2026-27 SCHOOL YEAR

PENNSYLVANIA ODYSSEY OF THE MIND

Dear Prospective PA Odyssey of the Mind Team,

We are so excited to welcome you with open arms to **Odyssey of the Mind**, the world's biggest K-12 creative problem-solving STEAM program!

We are even more excited to be offering donor-funded Jumpstart Grants to help your teams get started. The average grant is worth $500. Each year, we aim to award about $5,000 in grants to schools and community organizations across the sate.

If you ever have any questions about the Jumpstart Grant program, please feel free to contact Ryan Balton at grants@paodyssey.com or (646) 265-2620. For questions about getting started in your neck of the woods, you can find your local regional director's contact information at paodyssey.com/regions.

We can't wait to see you, your students, and their creations at a tournament in the coming season. Welcome to the Pennsylvania Odyssey of the Mind family!

Sincerely yours,
The entirely volunteer Creativity Unlimited in Pennsylvania Board of Directors

What are Pennsylvania educational leaders saying?

"The World Economic Forum chose complex problem solving, critical thinking and creativity as the top three job skills for 2020. I can't think of anything that develops those skills more than Odyssey of the Mind does. Being on an Odyssey of the Mind team has literally changed the lives of students in our district and created memories that will last a lifetime."

– Dr. John Bell, Past Superintendent, Delaware Valley School District, Pike County

"In Odyssey of the Mind, students learn at a young age skills that will last a lifetime. They work in teams so they learn cooperation and respect for the ideas of others. They evaluate ideas and make decisions on their own, gaining a greater self-confidence and increased self-esteem along the way. They work within a budget, so they learn to manage their money. They see that there is often more than one way to solve a problem, and that sometimes the process is more important that the end result."

– Dr. Catherine Sweeney, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Pocono Mountain School District, Monroe County

"Problem solving is so important in our world, and I am not sure that educators think about its value and relevance when we are planning instruction. Rarely in this world do things go according to plan, and the best and most efficient work team is that team whose members do not shut down when the most obvious solution doesn't work. Instead, these individuals rise to the occasion. They apply their creativity and innovative spirit to move on quickly to plans B, C, D... without missing a beat."

– Dr. Nancy J. Hines, Superintendent, Penn Hills School District, Pittsburgh

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Creativity Unlimited in Pennsylvania is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization run entirely by volunteers.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

JUMPSTART GRANT PROGRAM

How do I apply?
The online application form is at paodyssey.com/grants.

Who is eligible?
- New memberships – *Any school or community organization, such as a library, homeschool group, or church.*
- Memberships that have not had a team compete at a regional tournament in the past four years.
  If your membership competed in 2023 or earlier and have not since, you're eligible for the 2026-27 grants!

What is the deadline?
The deadline to apply is **December 1, 2026**. Grant recipients are announced on a rolling basis as applications are received. The total amount of each grant awarded is subject to change and will be awarded at the discretion of **Creativity Unlimited in Pennsylvania** (CUinPA), the 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that administers the Odyssey of the Mind program in our state.

What is covered by the grants?
1. **Membership registration** with Creative Competitions, Inc. (one membership between $190-290)
   You'll need to register at odysseyofthemind.com/join, pay the fee, and send us a receipt for reimbursement.
2. **Regional tournament fees** (starting at $100)
   No action required! We'll waive your regional tournament fees.
   If you receive an invoice for regional tournament fees, don't pay it! Please contact us at grants@paodyssey.com.
3. **Stipend for supplies and tools** ($125 for each team)
   After registering your teams, you'll receive the stipend(s) with the reimbursement for your membership registration

What are the requirements to receive a payment for a grant?
Grant teams must have at least five (5) unique team members. Teams can have up to seven (7) team members. One child cannot be a part of more than one team covered by a grant. The team must compete at their regional tournament.

What is not covered by the grants?
Any expenses not listed above will *not* be covered by a grant. Any accommodations and transportation to attend a tournament are *not* covered by a grant. If your team advances to State Finals or World Finals, any fees or other costs for State Finals and World Finals are *not* covered by a grant.

What other resources are provided to help a new team?
Each of our regions offers a free coaches' training in the fall, and we encourage you to attend! We'll also put you in touch with experienced Odyssey of the Mind volunteers in your area who are here to help.

How are the grants funded?
The grants are funded by generous donors, including alumni and friends of the PA Odyssey of the Mind community, to provide greater access to our creative problem-solving program. Thank you to our donors!

Any other questions?
Please contact Ryan Balton at grants@paodyssey.com or (646) 265-2620.

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