

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 connects to real careers. Career-Connected STEM Grants provide funding for educators to create engaging, hands-on learning experiences that help students solve authentic problems, explore STEM careers, and develop the knowledge and vital human skills needed for success.

Quick Facts

Topic	Information
Project Focus	Career-connected, hands-on 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	Cycle 1: August 21 Cycle 2: September 18
Award Notifications	One week after each application deadline
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 vital human skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, and adaptability.
- Demonstrate measurable student impact.
- Be completed during Fall 2026.
- Include business or community partnerships when appropriate.

Examples of Eligible Projects

- 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

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

Cycle 1

Application Due: August 21

Award Announcement: August 28

Cycle 2

Application Due: September 18

Award Announcement: September 25 (if funding remains available)

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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