Maintain all receipts
- Submit itemized expense report
- Submit final evaluation report

Failure to submit required reports will make the school ineligible the following year.

6. Modification Policy

Changes to budget or scope must be pre-approved in writing.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Upon arrival and acceptance at the Oconee Chamber of Commerce, your proposal will be assigned a random identification number. Your cover sheet will be replaced with a cover sheet that omits your name and school information. This sheet will only identify you by the identification number. The judging panel will rank the applications received according to the extent to which the project:

- Challenges students at different ability levels
- Enriches the educational experience for students
- Promotes innovation and creativity
- Has obtainable and realistic goals
- Is cost-effective

Once judging has been completed, the Oconee Chamber of Commerce will then finalize awards according to the mini-grant budget set for the year.

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

Upon approval of a mini-grant award, the Oconee Chamber of Commerce will create a special account at the school in the recipient's name. The recipient will be required to maintain records of all expenditures. Upon completion of the project, these records, along with the evaluation of the project, must be submitted to the Oconee Chamber of Commerce.

OWNERSHIP OF MATERIALS

Equipment and materials purchased through the mini-grant program will remain the property of the schools.

*The person receiving the grant will have exclusive use of the equipment and materials for as long as the project continues. If approved for a mini-grant, changes may not be made to the project in terms of supplies/materials needed unless approved by the Oconee Chamber of Commerce.

*Any funds awarded and not used must be identified in final review of project.

PROJECT REVIEW

During the project, the Oconee Chamber of Commerce will review the progress of the program and may conduct at least one on-site review.

To ensure accountability, project directors (grant recipients) will be required to submit a written final performance and budget report to the Oconee Chamber of Commerce. Receipts for all purchases and a one page description of the project and the outcome must be included.

IF THE PROJECT EVALUATION IS NOT SUBMITTED, YOUR SCHOOL
WILL BE INELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE MINI-GRANT AWARDS THE FOLLOWING YEAR.

This project evaluation from the previous year should be forwarded to the below address by no later than May 13, 2027

Oconee Chamber of Commerce
Attn: Mini-Grants
P.O. Box 348 Watkinsville, GA 30677

MINI-GRANT SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2026-2027

Applications Released: February 23, 2026

Proposal submission deadline: April 3, 2026

Grant recipients announced: At Virtual Event on May 26, 2026

Funds awarded: Upon Sign Agreement and Acceptance Letter

Project completion deadline: April 30, 2027

Project evaluation/financial reports submitted: May 13, 2027

NOTE: Under special circumstances, exceptions to the above schedule may be made. All recipients will be notified of the outcome after judging has been finalized. After the awards period, if you have a concern, please contact the Oconee Chamber of Commerce for any exceptions to the schedule

Project Guidelines

I. Project Need & Problem Statement

What specific student need or learning gap does this project address?

Provide data, observation, or evidence.

II. Innovation & Creativity

What makes this project innovative or different from current classroom practices?

III. Instructional Objectives

List 3–5 measurable learning objectives aligned to standards.

IV. Implementation Plan

- Steps
- Timeline
- Number of students impacted
- Grade levels
- Subject areas
- Staff involved

V. Assessment & Measurement

How will you measure:

- Student learning outcomes?
- Engagement?
- Overall project effectiveness?

VI. Sustainability & Reach

Will materials be reused?

Can the project expand?

Will it impact multiple classes or years?

VII. Detailed Budget

Provide vendor quotes if possible.

MINI-GRANT PROPOSAL TITLE PAGE

Applicant Name: _____ Date: _____

Principal's Name: _____ School: _____

Grade/Subject Taught: _____

Applicant's Email: _____

Principal's Email: _____

Project Title: _____

Additional Teachers Included: _____

Email Addresses: _____

Total Requested Amount: _____ (Up to \$1000)

I have read the mini-grant application information and wish to submit
this application in accordance with the mini-grant application guidelines.

Applicants Signature

Principal's Signature

EXAMPLE OUTLINE

Return to: Oconee Chamber of Commerce
Attn: Mini-Grants
P.O. Box 348 Watkinsville, GA 30677

Completed applications may also be dropped off or email as PDF's to the
Oconee Chamber of Commerce or inserted in the overnight slot by the front door.

- I. What specific student need or learning gap does this project address?
- II. What makes this project innovative or different from current classroom practices?
- III. List 3-5 measurable learning objectives aligned to standards.
- IV. Implementation Plan
- V. Assessment & Measurement
- VI. Sustainability & Reach
- VII. Detailed Budget

"Supporting Documents" (IF NEEDED) If you wish to provide information not requested in the outline but that you feel would promote a better understanding of your proposal

NEW GRADING RUBRIC

Total: 100 Points

Student Impact & Equity – 25 Points

- Serves diverse learning styles or ability levels
- Addresses a clear and documented need
- Impacts significant number of students OR targeted high-need population

25 = Exceptional impact and clearly defined need

15 = Moderate impact

5 = Limited impact or unclear need

Innovation & Creativity – 20 Points

- New approach, method, or experience
- Encourages critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration
- Moves beyond traditional instruction

20 = Highly innovative and transformative

10 = Some creative elements

5 = Traditional approach

Measurable Outcomes & Assessment Plan – 20 Points

- Clear objectives
- Strong evaluation method
- Demonstrates how success will be determined

20 = Clear measurable outcomes + strong assessment tools

10 = Some measurable elements

5 = Vague or unclear measurement

Implementation Feasibility – 15 Points

- Realistic timeline
- Clear action steps
- Well-organized plan

Sustainability & Scalability – 10 Points

- Materials reusable
- Multi-year potential
- Can expand beyond one classroom

Budget Justification & Cost Effectiveness – 10 Points

- Detailed and reasonable
- Strong value per student impact
- No unnecessary expenses

Optional BONUS CATEGORY

Community Engagement Bonus – 5 Points

- Involves business partnerships
- Connects to real-world learning
- Community collaboration

JUDGE SCORING SHEET

Teacher Code: _____

Total Score: _____ / 100 (+5 bonus possible)

Category	Points Possible	Score
Student Impact	25	
Innovation	20	
Measurable Outcomes	20	
Implementation	15	
Sustainability	10	
Budget	10	
Bonus	5	

Judges Notes:

MINI-GRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT FORM

Due to Chamber: May 13, 2027

Please attach a list of expenditures for the project

SCHOOL NAME: _____

TEACHER'S NAME(S): _____

PROJECT TITLE: _____

- Briefly describe your project, describing grade levels involved, number of students impacted this year, whether you will be able to reproduce this project next year with the materials purchased this year, types of learning objectives/performance standards addressed, etc.
- Describe what assessment methods you used to evaluate the effectiveness of your project (i.e. how did you determine whether the intended learning objectives were achieved and/or the success of the project).
- Describe the results and/or your overall assessment of your project. How was your project successful as a result of mini-grant funding?

Other general comments: