

## THE PROTOLABS FOUNDATION – STEM GRANTS

### Application Preview – September 2022

*This document is intended to help prospective applicants prepare to apply for a STEM grant from the Protolabs Foundation. It offers a preview of what you will see in our online portal when this grant round opens in September 2022.*

### WELCOME!

Thank you for your interest in applying for a STEM grant from the Protolabs Foundation. Before you get started, please review the grant guidelines and application process for this funding opportunity, which are shown below.

Phase	Month and Year
Grant guidelines and preview of application available	September 12, 2022
Application window opens; applications must be submitted online	September 28, 2022
Deadline to apply	November 9, 2022
Site visit (virtual) for applicants under review	January – February 2023
Final committee review and decision announcements	March 31, 2023

### Focus Statement

Recognizing the significant disparities in educational opportunity between white students and students of color, and between low-income and higher-income students in measures of proficiency in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), the Protolabs Foundation (the “Foundation”) will make grants to organizations focused on transforming students’ (grades 5-12) interest in STEM fields into a demonstrated ability to succeed in a STEM career, as well as to organizations providing assistance to parents and families as they support a child’s STEM education.

## Outcome Goals

The Foundation supports improved student outcomes in targeted populations on measures of STEM proficiency, including (but not limited to) 5th grade students achieving science standards, 8th grade math achievement and the likelihood of success in college level STEM coursework as measured by the ACT. Outcomes demonstrating increased student involvement in STEM-related programming will also be considered.

## Background

The [Minnesota Compass STEM Education](#) project reveals a striking disparity between students of color and white students in measures of ability in STEM fields, both in 8<sup>th</sup> grade math and in the STEM abilities of high school graduates. Similar gaps are observed when measuring the achievement of low-income versus higher-income students.

The Minnesota Compass STEM Education project also indicates that there are large gaps by race in elementary and secondary STEM achievement and that these gaps open early. They are not explained by lack of interest. In fact, key measures along the cradle-to-career continuum suggest there may be higher interest in STEM among students of color. And while approximately 57,000 students graduate from high school in Minnesota every year, only 20,000 of those students are deemed college-ready in math and science.

## Guidelines and What We Will Fund

The Protolabs Foundation will consider proposals for up to \$25,000 in general operating support or program-specific funding from nonprofit organizations and schools in the Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington Metropolitan Statistical Area<sup>1</sup>, in Wake and Durham Counties in North Carolina, and in the City of Nashua, New Hampshire. The Protolabs Foundation supports programs that provide students and teachers with opportunities for hands-on, inquiry-based learning experiences that significantly impact students' excitement about STEM careers. Proposals for funding will be evaluated based on the following criteria (non-exhaustive):

- The number of low-income and students of color in grades 5-12 reached, and the number of contact hours with students.
- The proposal's alignment with academic standards in disciplines supporting STEM education.
- Evidence of previous success or a high likelihood of success in supporting measurable student outcomes in STEM education (see Outcomes section above).
- Program design that is innovative, engaging for students, and focused on extending students' interest in STEM fields into demonstrated ability.
- The level of support provided for families to contribute to their child's STEM education.
- The sustainability of the program, considering current and future anticipated funding sources.

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<sup>1</sup> 16 county MSA as defined by the US Census Bureau.

## **Application Process**

All applications will be reviewed after the application deadline of 12 p.m. CDT on November 9, 2022, with funding decisions communicated to applicants in March 2023. The Protolabs Foundation plans to award up to \$200,000 in funding, with grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$25,000. Applications must be submitted through the Minneapolis Foundation's online portal.

## **Eligibility**

Funding will be awarded to 501(c)(3) nonprofits and schools that support youth and their families in areas of Minnesota, North Carolina, and New Hampshire where Protolabs has an employee presence.

## **Further Assistance**

As you consider applying for this funding opportunity, Christine Empanger ([cempanger@mplsfoundation.org](mailto:cempanger@mplsfoundation.org)) is available to answer questions about the content of your proposal. If you have technical questions about this process, please contact our Grants Administration team at [grantsupport@mplsfoundation.org](mailto:grantsupport@mplsfoundation.org).