



CHALLENGE SCHOLARS DREAM FUND

Grant Application Guidelines

We believe that students who have strong relationships with caring adults, access to high-quality teaching and learning, support as they navigate academic transitions, and access to financial resources will be successful in their journey to and through college or career training. We also believe in amplifying community voice in decision-making and accountability.

We want to fund projects that support these outcomes:

- **Strong relationships between students, families, and community partners:** Students and families feel encouraged, have a sense of belonging, and have help accessing academic and non-academic supports.
- **Supportive transitions into middle school, high school, and college or career:** Students learn the formal and informal rules that contribute to success in new environments and have meaningful opportunities to explore academic and career pathways.
- **High-quality teaching and learning:** Students have academically rigorous coursework, engaging classroom experiences, and their unique learning needs are met.
- **Financial stability:** Students have fewer financial and economic burdens during college, allowing them to focus on completing a degree or credential.
- **Mutual accountability:** Education efforts in the community are coordinated and aligned around a shared value of equity, reflected in strong collaborations and partnerships.
- **Community-led:** Systems, programs, and interventions are informed and shaped by the voices, preferences, and perspectives of students, families, and community members.

ELIGIBILITY

Grant funds are available for projects that benefit Challenge Scholars in graduating classes 2020-2028. Applications may be submitted by:

- Challenge Scholar students and parents
- 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations (including colleges and universities engaged with Challenge Scholars students) or [groups applying with a fiduciary](#)
- School staff at Union High School

Projects should be inclusive. Project participation must be open to individuals of any race, ethnicity, gender, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, age, national origin, or disability.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications must be completed online through our [grant portal](#). All applicants need to create a new account and review their Organization Profile, which requires a listing of board members, organization description, primary contact, as well as current and last year's annual budget.

The deadline to apply for funding during the 2024-2025 school year is February 7, 2025 at 5:00 pm. Applications will be reviewed in October 2024 and February 2025. A first round of grant awards will be announced in November for any applications submitted before October 4 at 5:00 pm.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR APPLYING

- Have a clear-cut, organized goal with direct benefits for Challenge Scholars in graduating classes 2020-2028.
- Be original, unique, well-written, and CREATIVE!
- Involve multiple stakeholders (i.e., students and teachers, community members, or parents and teachers) throughout the project.
- Clearly connects to at least one of the outcomes listed above.
- When describing how funds will be used, include estimated costs of items to be purchased with grant funds.

GRANT APPLICATION QUESTIONS

The application requests the following:

- **Project Information**
 - Project name
 - Amount of money you are requesting.
 - Project start and end dates.
 - What is the goal of your project? Your goal should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely. (50 words or less)
 - Which outcome area (select one) does your goal address?
 - Provide a detailed description of the proposed project or program (who, what, where, when, and how)
 - Description of the Challenge Scholars who will benefit from the project.
 - Specify how often the activity will take place, the location, length of each session, and how many occasions the activity takes place (For example, an activity occurs twice each week for six hours per week, over ten weeks).
 - The type of activity that best fits your project (pick 1-2).
 - How do you plan to use the money? (150 words or less)
 - Is there anything else we need to know about your proposal?
- **Additional questions for requests between \$2,501 and \$10,000:**
 - Describe how or why this project will address the outcome and activity type selected above (200 words or less)
 - Which groups are involved in the project (students, parents, teachers/school staff, or community partners), and how are they involved? (50 words or less)
 - Imagine that your project is complete, and it was a smash hit. How would you know it was successful? (200 words or less)
 - Is this a one-time project or an ongoing project? If it is ongoing, how will you continue to fund the project after the Dream Fund money is gone?

SELECTION AND PAYMENT PROCESS

A committee of Challenge Scholars students, parents, teachers/staff, and representatives from community-based organizations on the West Side will review your application during the school year.

If your project receives funding, we will connect with you on how to access the dollars and the reporting (photos, written description of the project) you will need to submit after the project is completed.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DREAM FUND?

Contact Giuliana Estrada, program officer, at 616.454.1751 or GEstrada@GRFoundation.org.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ONLINE APPLICATION?

Contact Keri Jaynes, grants manager, at 616.284.4911 or GrantSupport@GRFoundation.org.