

Civic Education Grant - Request for Applications

The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) invites SUs/SDs to complement and/or amplify their existing secondary school curricula by providing students an innovative course of instruction on the history and principles of U.S. constitutional democracy, and/or an understanding of the public policy-making process, through the [Center for Civic Education's We the People](#) (grades 9-12) and/or [Project Citizen](#) (grades 5-8) programs. This short-duration, competitive grant opportunity will award up to ten proposals of \$1,000 - \$5,000 each.

Application Due Date: November 17, 2021

Anticipated Grant Duration: December 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

Number of Awards: up to ten awards at \$5,000.00 each

For additional information, contact:

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Civic Education Grant Application

I. Introduction

In order to support SUs/SDs in providing Vermont students the experience of participating in an engaging and academically-rich civic education curriculum, the AOE is offering a competitive grant opportunity to complement the regular high school and/or middle school curriculum with an innovative course of instruction on the history and principles of U.S. constitutional democracy, as well as an opportunity to engage with governmental processes and policy solutions through the [Center for Civic Education's We the People](#) (grades 9-12) and/or [Project Citizen](#) (grades 5-8) programs. *We the People* allows students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of constitutional principles and engage in opportunities to evaluate, take, and defend positions on relevant historical and contemporary issues as they 'testify' in simulated Congressional hearings. *Project Citizen* provides a hands-on approach to learning about our complex system of government as students collaborate to identify problems within their community, as well as to develop solutions that would require government involvement. Students then showcase their research and policy solutions to the class/community.

*A research team from Georgetown University has conducted independent studies of **We the People** that have been confirmed by the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse, which has the highest standards for research scholarship. The team found that **We the People** students scored significantly higher on tests of both civic knowledge and civic dispositions than their peers. These dispositions include (1) respect for the rule of law, (2) political attentiveness, (3) civic duty, (4) community involvement, (5) commitment to government service, and (6) the norms of political efficacy and political tolerance. <https://www.civiced.org/wtp-the-program>. Additional information and studies can be found at www.civiced.org/research.*

*A 2007 study conducted by RMC Research Corporation of **We the People: Project Citizen** students found statistically significantly greater gains among participants than comparison students in their knowledge of public policy. **Project Citizen** participants also demonstrated superior writing ability in articulating, researching, and advocating policy solutions in essays addressing public policy problems. For the full report, please click [here](#).*

The intent of this grant is to

- foster an engaging civic education opportunity which allows for authentic performance assessment, has an evidence base to show enhanced student civic dispositions, and shares with the community a Vermont focus on civic education; and
- engender civic literacy and cultivate a commitment to civic engagement in Vermont students.

This grant will:

- a. Fund a classroom set of *We the People* textbooks/ebooks for the teaching of the 6-unit *We the People* civics course of instruction during the 2021-2022 school year where the classroom teacher agrees to have a class compete in the state-level hearing, and nationals if selected; and/or
- b. Fund a classroom set of *Project Citizen* Level 1 Grades 5-8 textbooks, including [Nosotros El Pueblo ... Proyecto Ciudadano](#) as needed, for the teaching of the *Project Citizen* civics course of instruction during the 2021-2022 school year where the classroom teacher agrees to have a class compete in the state-level Showcase, and nationals if selected;
- c. Fund transportation and cover substitute teacher costs for a class of students to compete in a central Vermont location, should more than one Vermont school choose to participate;
- d. Subsidize the Vermont state *We the People* team and “wild card”, if selected, to compete in Washington, D.C. in April 2022. (approx. cost of \$1200 per student); and
- e. Fund appropriate *Project Citizen* showcase materials/resources and submission costs, as necessary.

Through a competitive grant process, awards will be granted to SU/SDs that show the greatest promise for developing a *We the People* high school support program or a *Project Citizen* middle school support program. Each grant recipient will:

1. Commit to student learning through the appropriate program process(es);
2. Collaborate with the Vermont *We the People/Project Citizen* coordinator at the AOE, and communicate the status of goals and deliverables on a monthly basis; and
3. Develop a sustainability plan for *We the People/Project Citizen* to continue beyond the allotted grant period at the receiving school.

The total amount available for this grant opportunity is \$50,000. Up to ten applications will be awarded. Grant applications will be reviewed by the Agency of Education after

the November 17, 2021 application deadline. Approved grants may be fully or partially funded. The final award will be determined by the reviewers.

II. Background

On January 29, 2019, H.R.849 was introduced into the House of Representatives with the aim of amending a 1965 education act by increasing civic education in public schools. Congress enumerated the following as support for this bill:

Congress finds the following:

(1) The dearth of civics lessons available to students across the United States has helped to foster a political climate that is deeply partisan and divided.

(2) Polarized party politics in the United States has fractured public morale in our institutions and has created an environment in which people are less likely to be well-informed on the current state of affairs and to participate in the political process.

(3) According to the Annenberg Constitution Day Civics Survey conducted by the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania—

(A) in 2018, only 32 percent of people in the United States surveyed were capable of naming all 3 branches of Government, while 33 percent of Americans were not able to name any of the branches of government;

(B) in 2018, 30 percent of people in the United States surveyed knew that the Senate is in charge of Supreme Court nominee confirmations; and

(C) in 2017, 37 percent could not name any of the rights guaranteed under the First Amendment.

(4) In 2014, only 23 percent of eighth graders were found to have performed at or above the proficient level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress civics exam conducted by the National Center of Education Studies.

(5) A lack of knowledge on the basics of the structure of our democratic republic creates an increasingly ill-prepared electorate which overtime has, and will continue to, contribute to a weakened democracy.

Vermont's lens of proficiency-based learning, personalization and student agency leads to the point of view that civic proficiency can successfully be attained through means beyond a multiple-choice test. The College, Career and Civic Life C3 State Standards for Social Studies (C3) focuses on three Dimensions -- inquiry, evidence and taking action,

in addition to the dimension of testable content knowledge. These three areas allow for the development of transferable skills and make learning engaging, as students “make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world” (C3).

III. Vermont Agency of Education Priorities

This competitive grant will support a project that:

1. Demonstrates sufficient capacity to manage a *We the People* high school program and/or *Project Citizen* middle school program;
2. Identifies how this grant is a complement to, and/or enhances, the school’s current focus on civic education;
3. Includes a plan for implementation, monitoring and sustainability within the high school and/or SU/SD.

IV. Project Award and Timeline

The grant period is projected to begin on December 1, 2021 and expire on June 30, 2022 with the expectation that program objectives are met and all reporting and monitoring requirements are successfully fulfilled. The grantee is expected to provide a plan, timeline, and budget request for the identified grant activity period.

Timeline

Grant Application Released: October 20, 2021

Application Deadline: November 17, 2021

Anticipated Grant Duration: December 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

Number of Awards: Up to ten grants will be awarded.

V. Application Requirements

The narrative sections of the application must be double-spaced, and the font must not be smaller than 12-point and **shall not exceed 10 pages. Please use the templates provided in the appendices for the grant narrative, budget and budget justification, and contact information.** Each application must contain the following sections:

1. Grant Narrative (See Appendix A for Grant Narrative Template):

- a. Project Description and Justification: A detailed description of the Civic Education program that includes:

- i. The rationale/data behind this project;
- ii. The intended civic outcomes for students;
- iii. The number of students that will be served;
- iv. Intended strategies for communication with and among the *We the People/Project Citizen* coordinator at the AOE, and any stakeholders;
- v. Strategies to sustain this civic education program through on-going initiatives; and
- vi. A description of the measures that will be used to determine successful implementation of the program and student outcomes.

b. Scope and Sequence:

- i. **Project Goals, Plan, Timeline, and Benchmarks:** Provide a clear description of goals, an achievable plan and timeline, and monthly project benchmarks. This scope and sequence must be developed for the time period between December 2021 and June 30, 2022.

2. Budget and Budget Justification: (See Appendix B for the Budget and Budget Justification Template)

- a. Include a detailed budget for up to \$5,000; and
- b. Provide a budget justification that is clearly tied to the scope and sequence of the project.

3. Contact Information: (See Appendix C for Contact Information Templates)

- a. Name, address, phone number, and email information for Lead Grant Contact and Business Manager. (Please see Appendices A and B)

4. Evaluation to be submitted by July 15, 2022:

- a. Project Evidence and Final Evaluation Plan: A detailed description of how the project goals were met, measures of success, as well as any challenges that were encountered. Additionally, the final evaluation will include:
 - i. An explanation for how this work will be sustained.

Application Submission and Review

- A. **Submission:** Applicants must submit an original copy signed by an authorized institutional official to martha.deiss@vermont.gov at the Vermont Agency of Education. Electronic signatures will be accepted. To be considered for funding, original signed applications must be received at the Vermont Agency of Education by 4:00 PM on November 17, 2021. Applications submitted by mail or hand-delivered should be sent to:

Martha Deiss

VII: The Review Process

A review panel will evaluate the eligible applications in accordance with the required application components.

Criteria	Points
Project Description and Justification	40
Scope and Sequence	35
Budget and Budget Justification	25

Score	Scoring Guide: Criteria are awarded a score of 1 to 20, with 20 being the highest. We offer the following as a guide to assist you.
16-20 = Excellent	The proposal demonstrates the highest level of thinking, capacity or impact. The content of the responses is exemplary in this particular criteria area and could be an example to others.
11-15 = Good	Exhibits ideas that will affect positive change. While the criteria are not fully addressed, the responses are thoughtful and striving for effectiveness.
6-10 = Fair	Gaps are apparent. Criteria are not addressed fully. Responses lack detail.
0-5 = Poor	Weaknesses are apparent in the criteria; the question is not addressed, or the logic is faulty.

The Agency reserves the right to award in full or in part, to reject any and all applications in whole or in part, and to waive technical defects, irregularities or omissions if, in its judgement, the best interest of students would be served. After receiving the application, the Agency reserves the right not to award a grant, to negotiate specific grant amounts and to select certain grantees regardless of points awarded as part of the process to meet federal requirements or State Board of Education priorities.

VIII. Award Administration

- A. Notification of the Award:** The Lead Contact will be notified of the status of their application within two weeks after the application deadline.

- B. Reporting Requirements:** The Lead Contact will provide quarterly updates on progress to a designated staff person at the Agency of Education.

Appendix A: Grant Narrative Template

The narrative sections of the application must be double-spaced, and the font must not be smaller than 12-point and **shall not exceed 10 pages**. Each application must contain the following sections:

- a. **Project Description and Justification** (40 Points): A detailed description of the professional learning that includes:
1. The rationale/data behind this project.
 2. The intended civic outcomes for students.
 3. Intended strategies for communication with and among the WTP/PC coordinator, AOE staff, and any stakeholders;
 4. An explanation of how this civic education program could be sustained through on-going initiatives; and
 5. A description of the measurements that will be used to determine how the project is progressing towards civic education goals within the receiving school.

Project Description and Justification:

- b. **Scope and Sequence:** (35 Points) This scope and sequence must be developed for the time period between December 15, 2021 and June 30, 2022.

- Project Goals, Plan, Timeline, Participants, and Deliverable Products (see below):**
- Provide a clear description of goals, including participants;
 - Include an achievable plan with supporting activities and timeline; and
 - Identify monthly project deliverables

Scope and Sequence:

Timeline	Goal/Purpose	Description of Activity	Participants	Deliverable Product
<i>Example: December</i>	<i>Student learning/hearing preparation</i>	<i>Order textbooks/ebooks</i>	<i>Teacher of record and business manager</i>	<i>Student learning/assigning of units</i>

Appendix B: Budget and Budget Justification

Budget Template: This form is a **required element** of the grant application. Justification for each of the categories shall be included in the **budget narrative** portion of the application. The funding request can be up to \$5,000.

Functions	Salaries (100)	Employees Benefits (200)	Professional and Technical Services (300) Consultants Contracts	Other Purchased Services (500) Travel Printing	Supplies (600) Food Books Periodicals	Miscellaneous Expenditures (800) Subgrants, Dues, and Fees	Total
2213 - Instructional Staff Training							
2219 - Other Improvement of Instruction Services							
2290 - Other Support Services - Instructional Staff							

Functions	Salaries (100)	Employees Benefits (200)	Professional and Technical Services (300) Consultants Contracts	Other Purchased Services (500) Travel Printing	Supplies (600) Food Books Periodicals	Miscellaneous Expenditures (800) Subgrants, Dues, and Fees	Total
2715- Field Trips (Education related)							
2901-Other Support Services							
Total							

Appendix C: Contact Information

Superintendent

Institution or Organization	
Name	
Title	
Address	
Telephone	
Email	
Fax	
Signature	

Lead Grant Contact

Institution or Organization	
Name	
Title	
Address	
Telephone	
Email	
Fax	
Signature	

Business Manager

Institution or Organization	
Name	
Title	
Address	
Telephone	
Email	
Fax	
Signature	