

SUPPORTING TEACHERS AND LEADERS

Classroom Learning and School Supplies (CLASS) Grant

Ensuring Oklahoma students have the classroom resources they need to learn

WHY IS THIS INITIATIVE NEEDED?

Oklahoma's per-pupil expenditures are [among the lowest in the nation](#), and teachers spend hundreds of dollars of their own money each school year to equip their classrooms with the resources necessary for student learning. [Recent surveys](#) indicate this out-of-pocket spending has increased during the pandemic, with many districts forced to pivot to virtual instruction when staff and student absences make in-person instruction unsafe or impossible.

Through a partnership with [DonorsChoose](#), the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) will fund grants of up to \$800 per classroom teacher for the resources and materials they need to ensure their students have every opportunity to learn effectively.

HOW WILL THIS INITIATIVE WORK?

Oklahoma PK-12 public school classroom teachers will sign up on the [DonorsChoose.org](#) website and submit their project requests. Submissions must include an essay with clear, educationally appropriate goals linking their requested resources to student learning in the wake of COVID-19. DonorsChoose will screen and approve eligible requests and deliver supplies to the teacher's school mailing address.

WHAT IS THE RESEARCH BASE FOR THIS INITIATIVE?

- An [Education Policy Institute blog](#) reports that Oklahoma teachers spent an average of \$459 (adjusted for inflation to 2018 dollars) of their own money on classroom materials and supplies, with spending highest among teachers in high-poverty schools.
- The National Center for Education Statistics [March 2021 data report](#) includes additional information on average out-of-pocket classroom spending by teachers.
- A 2017 [Kids in Need Foundation](#) report showed that adequately resourced classrooms positively impact classroom equity, student behavior and student productivity.

WHAT IS THE OSDE'S TOTAL INVESTMENT IN THIS INITIATIVE?

The OSDE is investing \$6 million in federal coronavirus relief to fund Oklahoma public school classroom teacher projects and materials through DonorsChoose. The grant will be in effect through August 31, 2023, or until all funds have been expended, whichever comes first.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is eligible to participate in this initiative?

Any full-time, in-person Oklahoma PreK-12 public school classroom teacher of core or elective courses is eligible to apply for a grant under this initiative.

How can teachers apply for this funding?

First and most importantly, teachers must secure administrative approval prior to submitting a request for the grant to ensure their requests are aligned with district policies and allowable under state law. Once approval at the district level has been granted, teachers may apply beginning February 4, 2022, by creating an account on the [Teacher Sign-up page](#), selecting their school site from a drop-down menu and consulting the [Oklahoma teacher instructions web page](#) dedicated to this initiative.

After teachers have selected resources and provided a written explanation of how their project will enhance student learning in the midst of the pandemic, the application will be screened for eligibility. Once approved, materials/resources will be mailed directly to the teacher's school. Teachers will also create a public profile and page for their grant following [these instructions](#).

What types of projects and resources can teachers request under this initiative?

DonorsChoose funds a variety of projects. Approved projects have included classroom supplies (art materials, calculators, P.E. equipment, flexible seating, etc.), manipulatives and materials for classroom projects, and educational field trips aligned to academic standards and learning. Teachers can find commonly requested items [here](#).

Are technology resources and materials eligible for funding?

Yes, assuming they meet local district guidelines.

Are there district- or site-level responsibilities under this initiative?

Yes. Districts and schools whose teachers have received grants under the DonorsChoose initiative should utilize the [DonorsChoose District Partnership Program](#), which will streamline the inventory process and include a record of the resources and materials received under the grant by other Oklahoma schools and teachers.

What happens if the teacher who received the CLASS grant leaves the district?

All materials and resources secured under this initiative will remain the property of the school site that originally received them.

Are teachers allowed to submit multiple requests for resources if funding is still available?

No. In order to maximize the number of students impacted under this initiative, requests will be limited to one per individual teacher.

Can teachers request professional development with the DonorsChoose grants?

No. Only classroom materials and resources that impact student learning may be requested under this initiative.

For questions about the Classroom Learning and School Supplies (CLASS) Grant initiative, contact Chelsea Hunt, Executive Director for Innovative Programs, at Chelsea.Hunt@sde.ok.gov.

For information about federal relief funding, please see the [American Rescue Plan FAQs](#).