



Challenge Scholars Dream Fund

GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES

For Requests of \$10,001 or more



We believe that if students in West Side schools are:

motivated by their future and feel supported by caring adults, engaged in learning and achieving at or above grade level and ready, willing, and able to attend school every day **then they will be prepared for college or career training.**

The Challenge Scholars Dream Fund offers financial support to projects that help students feel motivated, be engaged in school and have great attendance. Based on feedback from students, community organizations, teachers and parents, a series of “accelerants” were identified as priority areas for funding. **Accordingly, projects funded by the Dream Fund must address at least one of the following:**

- Exposes students to new networks and opportunities
- Increases connections between stakeholder groups (students, teachers, parents, community organizations)
- Builds student voice and leadership capacity
- Creates safe spaces
- Maximizes experiential learning
- Cultivates Challenge Scholars identity
- Supports parent engagement and buy-in
- Celebrates and incentivizes positive outcomes
- Helps students understand and navigate steps to college and career
- Supports teacher or school district engagement and buy-in
- Builds trusting relationships and connections
- Honors culture

ELIGIBILITY

Non-profit organizations with a 501(c)(3) status or West Side schools (Sibley Elementary, Stocking Elementary, Harrison Park School, Westwood Middle School or Union High School) may apply for grants for programs that benefit Challenge Scholars on the West side of Grand Rapids.

Projects should be inclusive. Participation in projects must be open to individuals of any race, ethnicity, gender, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, age, national origin or disability. Applications from religious organizations for non-religious purposes will be considered.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Three to six grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000 will be considered per school year. Grant applications must be submitted electronically at <https://grantcentral.smartsimple.com>. A committee of Challenge Scholars students, parents, teachers/staff, and representatives from community-based organizations on the West Side will review your proposal. If the committee would like to recommend a grant, GRCF’s Board of Trustees will then review the recommendation. The process will take approximately 2 months.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR APPLYING

- Have a clear-cut, organized goal with clear benefits for Challenge Scholars or students attending Sibley, Stocking, Harrison Park, Westwood or Union.
- Be original, unique, well written and CREATIVE!
- Involve multiple stakeholders (i.e. students, and teachers, or parents and teachers) in planning and implementation.
- Clearly address at least one of the accelerants listed above.
- Project budget is required.
- When describing how funds will be used, include estimated costs of items to be purchased with grant funds.

GRANT APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- **Project Information**
 - Project name
 - Project purpose
 - Amount Requested/Total Project Cost
 - Proposed Start Date/Proposed End Date

- **Project Narrative**
 - What issue area or need area (from the list of Accelerants) does your project or program address?
 - What is the goal of your project? Your goal should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely. (50 words or less)
 - Project start and end dates.
 - Describe your project as instructed below. (300 words or less)
 - Provide a SPECIFIC and CONCISE description of the proposed project or program (who, what, where, when and how).
 - Include a project timeline
 - Specify how often the activity will take place, the location, length of each session, and on how many occasions the activity takes place (For example, an activity occurs twice each week for six hours per week, over a ten-week period).
 - Please provide further rationale on how this project will address one or two of the accelerants. Why is this approach the most effective? (200 words or less)
 - The Grand Rapids Community Foundation values partnership and collaboration among stakeholders as well as with individuals who are intended to benefit from programs or initiatives.
 - Please explain how you are connecting with other organizations in the community, schools, individuals and/or groups to achieve the goals of your project.
 - How will participants in the program inform, design, or lead the project?
 - Imagine that your project is complete and that it was a smash-hit. How would you know it was successful? (200 words or less)
 - If this request receives funding, how might the project continue if/when you no longer receive funding from the Dream Fund? Or is this request for a one-time expense? Please explain. (150 words or less)
 - The Grand Rapids Community Foundation is committed to creating a community that is diverse, inclusive, and racism-free. We expect our grantees to share in this commitment.
 - Describe what steps you are taking to create access and accommodate barriers for diverse populations to feel welcome and included at programs that you offer? (150 words or less)

- **Budget information**
 - Either upload a budget document or use the Budget Builder feature.
 - Indicate how funds being requested will be spent.

QUESTIONS? NEED HELP?

Contact Ben Oliver at 616.284.4922 or boliver@grfoundation.org.