

Career-Connected STEM Grants

Program Guide & Application Instructions Fall 2026

Preparing Students for School, Career, and Life

Cabarrus County Education Foundation (CCEF) believes more students should have opportunities to explore how STEM careers connect to student learning. Career-Connected STEM Grants provide funding for educators to create engaging, problem-based learning (PBL) experiences that help students solve authentic problems, explore STEM careers, and develop the knowledge and college- and career-ready skills needed for success.

Quick Facts

Topic	Information
Project Focus	Career-connected, hands-on PBL STEM learning
Award Amount	Up to \$1,500 per project (subject to funding availability)
Eligible Applicants	Educators at non-STEM Program Choice elementary and middle schools and high school programs outside the STEM Program Choice umbrella
Application Limit	One application per teacher during each funding cycle
Grant Application Deadlines	Application Deadline: September 30, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. Applications will be reviewed and awarded on a rolling basis while grant funds remain available. Early submission is encouraged.
Award Notifications	7-10 days after receipt of the application
Project Deadline	All projects must be completed by December 18, 2026. Unfortunately, no grant extensions can be granted due to donor restrictions.
Final Report Deadline	Final project reports and required materials must be submitted by January 4, 2027.

Funding Priorities

Successful proposals should:

- Connect classroom learning to authentic STEM careers.
- Provide hands-on, project-based learning.
- Engage students in authentic problem solving.
- Develop college- and career-ready skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, and adaptability.
- Demonstrate measurable student impact.
- Be completed during Fall 2026.
- Incorporate business or community partnerships as appropriate.

Examples of Eligible Projects

Projects should start with a challenge or problem students must solve such as:

- Engineering design challenges
- Manufacturing and automation activities
- Robotics and coding
- Construction and skilled trades exploration
- Environmental or agricultural science
- Healthcare or biotechnology
- Computer science
- Entrepreneurship and product design
- Career exploration through industry partners or guest speakers

Note: Projects that enhance curriculum standards are better aligned for CCEF's Inspire IMPACT grant program.

Eligible Expenses

Instructional materials, engineering and design supplies, robotics components, coding resources, makerspace materials, software, career exploration resources, safety equipment, and other project-specific materials. Requests for equipment or technology must be presented as part of a clearly defined student learning project—not simply as a request to purchase materials.

Non-Allowable Expenses

- VEX competition team fees and supplies
- Salaries or stipends
- Food or beverages
- Furniture or facility improvements
- General classroom supplies unrelated to the project
- District-provided curriculum
- Personal technology
- Ongoing subscriptions beyond the grant period

Application Instructions

1. Review the program priorities and determine how your project connects students to STEM careers.
2. Complete the Career-Connected STEM Grant application.
3. Obtain your principal's approval before submitting.
4. Submit all required materials by the published deadline.
5. Applications must be complete, clearly written, and aligned with the grant purpose.

Application Timeline

Application Deadline: September 30, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

Applications will be reviewed and awarded on a rolling basis while grant funds remain available. Early submission is encouraged.

Grant Recipient Expectations

- Implement the approved project.
- Use funds only for approved purposes.
- Submit a final impact report and expenditure summary.
- Provide photos and success stories for CCEF communications.
- Acknowledge CCEF support when appropriate.

Application Checklist

- ☐ Completed application
- ☐ Principal approval
- ☐ Project budget
- ☐ Proofread proposal
- ☐ Submitted by the deadline via email to amy.gough@cabarrus.k12.nc.us

Questions?

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