

## Unit 103 Innovation Fund

The ACBL Unit 103 Board<sup>1</sup> has a new initiative!

We exist to support and advance Duplicate Bridge across Minnesota. As such, we want to invest in our Players, in our Clubs, and in our Unit's future. We have recently set *Five Priority Investment Areas* –

1. **Recruitment of New Players**
2. **Supports for Current Players**, especially novice and advancing players
3. **Supports for Clubs** – for their *growth*, or one-time operational needs
4. **Getting Past Players Back**
5. **Ongoing Innovation**

To advance the last priority, we recently created **\$1000 Innovation Fund**. We Board members understand that we represent you, and we created this mechanism as one way to ask for your ideas regarding how *advance* this game we all love.

We *want to hear* your innovative ideas, and what support you might need from this fund to try them out! Ideas can be submitted by *individual players, or by clubs*.

### The Challenge

We are looking for your ideas to **recruit** new players, **retain** current members, and **return** lapsed members.

### Criteria for Selection

- **Creativity.** We are looking for ideas that try something new, and advance one or more of the above five priorities.
- **Practicality.** The player or club who submits the idea must be able to put the idea into action. In other words, this isn't just about submitting ideas. It is about trying them out.
- **Possibly Replicable.** The submitter is asked to estimate whether other clubs or bridge players could benefit from the idea, and a sense of scale (e.g. *how many; how diverse*).
- **Willingness to Share Learning.** The player or club is willing to capture, and share, learnings about how the idea went and its results. Know that it is ok if the idea didn't work well ... just that learning re: *why or why not* was captured. Learnings must be shared with the innovation committee and Board, and might be shared statewide to all.

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<sup>1</sup> MN is divided into two ACBL Units. Unit 103 covers bridge players and clubs in St Paul, eastern suburbs and all of Greater MN. Unit 178 covers Minneapolis and western suburban areas. Both units work together to advance the game of bridge.

- **No Tails.** The submitter has no expectation of automatic ongoing funding. This fund is primarily for a one-time grant to jump-start, or try an idea. (If the submitter has a multi-year idea, please submit it – but know that it may or may not get funded in subsequent years.)

**Process:** We want to keep the process *very simple* – for you as a submitter, and for us as reviewers. A five-member innovations fund committee has been created. The committee will review all submissions, and recommend proposals to the Unit 103 Board. The Board will make the final determinations. All submitters will hear back whether or not their idea was funded.

### CY 2025 Timeline

BY	
<i>January 31</i>	Send out <i>request for proposals</i> via two routes, 1.) by <i>Pianola</i> blast to all active players in Unit 103, and 2.) by Email message to all Club Managers
<i>March 31</i>	Deadline for grant submissions
<i>April 16</i>	Innovations team makes recommendations to Unit 103 Board re: proposals
<i>May 31</i>	Unit 103 decision re: funding of proposals
<i>June 15</i>	All submitters informed of the funding decisions
<i>December 15</i>	Grantees submit “learnings” to Innovation fund committee
<i>January 9, '26</i>	Board receives summary of learnings. Sets \$\$ for <b>2026</b> Innovation Fund
<i>January 31</i>	New cycle begins

## Unit 103 Innovation Fund - Submission Form

We want this process *to be easy for you* to submit your good idea. Answer the following questions as best you can. Brief, clear answers are best. (Please know that Unit 103 has not ruled out any idea - whether tried before or not, nor any legal use of funding received.)

Name of Submitter \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

1. **Your Idea "In a Nutshell."** *Clearly state your idea. Please state how it will benefit a subset of - or all bridge players, or a club or clubs, in Minnesota.*

2. **Which Investment Priorities will your idea Advance, and by How Much?** *Where Is it targeted/ (e.g. reaching new players, getting past players back) Please estimate a sense of scale (how many; how diverse). Might you have a way to measure that in any way?*

3. **Funds Needed, and why.** *What amount are you requesting, and how will it be used?*

4. **Into Action How?** *Are you in position to put the idea into practice, if it is funded in June? If not, please state how you plan to put it into practice.*

5. **Learning.** Are you willing to write a recap of what was learned?      Yes      No

Please submit to Connie Nelson at [Connie@psg.us](mailto:Connie@psg.us) by **March 31, 2025**.

*Questions?* Call Connie at 320-282-7859.