

ENTREPRENEURSHIP GRANT

2026 Call for Applications



Round 7 Projects: June 1 - Dec. 15, 2026

Applications Due: April 30, 2026

Missouri afterschool programs – receive up to \$2,000 grant to support middle and high school students in exploring and experiencing entrepreneurship in afterschool during 2026.

Open to all programs, new and continuing, to request funding by Apr 30, 2026.

- **Receive initial stipend and implement project between June 1 and Dec. 15, 2026.**
- **Access nationally-recognized curriculum, resources, and staff training.**
- **Join MASN's Youth Workforce Initiatives PLC, a professional learning community of peer afterschool programs and staff empowering K-12 students for their future careers with entrepreneurial mindsets, skillsets, immersion, and experience.**
- **Final project report due by Dec 31, 2026 with final payment to follow.**

CALL FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Missouri AfterSchool Network will award competitive grants this spring to Missouri afterschool programs proposing projects that expand entrepreneurship opportunities for middle and high school students in 2026. This opportunity is open to all Missouri K–12 afterschool and summer learning programs.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP GRANT:

1. Unleashing the potential of students as entrepreneurial thinkers and problem-solvers.
2. Engaging middle and high school students on a youth entrepreneurship pathway.
3. Growing afterschool program capacity for entrepreneurship programming.
4. Sparking new partnerships and networking between afterschool programs and local/regional ecosystems
5. Raising awareness of afterschool's impact on education, workforce and entrepreneurial development.

Grant projects are encouraged to draw upon curriculum, training, technical assistance, and networking through MASN's Youth Entrepreneurship Initiative. Grantees have access to nationally-recognized providers of resources for youth entrepreneurship education: Young Entrepreneur Institute and VentureLab. These partners are working with MASN and other state afterschool networks around the nation to expand entrepreneurship afterschool. Preference will be given to projects that foster new partnerships with community and/or regional organizations, and show potential to be sustained over time.

TARGETED STUDENTS

The target audience for projects are middle and high school students, grades 6-12. Projects should specifically reach female, minority, and/or rural students from communities with population under 50,000 – groups that are under-represented among entrepreneurs.

YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP PATHWAY

Projects will provide activities and learning experiences that start or move middle and high school students further along the youth entrepreneurship pathway (see Pathway diagram below). Previously funded projects will specifically involve activities that move students from Exposure/Exploration and Skill-Building for entrepreneurship to:

Immersion – initial connections and student interactions with peers and adult entrepreneurs; students build awareness of resources and opportunities and form relationships beyond afterschool programs; students recognize their community values them and their entrepreneurial ideas and abilities; students identify a specific idea or interest, recognize the value of a team, understand the role of mentors and advisors, and learn about outside programs and opportunities.

Experience – further connections and students working directly with adult entrepreneurs and local businesses or organizations; students utilizing resources and opportunities to deepen relationships beyond the program; students gaining firsthand experience from the community to apply toward their entrepreneurial ideas and goals; students pursuing a specific idea and interest, mobilizing a team of support, working with a mentor or advisor, and participating in outside programs and opportunities for entrepreneurs.

GRANT AWARDS

Grants of up to \$2,000 will be awarded to Missouri afterschool programs under the seventh round with half given at the beginning of the project and the remainder following review of final report. New programs applying for Round 7 can focus on any step in the Youth Entrepreneurship Pathway while continuing projects should focus on components of immersion and experience, connecting students with the community, or extending opportunities for students to gain experience learning by doing.

Projects should imaginatively and flexibly meet the needs of students, families, programs and communities. In-person, virtual, and hybrid programming, and other creative methods of safely engaging students over the summer, or during the 2026-2027 school year are encouraged.

Proposed activities might include any of the following: fields trips or tours linking students with area entrepreneurs or campus entrepreneurial programs, consultations with local professionals around student business ideas, youth selling experiences, entrepreneur-focused job shadowing, internships, mentoring and advising students on business startups, or similar activities.

Programs are encouraged to propose and build local/regional partnerships, such as with schools, youth-serving organizations, civic associations, libraries, career centers, chambers of commerce, business incubators, banks, small business development centers, economic development organizations, community colleges, and/or University of Missouri campuses.

Programs are encouraged to propose use of tools, curriculum and resources available through the Young Entrepreneur Institute, VentureLab, and other providers through MASN's Youth Entrepreneurship Initiative, or other Missouri-based providers. For resources to support entrepreneurship projects, please visit <https://moafterschool.org/entrepreneurship/>.

DUE DATE FOR APPLICATIONS

The application period for Round 7 grants is open March 2-April 30, 2026. Funded sites will be notified by May 18 and projects can begin as early as June 1, 2026.

EXPECTATIONS OF FUNDED PROGRAMS

Selected afterschool grantees will receive up to a \$2,000 stipend in two payments for direct support of entrepreneurship education projects. Projects will be finished by Dec 15, 2026. Grantees will become part of MASN's Youth Workforce Initiatives Professional Learning Community (PLC) with other funded programs, and agree to participate in the MASN Pitch Challenge. Grantees agree to participate in any project-related evaluations and complete a brief final report by Dec 31, 2026. Grantees will ensure project sponsorship is credited to the Missouri Afterschool Network and the Charles S. Mott Foundation. Grantees may be asked to share results on webinars or during conference presentations for afterschool audiences. Grantees will receive half the awarded funds at the start of the project and the remainder after submission of final report and evaluation.

FOR QUESTIONS OR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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