

Student Research *for action*

A program of What Kids Can Do sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation



GRANT ANNOUNCEMENT STUDENT RESEARCH FOR ACTION GRANTS 2005-2006

What Kids Can Do, in conjunction with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, is delighted to invite proposals for a third round of grants in our Student Research for Action initiative. Launched in September 2003, this national program supports and documents the capacity of high school students, working with teachers and other adults, to conduct research *and* take action on important school and community issues.

Competitively awarded mini-grants (of up to \$4,500) underwrite the work of teams of high school students engaged in such action research.

What makes this program different

Absent from most instruction in today's U.S. public high schools are the very things success demands in the 21st century workplace: complex problem solving, effective communication, informed opinions that take in diverse points of view, the ability to exercise independent judgment while working in groups and across disciplines. Absent from most conversations about what kids can do is a view of students that encourages and welcomes their role as innovators, community builders, and contributors to social and intellectual capital. Absent from prevailing accountability systems that measure student and teacher accomplishments with a multiple-choice grid is a more expansive view of what constitutes ambitious learning and how best to demonstrate it.

Through its grants and the work they will support, *Student Research for Action* sends a different set of messages: that complex problem solving, independent judgment, and teamwork among students and teachers merit a place in every high school's curriculum; that what happens inside a school's walls should connect to the world outside; that young people have the capacity to reflect, analyze, and create new knowledge that can then improve their schools and communities.

Program goals

Against this backdrop, *Student Research for Action* aims to:

- support research by groups of students, guided by teachers and other adults, that is rigorous and relevant, substantive and action-oriented
- recognize the power of adolescents to engage in "real world" problem solving
- encourage teachers and students to work as a team and across disciplines
- demonstrate what students and teachers can accomplish together when challenged by high expectations and afforded the curricular flexibility and resources that allow for creativity and risk taking
- help students take well-informed and positive action in their schools and communities.

Eligibility guidelines

This year, like last, *Student Research for Action* will award on a competitive basis student action research grants of up to \$4,500. The competition is open to all schools linked to one of the several grant initiatives the Gates Foundation has launched to support high school reform

To be eligible for consideration the project must:

- involve a team of students (minimum of three), supported by two teachers (from different disciplines) and a community partner
- target a problem or issue meaningful to the school/community and show promise of having real impact
- lead participants through an extended period of research that includes a formulation of the problem, a research design, data collection and analysis, and the creation of a final product(s)
- put students in a leadership role
- earn students academic credit of some kind
- culminate in a public school-community presentation and a plan for next steps

Note also:

- Students must be the primary authors of the grant proposal.
- Proposed projects can either be new or an extension of an existing effort.
- Grants are for one year only and nonrenewable.
- No more than one grant award per school.
- Major equipment purchases must be well substantiated, indicating why they are essential and how they will be used and maintained beyond the life of the project.

Application materials

The application for Student Research for Action grants includes a cover sheet, a narrative that responds to a set of questions, and a proposed budget. We expect that students will play a major role in its preparation. This year's application directions are at the end of this announcement. You can also download them at <http://www.whatkidscando.org/studentresearch/2005pdfs/0506grantapp.pdf>.

Deadlines

Completed applications are due by October 24, 2005 and should be e-mailed to studentresearch@whatkidscando.org. Questions, which we encourage, should be directed to the same email address. We promise a quick response, as experience shows that this sort of back-and-forth makes for stronger proposals.

We will acknowledge by email receipt of your proposal. If you do NOT hear back promptly, please contact us so that we will know there has been a problem with transmission. Do not assume we received your proposal if you do not receive confirmation from us.

Grant winners will be announced by November 25, 2005, chosen by a review team that includes researchers who work with youth, teachers, student researchers, and school and community change advocates. The awards are for the 2005-2006 school year, with grant activities beginning in December 2005 and ending in July 2006, although it's also possible to extend the grant work and funds into the fall of 2006

Examples of student projects

To learn more about the projects we have funded in previous two years, please go to <http://www.whatkidscando.org/studentresearch/srhome.html>.

Grant Application Directions
STUDENT RESEARCH FOR ACTION GRANTS
2005-2006

The nine questions below serve as the grant proposal application form for the *Student Research for Action* program. Though we know projects may evolve in unpredictable ways, please answer each question as best you can at present. Also, please limit completed applications to five single-spaced pages, using a size 12 font, preferably Times. (The consistency in formatting will help our proposal review committee.) We expect that students will play the major role in writing the application.

Send completed applications to studentresearch@whatkidscando.org by October 24, 2005.

If you have questions or concerns while preparing this application, please contact us at the above email address or call us at 401.247.7665. We encourage your inquiries! Winners will be announced by November 25, 2005.

Application Questions

1. Context and participants: Tell us about your school (size, location, ethnic/racial make up of student body, anything else that is important for us to know). And tell us about the students on your team: how many, what grade(s), how did they become involved?

>>**Teacher and community partner(s) (to be completed by the teacher):** Tell us, briefly, about your teaching experience: how long have you taught, how does this project fit in with your work this year, what sort of experience do you have with project-based learning or student action research? Who is the community partner for this project and what role will they play?

2. Problem and hoped-for impact: Describe the problem or issue your action research project will address: What led you to pick it and why is it important? What do you hope the project's impact will be? Who will benefit and how?

3. Research questions and initial theories: What are your initial research questions? What data, if any, do you already have that can inform your work? Describe any initial theories or hunches you might have.

4. Research methods and analysis: What research methods will you use to answer your questions and test your theories? How will you analyze the data you collect?

5. Final products, action, and public attention: In what form will you present your final results? How will you turn your research into action and how will you draw public attention to your work?

6. Evaluation: How will you determine the success of your project—in terms of the research process, the actions that result from the research, and the project's overall impact? Name **four** things you hope your project will accomplish.

7. Obstacles: Few projects proceed without hitches. What do you anticipate as your biggest obstacles and how might you address them?

8. Timetable: Provide a rough project schedule (December 2005 – July 2006, for one semester projects, or December 2006, for two semester efforts). *Special note:* It was our experience the past year that some projects needed to continue through the fall semester of the following school year to accomplish their goals. It's essential, though, that a core of students from this year's project team is able to continue with the project when it extends into the next year, and that the same teacher(s) continue to oversee the work.

9. Budget: Using a table like the one below (yours will no doubt need more space), itemize the funds requested from What Kids Can Do, indicating the amount you are requesting per category and how it will be spent. You may not need funds for every category, in which case put "NA" (not applicable) under amount. Please also list:

- any additional funds required, what they'll be used for, and how they'll be obtained
- in-kind contributions (e.g., donations of equipment, space, technical assistance).

CATEGORY	AMOUNT	EXPLANATION
Personnel		
Office costs		
Equipment rental		
Technology		
Printing & publications		
Travel & meetings		
Other		
TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED:		

NOTE:

Personnel includes stipends, if any, paid to teachers or other adults working on the project.

Office costs include supplies and expenses like photocopying and postage.

Equipment rental includes the cost of renting special equipment needed for the project and not otherwise obtainable.

Technology includes software, devices like GPS or scanners, and similar items expected to last more than a year but critical to the project.

Printing and publications includes dollars allocated to producing reports, leaflets, videos, CD-ROMs, and other materials linked to the project.

Travel and meetings includes transportation costs integral to the project (e.g., car mileage), as well as costs related to attending and hosting meetings (e.g., registration fees, food).

Proposal Cover Sheet

Please put at the front of your application, on a separate page, the following information.

Project title:

Funds requested:

Name and address of school:

Submitted by:

Student representative(s) (give name and grade)

Teachers (give name and grade/subjects taught)

Community partner(s) (give name, title, and organization)

Contact info: email _____ phone _____