



Corporate and foundation funders appreciate how invention education encourages creativity, collaboration, critical thinking and communication skills alongside STEM literacy and competence — and said that these are the essential skills they want students to have upon graduation.



Funding Your Program

Although typical invention education programs are not overly expensive to implement and sustain, your school will need to budget some funds. Getting started can cost as little as \$500.

- Program registration fees or curriculum fees
- Funding professional development for teachers
- Awards and incidentals for your school's community event (if needed). Schools can also use the publicity and exposure from these events to attract more support and interest for their STEM programs.
- Materials for prototyping, Makerspace equipment (if needed)
- Teacher stipend (if required and teaching outside of contracted hours or for additional planning time outside of contracted hours)
- Inventor event registration fees, if you would like your students to present at events

Here are some examples of how schools can secure funding to support STEM and invention education programs:

1 Grants: Schools can apply for grants from various sources, including government agencies, private foundations, and corporate sponsors. Seek out organizations that offer grants specifically for STEM and invention education initiatives.

2 Corporate Sponsorship: Schools can seek sponsorship from local businesses and corporations that have an interest in promoting STEM education. Companies may be willing to provide financial support, donate equipment or materials, or offer mentorship opportunities for students. Invention education provides local businesses with numerous ways to support your school. The connection may begin with employees visiting the school as mentors or judges at a school event.

Schools can organize events, fundraisers, campaigns or drives to raise money for their STEM and invention education programs and solicit donations from businesses and community members.





Invention education helps to cultivate not only a problem-solving orientation, but also a problem-identification mindset, which gives students the confidence to address challenges.

– InventEd’s Field Guide developed by Kid Museum, The Lemelson Foundation, and Nation of Makers



3 Crowdfunding: Consider a crowdfunding campaign on DonorsChoose, Kickstarter, or GoFundMe to raise funds for invention education initiatives. Teachers and schools can create campaigns to solicit local support to purchase equipment, fund field trips, or support extracurricular activities.

4 Parent-Teacher Organizations and Education Foundations: These organizations, attached to your school, may provide some of the funding needed to implement invention education. Education foundations may pay school registration fees and inventor event fees, so that inventors can present their hard work at state events. PTOs have raised money for inventors to travel to national events.

5 Partnerships with Nonprofit Organizations: Schools can partner with nonprofit organizations that specialize in STEM education to access funding, resources, and professional development opportunities. Some nonprofit organizations offer grants, curriculum support, and training for educators at little to no cost.

6 Partnerships with Vendors: Districts can negotiate deals with vendors or suppliers of materials and equipment. Schools can try to get discounts, free trials, or donations of STEM products or services from vendors or suppliers that are interested in supporting STEM education.

7 Local Government Funding: Schools can seek funding from local government agencies, such as city councils or county commissions, to support STEM and invention education programs. Schools may be eligible for grants or allocations from education budgets to enhance STEM initiatives in the community.

8 Community Fundraising Events: Schools can organize community fundraising events, such as STEM fairs and invention showcases. These events provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their projects and engage with the community while generating financial support for future programs.

9 Endowments and Alumni Contributions: Schools can establish endowment funds or alumni giving programs to support ongoing invention education initiatives. Alumni and community members who have benefited from STEM education may be willing to donate to support future generations of students.

Note: Involve your student inventors in your fundraising efforts. The voices and words of students will help sponsors understand how invention education increases employability and supports future workforce readiness.