

## Education Innovation Fund

In response to COVID-19's dramatic impact on schools and overall disruption of daily learning and school operations, the Education Innovation Fund (the Fund) was developed as a K-12 initiative to support innovation in learning. The Fund is available to anyone working to provide innovative learning opportunities for our youth during these unprecedented times.

The Fund will support emergent approaches to meet students' needs by creating a flexible pool of funding that promotes resilient education systems and encourages transformative, systemic, and sustainable ideas. **Given the unprecedented and evolving nature of this crisis, please note there is not an expectation for applicants to have fully-formed projects and ideas. We encourage interested applicants to apply, regardless of the status of your proposed project.** The Fund will work with selected applicants to determine need and develop innovative projects.

### About the Initiative

The Fund has designated \$325,000 for small, medium and large size grants, which will focus on emergent strategies and will provide support via:

1. "Learning dollars" for families facing economic hardship to expand access to summer learning opportunities.

*Funding will support RESCHOOL's Summer Learning Fund, which allows learners statewide to access summer learning experiences grounded in their unique contexts and interests. Family recipients will receive support from RESCHOOL to navigate the summer learning landscape and will connect with the RESCHOOL team to share their experiences.*

If you are a family interested in applying for this resource, please visit RESCHOOL's website [here](#).

2. Funding for eligible applicants for locally-driven efforts to design and test new models of learning.
3. Funding to districts and others to develop strategies that address the disruption of school and district operations due to COVID-19 for the summer and 2020-21 school year.

Projects able to be expanded across communities, schools, innovation zones, and districts and/or which could significantly and permanently impact schooling or district operations are eligible for additional grant dollars (up to \$50,000). Empower Schools will work with districts to determine if their projects qualify for the additional funding.

### Eligible Applicants

Educators, school leaders, families, out-of-school learning providers,\* teams,\*\* school networks (district or charter schools), nonprofit organizations, superintendents, boards of education, or others partnering with districts, parents, entrepreneurs, and students.

*\*Learning providers are individuals or organizations that operate programming for youth in the out of school/summer space (e.g., Arts, STEM, sports, leadership, music, identity & culture, bilingual, outdoors, tutoring, etc.). As such, a learning provider could apply as an individual (e.g., teacher, artist, etc.) or as an organization (e.g., camp, STEM program, etc.), or as part of a team.*

*\*\*Teams may include groups of families, teachers, learning providers, or another combination of community members beyond this that have ideas they want to pursue together to support youth in the out-of-school/summer space in the short-term that might lead to new potential models of learning and/or collaboration with (or alongside) school systems in the Fall.*

### Selection Process & Timeline

Applicants are asked to submit Letters of Interest which will be reviewed and funds distributed on a rolling basis from now through the beginning of the 2020/2021 school year. Letters of Interest will be reviewed on a regular basis (June 1, June 15, July 15 and August 15). Submissions may be up to two pages in length, or comparably brief if submitted in another format (e.g., PPT, video, etc.) Final selection will be guided by a desire to capture a diversity of approaches to improving educational opportunities for students in Colorado.

### Overview of Fund Parameters

The Fund is intentionally designed to encourage innovative prototypes and pilots as well as bigger scale initiatives. The Fund's donors and partners will select grantees from submitted Letters of Interest. The Fund plans to give grantees a great deal of flexibility over the use of grant dollars. The size of the award will be determined based on the potential scope of the project and projected cost for implementation. Most grants will be in the \$1,000-\$4,000 range but some could be as high as \$50,000. See examples of potential projects and corresponding award amounts for guidance [here](#).

## Application Information

The Fund will provide grants to support innovative learning opportunities across Colorado. Funding will support innovative ideas (or an adaptation of an existing program in light of new circumstances arising from COVID-19) as well as partnerships to form networks within and/or across districts and communities to support operations.

Submissions can be an idea you are ready to build out and test this summer and/or a plan to form partnerships and co-design new approaches that could be prototyped or otherwise implemented in the fall. Letters of Interest should describe:

1. The project/concept: Include the idea you seek to implement, goals/learning objectives, anticipated outcomes, and how it responds to:
  - Challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has surfaced; *and*
  - Fosters innovation and leans into an equitable, responsive ecosystem of learning if we cannot return to the former way of “doing school.”
2. The people: The application’s prospective members, any previous experience working together, who will be the point of contact on the project and how funds will be allocated if the effort is selected.
3. Community resources that can be leveraged to execute the project. Please identify any partnerships necessary to implement your project.
4. The need: How financial resources will support the effort.

## The Strongest Submissions Will

- Partner with students and families to co-create solutions that reflect their needs and realities and support their academic success - *the link between students’ experiences at home and school has never been clearer. How do we leverage this connection to improve outcomes? or;*
- Embrace the opportunity to rethink and reinvent systems and structures that may serve as barriers to access and progress - *in this moment of disruption, how can we build more equitable systems and innovate to better serve students now and into the fall? or;*
- When appropriate, engage a diverse coalition of community members to support projects collectively – *how can community resources and knowledge support students’ learning and education?*

## Additional Information

Grantees will be asked to report on their implementation efforts and learning experiences, and will participate in check-ins (calls or video diaries) as well as limited virtual video meetings with Fund representatives.

For schools and districts that seek to identify solutions that have the potential to significantly and permanently impact schooling or district operations, Gates Family Foundation and Empower Schools will support this process through facilitation, rapid needs assessments, and the development of implementation plans.

The Fund has permission to publicize information from projects awarded grant dollars, with all necessary credit given to applicants.

Please submit any questions and your Letter of Interest to:  
[innovationfund@lyracolorado.org](mailto:innovationfund@lyracolorado.org)

