



2026-27 Duke Energy STEM Partnership Impact Grant

Application Fact Sheet

Through a generous Math, Science, and Energy Education grant from the Duke Energy Foundation—matched by the School District Education Foundation Matching Grant—OCPS students and teachers gain access to dynamic STEM education opportunities. These funding programs emphasize workforce development and strengthen proficiency in science, technology, engineering, and math, preparing students for future success in high-demand fields.

Eligibility

- OCPS K-12 classroom teachers of science, technology, engineering, and/or math- subject areas may request up to \$5,000 for instructional projects.
- Proposed project activities must take place within the 2026-27 grant year (October 7-May 27)
- Project activities may occur before, during, and/or after school in STEM-based clubs (i.e., Robotics)

Grantor Focus

Funding priority will be given to projects that:

- provide a high-impact learning opportunity for students who are working to solve a problem
- include partnerships with local businesses to conduct high-engagement, high-impact learning activities
- provide hands-on learning opportunities, and a scientific discovery process
- mimics the tasks and practices of real STEM professionals who work to solve similar problems
- include opportunities for the students to share what they've learned with the greater school community
- expand access and opportunity for students from groups historically underrepresented in STEM fields, including one or more of the following categories:
 - Females
 - Racial and ethnic minorities: African American, Hispanic/Latino(a), Native American/Alaska
 - Native, Asian American/Pacific Islander
 - Low-income students (% eligible for free/reduced lunch or Title I designation)

Allowable Purchases

- Project supplies
- Equipment
- Software (with IT Approval)
- Expansion of existing programming

Grant Will NOT Cover

- Honoraria, salaries, stipends or substitute teachers
- Awards, incentives, t-shirts or food (unless part of an experiment)
- Programs that are state-mandated or existing programs funded by another organization
- Replication/maintenance of a grant awarded in a prior academic year to the same grantee

Application Requirements

- All applications must be approved by the school principal prior to submission via the [TIG application Form](#).
- Project MUST be conducted in conjunction with a business partner. The business partner must visit

<https://ocps.samaritan.com/> sign up and be approved as a school volunteer.

- The business partner must be identified in the application.
- This partner must provide at least 10 on-site hours of direct engagement with students and teachers.

Procurement Considerations

- All equipment and software purchase plans in your grant application must be pre-approved by OCPS Information Technology Services (ITS) before submission. If you are looking to purchase pre approved OCPS computer purchases by ITS please work with your school bookkeeper for a complete list of those items.
- Devices must also be approved by your school's technology coordinator.
- Purchase of devices must be completed through iBuy, following ITS approval.
- All spend activity must follow OCPS procurement guidelines. No purchases made prior to the official grant award may be reimbursed.
- Management Directive B-14 procedures must be followed for any electrical or structural configurations. Approvals must occur prior to a grant submission.

Application Timeline (subject to change):

Application Opens:	August 3, 2026
Application Closes:	September 6, 2026
Application Review:	Sept 7-Sept 25, 2026
Award Notification:	Sept 28- Oct 6, 2026
Mid-point Reporting Sent:	Nov 30- Dec 18, 2026
Unspent Funds Returned:	May 28, 2027
Final Evaluation Due:	May 28, 2027

Evaluation:

Each Teacher Impact Grant application is reviewed, evaluated, and scored by a panel of judges that include Duke Energy employees, teachers, district staff, and community volunteers. Applications will be scored based on innovation, student impact, alignment with funding priorities, feasibility, and sustainability.

Note: Most volunteer reviewers are not licensed educators, therefore may not be familiar with education pedagogy/terminology. For best evaluation results, make sure to write clearly and concisely.

Distribution:

Award funds will be sent via check to the school address to be deposited into the school's internal account. If purchases must be made through external vendors, bookkeepers may cut a check for that amount and send it directly to the OCPS Finance department to be deposited in the school's external account. Unspent funds over \$25 must be returned via check payable to Foundation for Orange County Public Schools.

Note: Supplies, materials and equipment purchased with grant funds may travel to a new school with the grantee should work location change but are not the personal property of the grantee. Upon resignation or retirement, the grant-funded supplies, materials, and equipment become the property of the OCPS school where grantee was last employed.

Grantee Responsibility:

- Post-award- The administrator, bookkeeper and teacher must sign the Teacher Impact Grant contract upon receipt.
- Receipts from all purchases must be included in the mid-point report and final evaluation.
- Post-project- Submit expense summary and copies of all receipts with the final evaluation.
- Unspent funds must be returned to FOCPS no later than May 28, 2027.