



Engagement Grants 2026-27

Guidelines and call for applications

\$25,000 available in this pilot round. Grants for schools, professors and student groups that bring more students into spreadsheet skills, through campus competitions, faculty workshops, student clubs and team travel.

Early deadline, team travel: Friday, October 30, 2026. Up to \$10,000 of the round supports travel to in-person competitions held before December 31, 2026. Decisions by November 4.

Main deadline: Thursday, December 10, 2026. Decisions by December 18. Funded activities take place January through June 2027.

1. Why we offer these grants

The Foundation for Spreadsheet Education is a nonprofit that helps students build spreadsheet and financial modeling skills through education and competition. Many of the strongest campus programs started with one professor, a room, and a small budget. Engagement grants help schools and student groups start or sustain activities that reach more students, with a particular interest in activities that will keep going after the grant ends.

2. Our commitment on independence

Grants support students, professors and schools. They are not tied to any particular competition, organizer, platform or company. You may use a grant for any activity that fits these guidelines, with whichever providers you choose, and the review panel does not favor one provider over another.

Our criteria are based on the needs of schools, professors and students, and not on the needs of any organization that supplies events or services.

3. Who can apply

- A college or university, including a department, a faculty member, or a staff member applying on the institution's behalf.
- A registered student organization at a college or university, with a named faculty or staff sponsor.
- Applicants from any country are welcome.

Individual students do not apply directly. Support reaches students through their institution or club.

4. What we fund

A. Hosting a spreadsheet competition or event on campus

A regional round, invitational, case competition or modeling challenge hosted by your institution. Eligible costs include case materials, scoring and platform fees, venue, food, awards and event coordination. Any competition format or organizer qualifies.

B. A faculty workshop day

An experienced spreadsheet educator visits your campus to run a session for faculty on teaching spreadsheet skills and using competitions to engage students, followed by a hands-on workshop for students. The Foundation covers the visitor's travel; presenters are not paid a fee. Your institution provides the room, the promotion and the audience.

C. Starting or sustaining a student club

Club registration fees, costs of club events, and practice materials, so that no student has to pay out of pocket to start a spreadsheet or Excel esports club.

D. Team travel to an in-person competition (early deadline)

Transportation and lodging for a team of students, and one faculty or staff advisor, travelling to an in-person spreadsheet competition held before December 31, 2026. Any competition, format or organizer qualifies.

Eligible costs are transportation and lodging only. Entry or registration fees, event tickets, meals, and any payment to a competition organizer are not eligible, and neither are costs that the organizer or anyone else has already agreed to cover. Up to \$10,000 of this round is set aside for team travel; anything not awarded moves to the main round. Applications for A, B and C use the main deadline.

What we do not fund

- Grants to individuals. Travel support under D is paid to the institution for a team, not to individual students.
- Entry fees, registration fees or event tickets for any competition.
- Payments made directly by the Foundation to a competition organizer or other vendor. Grants are paid to the institution, which contracts with its own providers.
- General operating budgets unrelated to the funded activity, or activities that have already taken place.

5. How much to request

Tell us what you need. There are no fixed grant amounts. As a guide:

Activity	Typical request
Hosting a regional-scale event	\$2,500 to \$5,000
Faculty workshop day	The visitor's travel costs
Starting or sustaining a club	Usually a few hundred dollars
Team travel to a competition (D)	Transportation and lodging, typically \$1,000 to \$3,000 per team

We look favorably on requests where the institution shares the cost, in cash or in kind (rooms, staff time, promotion, catering). Co-funding is preferred but not required. The panel may fund a request in part, and will say so plainly if it does.

6. How applications are reviewed

Applications are reviewed by an independent panel of three to six people. No one who is applying, and no one with a financial interest in a provider named in an application, sits on the panel for that application. Conflicts are disclosed in writing and recorded.

The panel considers these questions together. They are not a formula:

- **Lasting impact.** Is the activity likely to continue next year, with or without Foundation support?
- **Reach.** How many students will take part, and how many are new to spreadsheet competitions or training?
- **Commitment.** What is the institution contributing, and is there a named person responsible with support from the department or school?
- **Access.** Does it reach students, schools or regions that are not yet served, including institutions with fewer resources?
- **Value.** What does the request cost per participant, relative to other applications?
- **Readiness.** Is there a date, a venue, a named owner and a budget that adds up?

For team travel, the panel gives priority to teams that could not otherwise attend, and to institutions sending a team for the first time.

Nothing is scored before its deadline, so applying early within a deadline carries no advantage. Every applicant receives a decision and a short reason. If we decline, we will say what would make a future application stronger.

7. Key dates

Milestone	Date
Early deadline: team travel (D)	Friday, October 30, 2026, 11:59 PM Arizona time
Early decisions sent	By Wednesday, November 4, 2026
Main deadline: A, B and C	Thursday, December 10, 2026, 11:59 PM Arizona time
Main decisions sent	By Friday, December 18, 2026
Funded activities	Travel: before December 31, 2026. A, B and C: January through June 2027
Closeout report due	Within 30 days of the activity

8. How to apply

Apply through the online application form at spreadsheetedu.org/grants. Your answers should fit on about one page. No audited financials, letters of support or long narrative are needed. If the form gives you any trouble, email info@spreadsheetedu.org. The form asks:

1. Your institution, and the person responsible, with their role and email.
2. Which activity you are applying for (A, B, C or D above).
3. What you propose to do, when, and where, in a paragraph. For team travel, name the competition, its dates and location, how many students are travelling, and what other support you have looked for.
4. Expected number of participants, and roughly how many will be new to spreadsheet competitions or training.
5. Total cost, the amount requested, and what your institution is contributing, including in kind.
6. Whether this has happened before at your institution, and what you expect to happen next year.
7. If we can fund only part of the request, what changes.
8. Any outside provider you plan to use (for cases, scoring, platform or training). This is for conflict screening only. The choice of provider is yours and does not affect the review.

9. Payment and reporting

Grants are paid to the institution (or to the institution's account for a registered student organization) after an award letter is signed. Funds must be used for the purpose described in the application; material changes need our agreement, and unused funds are returned.

Within 30 days of the funded activity, send a short closeout report:

- Number of participants, and how many were new.
- Confirmation that the funds were used as described. We may ask for receipts.
- Two or three photographs the Foundation may use.
- A paragraph on what worked, what did not, and whether you plan to do it again.

10. Questions

Email info@spreadsheetedu.org. We are glad to talk through an idea before you apply.