



# Call for Proposals

## MAA-Neff Middle School Partnerships Program

We are excited to announce a new grant opportunity focused on the professional development of middle school math teachers supported by The John and Mary Neff Foundation. Proposals are sought from higher education institutions, accredited middle schools or school districts, or nonprofit organizations.

### Guidelines for Project Design

MAA recognizes the myriad of challenges that mathematics teachers in the middle grades face in engaging their students in meaningful ways and delivering effective instruction to ensure their students develop the mathematical and critical thinking skills they need for school and life. The MAA, with the support of the John & Mary Neff Foundation, has designed this grant program to provide recipients with funding to implement programs, practices, and processes that will help them and/or their middle school math educator partners improve their practice and overcome specific instructional challenges.

Funded projects can include professional development activities/events, such as hosting conferences, creating communities of practice, conducting lesson studies and observations, procuring instructional resources that come with professional development support, job-embedded professional development opportunities, etc. Funded projects should align with the mathematics standards and/or profile of a graduate of the state(s) in which participants are located.

### Funding Details

- We anticipate making grants in the range of \$10,000-\$15,000 for a twelve-month period.
- Applications will be accepted from college and university mathematical sciences faculty at accredited U.S. (including U.S. Territory) institutions, accredited schools or school districts, and nonprofit organizations. Applicants from higher education institutions are encouraged to demonstrate a partnership with middle school mathematics educators. Either the middle school teachers or the college or university faculty may initiate the project and submit the application.
- Indirect costs of up to 10% of direct costs are allowable.

### Restrictions

- Funding for the program is limited, and the MAA will make every attempt to support a broad range of projects from various geographic locations. If any department, district, or nonprofit organization is interested in submitting more than one proposal, the proposals must support **different** programs and must have **different** personnel.

### Timeline

This MAA-Neff Middle School Partnerships Program will follow the approximate timeline below.

- February 3, 2025: Application portal opens.
- **March 31, 2025:** Applications are due.
- April 2025: Notifications of awards.
- May 2025-June 2026: Project activities.
  - For 2025 awards, all activities should conclude by June 2026. A final report narrative on activities and a final financial report must be submitted by June 30, 2026.

## Characteristics of Effective Programs

While projects will have a high degree of variability, there are some characteristics that effective projects will share:

- Distinct, fresh, and innovative
- Plans for successfully recruiting and retaining teachers from the target middle schools
- Clearly articulated rationale and measurable project objectives;
- Strong mathematics component that supports teachers' skills and/or confidence in mathematics;
- Highly competent project team;
- Some evidence base for the proposed approach.

## How to Apply

Applications must be submitted through Amplifund, our online application portal.

We encourage all applicants to click the **Download** button on the first screen of the application portal *before starting* their application to gain insight into all the information required. This will download a PDF to your computer with the full blank application form.

We recommend completing the application on Amplifund using Chrome or Firefox. There are known issues with Amplifund and Safari.

To create\* a free AmpliFund account:

1. On the "Application Details" page, click "Apply".
2. On the next screen, click "Register".
3. Enter the requested information about yourself and your organization (note: for academic institutions please select "Other" as the organization type).
4. Read and accept the terms and conditions.

If awarded, this account will be used to administer your award, so please be sure to enter all of your contact information correctly.

\*If your institution already has an AmpliFund account for another grant, you do not need to create your own. Amplifund is the grants management system for many organizations, not just MAA, so it is possible that your institution's grants office, or sponsored programs office, already has an account for your institution. Please check with them before creating an account.

## Application Materials

### Application Form

In AmpliFund, please complete the information in the fillable fields as requested.

## Please Note:

- Limit project titles to 80 characters or less. (The project title is what should be entered in the field **Application Name.**)
- If awarded, the name of the institution/organization, address, and other information you submit will be used to generate the award agreement letter, so please ensure that the correct name is included here.
- Be prepared to include the name and email addresses of an Authorized Signatory and Financial Officer at your institution who can accept the funds on behalf of the organization. These contacts and the Project Director are usually not the same individual.
  - The Authorized Signatory will sign the agreement letter. We will send the grant agreement letter to the attention of this contact. This person is usually in the institution's finance or grants management office.
  - The Financial Officer should be a person in your institution who will accept the award direct deposit for this grant, ensure that the funds are available to the project team, and help the Project Director with preparing the final expenditure report on the project.
  - **If applicable, we encourage you to discuss this project with your sponsored programs office or grants office before applying.**

## Project Director and Co-Directors

Please be prepared to enter contact information for the Project Director and up to four Co-Directors. If you have more than 4 co-directors, please be sure to include their contact information in your proposal narrative.

You will need to provide a bio or CV for each Project Director or Co-Director highlighting relevant skills and qualifications for the project.

## Proposal Narrative

The following guidelines should be addressed in the order listed using a font of 11 or 12 point and not exceed 5 pages. You will need to upload this as a PDF in AmpliFund.

- **Problem Statement:** What is the problem of practice or instructional challenge(s) your project seeks to address?
- **Goal Statement:** What is the goal of your project related to your problem statement?
- **Activities:** Describe the activities your project will focus on to achieve the project's goal(s). Include information about the mathematical content of these activities.
- **Context:** Provide information about the geographic and demographic contexts of the schools/districts/communities in which the majority of proposed participants teach.
- **Evaluation:** How will you judge the success of this project?
- **Timeline:** When will you carry out the activities?
- **Reception:** If this is an already running project, what is some feedback you have received thus far?
- **Impact:** Does this project engage middle school teachers who otherwise may not have mathematics education professional development? If so, how? Note specific ways in which the students in these contexts will benefit from the proposed activities.

## Letter of Support

You must include a letter of support from the schools or institutions that will be implementing or partnering to implement the program indicating their agreement to participate if funded. This letter should indicate permission from the appropriate personnel (principal, administrator, department chair, dean, etc.) to implement the project.

# Budget

You will be asked to complete a fillable budget form in AmpliFund. The budget form will have separate lines for you to enter line items against the provided budget categories. Each line item will also have a space for your budget justification. Please include a brief but thorough narrative justifying the need for each budget item.

For example, "Supplies - We are requesting "X" amount of money to purchase supplies such as pens, pencils, markers, and notebooks for the students to use for their daily projects."

If your budget justification is blank or does not include enough information to justify the expense, your proposal will not be reviewed.

Requests for indirect costs must be justified and are capped at 10%.

The following categories have been set up in the budget template. If you have an expense that does not fall into one of these categories, you may create a new category.

## **Consultants/Contracts**

Line items in this category can include: guest speaker fees, consultant fees, etc.

## **Participant Support**

This category is for any stipends or other payments to support teachers' PARTICIPATION in the project.

## **Project Leadership**

Line items in this category can include salaries/stipends for project personnel leading or organizing the project.

## **Supplies**

This category is for line items needed to successfully implement your project. They can include items such as t-shirts, office supplies, food (snacks/meals for participants during programming), activity materials (puzzles, origami paper, etc.), and more.

## **Travel**

This category is for any expenses related to project travel. This can include: participant travel, speaker travel, transportation costs, etc.

## **Other Costs**

Any other costs for your project.

The form will automatically total your line items and will not allow your budget to exceed the amount you requested at the beginning of the application.