



## EECA Announces Student Support Grant Recipients to Help Schools Meet Basic Student Needs

Egyptian Electric Cooperative Association (EECA) is proud to announce the recipients of its inaugural Student Support Grants! This program was created after conversations with local educators revealed that some of the most pressing needs in schools are for basic necessities. In response, EECA launched the grants to help schools meet those needs so students can focus, learn, and thrive.

Originally designed as a six-award program for the 2026-2027 school year, EECA received more than 40 applications from schools across our territory, each demonstrating a significant level of need. Because of this response, the program was expanded to fund 10 grants, and EECA is pleased to announce our first 10 recipients. The 2026-2027 Student Support Grant recipients are:



■ **Abigail Hammonds**  
Southern Region Early  
Childhood Programs (SIU),  
Du Quoin

To provide a flexible support system for pre-K students by offering hygiene products, clothing, food, bedding for those experiencing unstable housing, and emergency cash assistance for families needing temporary lodging.



■ **Allison Sims**  
Du Quoin High School

To provide financial support for gaps in medical care, including gas money/taxis for out-of-town appointments, over-the-counter medications, and other expenses not covered by a medical card and who have exhausted all options.



■ **Caitin Pflasterer**  
Marissa Elementary School

To support a program she created last year to purchase supplies for weekend food bags for students experiencing food insecurity, ensuring they have access to meals even when school is not in session.

■ **Amy Hicks**  
Carbondale Middle School

To address "period poverty" by purchasing a surplus of feminine hygiene products for the school nurse's office and Family Resource Center. The school estimates that approximately 75% of its female students rely on the school to provide these essential supplies.





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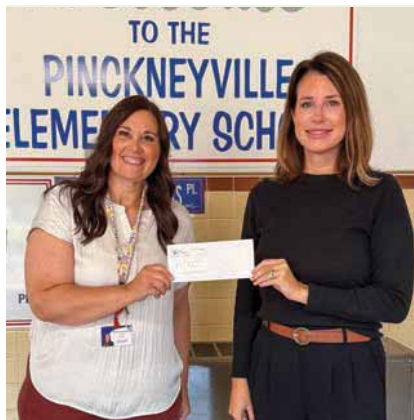
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### ■ Haley Stanton Pinckneyville Elementary School

To establish and maintain a student resource closet stocked with clothing, jackets, shoes, and hygiene items. Funding will also allow them to purchase specific items when needed, such as different sizes that may not be available through donations.



### ■ Kristin Petrowske Chester Grade School

Funds will be used to establish a Student Essentials Program at Chester Grade School by providing hygiene items, clothing essentials, school supplies, backpacks, and snacks. These items will be organized into discreet, ready-to-use kits so staff can quickly meet student needs and ensure children don't miss class or feel embarrassed due to a lack of basic necessities.



### ■ Melinda Pierson & Amy Prudencio Carbondale Community High School

To supplement the clothing closet, ensuring students have access to clean, seasonally appropriate clothing when they need it. Funds would also be used to purchase size-specific items such as underwear, socks, leggings, and shoes.



### ■ Natalie Hubler Du Quoin Middle School

Grant funds will support a school-based clothing closet and hygiene pantry by purchasing size-specific clothing as needed, including underwear, socks, sweatpants, leggings, hoodies, and coats, as well as hygiene products such as deodorant, shampoo, toothpaste, and feminine care items.

**Candice M Brehm**



■ **Sarah Brennfleck**  
**Sparta Lincoln School**

Funding will be used to purchase items for students who need daily support with basic needs such as clean, seasonally appropriate clothing, socks, and hygiene supplies. This includes pants for younger students, underwear, baby wipes, personal wipes for older students to clean up at school, deodorant, and feminine hygiene products.



■ **Michelle Hamilton**  
**Steeleville High School**

Funding will be used to support "lunch bunch" groups to give students the opportunity to have a special lunch with peers and a trusted adult for conversation and informal check-ins about their experiences and well-being. It will also provide water bottles for students to keep in the classroom, helping reduce frequent trips out of the room while also giving them something many of their peers already have, helping them feel more included.

This year's projects will address a wide range of student needs, including hygiene supplies and clothing, support for medical assistance, weekend food bags, and transportation assistance for students. Recipients were selected based on how clearly their applications demonstrated need, including specific examples, data showing how many students would be impacted, and the impact on students.

In addition to awarding the grants, EECA has created a list of requested items from participating schools to share with the community. The hope is that individuals, businesses, and organizations will choose to help meet these needs directly by donating requested items to the schools. We are excited to launch this program and look forward to seeing this program grow and make an impact for years to come.

**Learn more**

[eeeca.coop/student-support-grants](https://eeeca.coop/student-support-grants)



## Operation Round Up

Thanks to the generosity of our members who participate in Operation Round Up, we were proud to present Specialized Equine Services with a \$1,500 grant to help provide therapeutic riding sessions for veterans and individuals living with disabilities.

The funds will help them purchase adaptive equipment and provide scholarships for individuals who cannot afford the program fees.

Thank you to all of our members who choose to participate in Operation Round Up and make gifts like this possible.

**Jeffrey K Deutsch**

*Pictured L to R: EECA's Roni Croxell, Debbie Cooper, Executive Director of Specialized Equine Services, and EECA's Brooke Guthman.*



**LEARN MORE OR SIGN UP TO CONTRIBUTE:**

[eeeca.coop/roundup](https://eeeca.coop/roundup)



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

September kicks off the fall shoulder season, when cooler mornings and milder evenings often mean you can give your heating and cooling system a break. Open windows, use ceiling fans and enjoy the fresh air whenever temperatures allow. It's also the perfect time to schedule annual HVAC maintenance before colder weather arrives. Because demand is typically lower during the fall, heating and cooling professionals often have greater availability, making it easier to book an appointment. Regular maintenance can improve your system's efficiency, help prevent unexpected breakdowns and keep your home comfortable all year long.

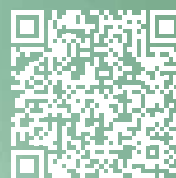
*Source: Dept. of Energy*



## APPLY NOW Classroom Empowerment Grants

EECA will once again award ten (10) Classroom Empowerment Grants to local teachers and administrators for the 2026-27 school year! These grants help enhance educational opportunities for students in our service territory by supporting innovative classroom projects and creative learning initiatives.

Grant applications will be available on our website beginning September 1, with a submission deadline of November 6. Grant recipients will be selected and announced in early December. To learn more or apply, visit [eeca.coop](http://eeca.coop) or scan the QR code.



## MEMBER PRIZES

Every month we will have three member names hidden throughout our Egyptian Electric News section. If you find your name, call our office and identify yourself and the page that it is on and you will win a \$10 credit on your next electric bill.