



Application Form and Instructions
15th Annual Daniel Swets Robotics Materials Award (2026)
NASA South Dakota Space Grant Consortium
(This Announcement Released on January 26, 2026)
Application Deadline: **March 13, 2026**



The NASA South Dakota Space Grant Consortium (SDSGC) <https://sd.spacegrant.org> invites applications from South Dakota teachers and informal educators for the **15th Annual Daniel Swets Robotics Materials Awards** for a total of up to \$10,000 (individual award applications limited to a maximum of \$5,000) in memory of the unprecedented enthusiasm and vision that Dr. Dan Swets brought to the state of South Dakota in the field of robotics.

About the Award

Dr. Swets, founder of the South Dakota Robotics Association (which has since evolved into other robotics organizations), saw the value of robotics in recruiting students into science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) at an early age. He strove to provide those opportunities for students throughout their educational career. Not only does this help young people in science and engineering in general, but it also produces high quality students that NASA is looking toward to help fulfill its mission. Dr. Swets served on the Management Team of the SD Space Grant Consortium (SDSGC) for 15 years. SDSGC provides this annual award to a South Dakota teacher or informal educator of robotics who will carry on these traditions in memory of Dr. Swets and the three other gentlemen who tragically lost their lives in an airplane crash on December 9, 2011; Mr. Kevin Anderson, Mr. Joshua Lambrecht, and pilot Mr. Brian Blake, while on their way from Sioux Falls to Rapid City to assist with a robotics program.

Purpose

This funding is open to South Dakota teachers/educators who either: A) have taken robotics training or plan to take robotics training and want to begin new robotics programs and teams, or B) have sustained robotics programs/curriculum in their classrooms or at their schools that are in need of additional support due to growth in the number of student participants or aging robotics materials. First-time applicants to this award and teachers/educators at schools/organizations that currently don't have robotics programs are encouraged to apply. Past winners and teachers/educators with existing robotics programs at their institutions are also eligible.

Application

Please submit a **one-page** Letter of Intent attached to the completed application form on the following page. The Letter of Intent must: 1) describe the robotic materials that you request to purchase (with a cost estimate up to a maximum of \$5,000 including shipping), and 2) explain how the materials will be used for educational purposes. Computer and clothing purchases are not allowed. If you already have robotics programs/curriculum in your classroom or at your school, please briefly describe that. If you haven't yet taken robotics training, but plan to take it, please describe when and where you plan to do that. Usage of the robotics materials requested under this grant may be collaborative among a group of educators who plan to share the

materials. **Include the company name, address, phone number, and/or website address of the robotics supplier where the materials can be ordered, as well as the specific “item numbers” or “Product ID” numbers of the robotics materials that you wish to order from whichever website or catalogue you are using.** This will facilitate ordering. *(Note: The robotics materials will be purchased directly by SDSGC and either delivered to, or picked up by, the award recipient).*

Non-federal cost sharing (i.e., in-kind “matching funds”) is not a requirement, but it is welcome if it can be provided.

Application Submission and Deadline

One completed copy of: A) the following application form, and B) the Letter of Intent, must be received as a **single electronic file** (Word or PDF format preferred) via email by **March 13, 2026** to:

Dr. Todd Letcher, Director, SDSGC
Email: Todd.Letcher@sdstate.edu

Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted. We anticipate notifying award winner(s) and all other applicants by March 31, 2026. Information on winning projects will be posted at: <https://sdspacegrant.sdsmt.edu/DanSwetsRoboticsAward.html>

Questions?

Questions can be directed to Dr. Todd Letcher at todd.leitcher@sdstate.edu or 605-688-5311.

Reporting and Evaluation

Winners will need to complete an evaluation survey provided by SDSGC Program Evaluator Steckelberg Consulting, LLC, at or near the end of their first project year, which will include the number and ages of students reached and the educational impacts of the project. Because there is a shift in the start and end dates of our grant cycle, we do not yet have guidance on when this survey will be due.

Application Form
Daniel Swets Robotics Materials Award for 2026
NASA South Dakota Space Grant Consortium

Name _____

School or Educational Organization _____

School Address _____ Phone _____

E-mail address _____

If you have received robotics training in the past, please indicate when and where, and the name of the trainer/instructor, if you recall.

Have you previously received Space Grant Consortium funding? ☐Yes ☐No

Signature (or typed name)

Date