Here are a few national grant opportunities for science education and STEM projects:

*National Education Association Foundation (December 1, February 1)
http://www.neafoundation.org/for-educators/student-success-grants
http://www.neafoundation.org/for-educators/learning-and-leadership-grants/

NSTA’s Shell Science Lab Regional Challenge (Opens April or May, due January 22, 2021) (Note: The challenge is now only regional near Shell facilities in AL, CA, GA, LA, PA, TX, WA: see website for details on specific locations.)
https://www.nsta.org/shell-science-lab-regional-challenge

Toshiba America Foundation
https://www.toshiba.com/taf/k5.jsp (Grades K-5 due October 1)
https://www.toshiba.com/taf/612.jsp (Grades 6-12 for amounts up to $5K, 3/1, 6/1, 9/1, 12/1)
amounts greater than $5K 5/1, 11/1

Voya Unsung Heroes (Opens June for April 30 deadline)

American Honda Foundation (New organizations due February 1, August 1, Returning organizations due May 1)

USDA/NIFA National Institute of Food and Agriculture: Farm to School; SPECA; others
https://nifa.usda.gov/grants

*Only public schools are eligible

Tips:

The first step is to go to the grant website and register your school because (1) you usually cannot submit your proposal unless you register first and (2) you will see the actual online application. They will not send you junk mail and they won’t sell your information to others. You may need your school’s tax-exempt number; get it from your school office. Remember, federal law requires foundations to give their money. They want your application!

Funders fund innovative, creative, exciting projects. They love projects that are student-driven and address a local need. They want to know exactly what you plan to do (activities) and student outcomes (changes).

Think about what your students need in the context of a project: What will your students do with microscopes, centrifuges, models, drones, probeware, or makerspaces? How will your students benefit? What are the demographics?

Seek out and collaborate with partners in your school and/or in your community because funders see partners as resources that support sustainability, strengthen your work, and increase opportunities for students.

Documents good to have on hand:
• Your school district federal tax ID and/or your state certificate of tax exempt status. Your school or district office will have copies. Have a hard copy or scan into your computer.

• Updated resume(s) for yourself, your supervisor, and other teachers/collaborators

• A lesson plan related to the equipment, materials, and supplies you are requesting

• The standards (your state and/or NGSS) you will address

• Simple budget that lists items and their cost (as well as items you already have as part of the project)

Check out Ward’s eCatalogs for ideas.

Ward’s reps can send you recommended materials lists (RMLs) for your curriculum, grade level, or project (e.g., elementary, middle, biology, AP bio, environmental science, etc.)

Proposal summary similar to an actual one submitted: Before and After

Before:
We want to improve science instruction using hands-on equipment. We want to provide quality professional development that will help teachers and students in the future. Our school need of professional development to implement skills that we currently do not possess. Our students will benefit.

Review Comments:
• Spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors
• What kind of science?
• What currently exists?
• What do they mean by “hands-on equipment?”
• How will the professional development happen? Where? When? Which teachers?
• What is the student and teacher need? How do you know? How will they benefit?

After:
The purpose of this project is to increase our students’ competitiveness for college and careers by building on our success and addressing our challenges. Over the past five years, our school district has made significant improvements and gained new lab equipment for our 9-12 biology, chemistry, physics, and environmental science classes. We have also increased our science teachers’ practices and experiences through semi-annual professional development offerings at our school. All our labs now have running water, gas lines, and new electrical outlets. Lab safety has improved since the local hospital has given us a supply of lab aprons, goggles, and gloves; our chemical cabinets now have locks. However, inventories of our equipment, interviews with teachers, and student surveys show that while our resources have improved, our microscopes are 40 years old and many are broken, we have very few glass beakers and test tubes for chemistry, and we have not purchased any new physics and earth science equipment such as data sensors and GPS trackers since we moved into our current space nearly 20 years ago. Students tell us that they are concerned that they are not competitive for college and jobs and teachers say that our current resources do not meet the demand for 21st century learning and achievement standards. We are therefore seeking funding for modern laboratory equipment for each of our four science courses and the teacher professional development that will insure that the teachers know how to use and link the equipment to NGSS and state standards. With funding we will meet the college and career needs of our 600 high school students and the six science teachers in the science department.

Contact Dr. Rusti Berent (rusti.berent@avanatorsciences.com) for complimentary (free!) assistance with your grant planning, applications, and additional ideas and opportunities available in your community.