

GRANT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

- The Chester County Community Foundation **connects people who care with the causes that matter**, so their philanthropy makes a difference **now & forever**.
- We are a **collection of Field of Interest & Donor Advised Funds** with **\$5M + granted annually** to nonprofits in Chester County & beyond.
- **99%** of our grants are made by our generous Fund Advisors, who make grant decisions all year.

Proposals submitted by nonprofits are considered for 2 types of grants:

Field of Interest & Donor Advised Funds (No Deadline)

- ◇ Grants **focus on Chester County** causes & issues, but are not limited to Chester County.
- ◇ Charitable nonprofits working **in all fields of interest** are considered for grant awards. (I.e. arts, culture, & humanities; education; community improvement; environment; religion; health; & human services)
- ◇ **General operating** grants are encouraged. Nonprofits should be specific about their mission, goals, & measurable outcomes.
- ◇ Proposals can be submitted **anytime all year**.
- ◇ Grant decisions are made **intermittently** all year, as Fund Advisors desire.
- ◇ Grant **awards** typically range from **\$1,000-\$7,500**.

Fund for Chester County Capacity Building Grants (Due 9/10)

- ◇ For eligibility in this grant program, nonprofits must be **located in & serve only Chester County**.
- ◇ Nonprofits **budgets** must be **\$500,000 or less**.
- ◇ The goal of capacity building grants is to **strengthen the effectiveness of NPO's serving the region**, see page 4 for more details on the areas including:
 - Mission, Vision & Strategy
 - Governance & Leadership
 - Partnerships & Collaborations
 - Operations & Technology
 - Fundraising, Development & Marketing
- ◇ Proposals submitted between **July 1 - Sept. 10** are eligible for consideration.
- ◇ Grant **awards** typically range from **\$1,000-\$5,000**.

- Use this form @ www.chescocf.org to apply online for grants from all Community Foundation Funds.
- **Email proposals to grants@chescocf.org**
- Proposals are considered "complete" when CCCF has **confirmed** receipt of the **Grant Proposal Summary Sheet, Narrative & Attachments**.
- Proposals are shared electronically and online with Fund Advisors, Donors & Grant Panels.
- Per IRS Regulations, applicants **must be** charitable, tax exempt organizations with 501(c)(3) certification & **cannot** be individuals.

Please contact Grants Administrator **Kevin Baffa** at **(610) 696-8211** or **grants@chescocf.org** with any questions.

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

One page only. This page will be shared electronically with Grant Panel Members & Fund Advisors.

Note: If Philanthropy Network's Common Grant Application is used, CCCF's **Summary Sheet** **MUST** accompany application.

To obtain an electronic version of this application, visit www.chescocf.org

Date 9/12/2025

Contact Information

Organization Name: Keystone STEM Alliance
Address: 15 Waterloo Ave Suite 200 Berwyn PA 19312
Phone: +1 (646) 223 0826
Website: <https://team10989.org>
Year Incorporated: 2025
FEIN: 39-3589749

ED/CEO Name: Murahari Ponugoti
ED/CEO E-mail: p.murahari@gmail.com
Board Chair Name: Murahari Ponugoti
Board Chair Approval (check here): ☒
Primary Contact Name: Murahari Ponugoti
Primary Contact E-mail: p.murahari@gmail.com

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

___ Arts, Culture & Humanities ___ Environment/Animal Welfare **_x_ Education**
___ Health ___ Human Services ___ Religion

Mission:

Empowering the next generation of innovators through hands-on robotics experiences, fostering a passion for STEM, and building a community of learners.

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served):

Upper Mainline (Berwyn, Chesterbrook, Radnor, Paoli, Devon, Wayne)

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:

200

Annual Budget \$ ___ 50,000 ___	___ 0 ___ # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
___ 95 ___ % of budget for program expenses	___ 3 ___ # of Board Volunteers
___ 4 ___ % of budget for administrative expenses	___ 5 ___ # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
___ 1 ___ % of budget for fundraising expenses	___ 400 ___ # of Volunteer Hours
100 % total	

Top 3-5 funding sources:

Isolite Corporation

Membership Dues

Department Of Defense STEM Grant

Comcast Sponsorship

Summer Camp

Is this grant proposal for: Capacity Building _X_ or General Operating ___?

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:

X Mission, Vision & Strategy X Governance & Leadership ___ Partnerships & Collaborations
___ Fundraising, Development & Marketing _X_ Technology Other: _____

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$ 10,000

Proposal Summary:

II. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information. 3 pages maximum.

1. Nonprofit's history, goals, key achievements & distinctiveness

We are **Blast Robotics (FRC Team 10989) under Keystone STEM Alliance**, is a student-led nonprofit robotics team that we founded in 2025. Our mission is to inspire youth in **STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics)** disciplines through participation in the **FIRST Robotics Competitions (FRC)**. We believe in building a comprehensive robotics program, which is why we've also launched a pipeline that includes **FIRST LEGO League (FLL)** for elementary students and **FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC)** for middle school students.

Since we started in May 2025, our team has grown to over 50 students, and we've made incredible progress in a span of just 3-4 months. We've secured key partnerships with established FRC teams 1712 Dawgma, 1168 Malvern Robotics, and 1640 Sa-BOT-age. We've also been successful in our initial fundraising efforts, including a **\$3,000 sponsorship from Comcast** and a **\$6,300 DoD STEM grant**. We're proud of our growing presence, which includes our website (www.team10989.org, developed by our founding team) and our active social media presence (@10989blast).

What makes us unique is our **student-run model**. We are responsible for all aspects of the team, from engineering, programming to fundraising, business, marketing, operations and project management. This model allows us to gain hands-on experience in fields like **CAD Design, Java programming, and advanced manufacturing**, while also developing crucial soft skills such as leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving that will prepare us for college and our aspirational careers.

2. Funding request

- **Description of key initiatives**
- **Specific needs & issues to be addressed**
- **Why it is important to fund this now**
- **How impact & results will be demonstrated**

We are applying for a **capacity-building grant** to strengthen our organization and ensure we can grow and become sustainable. We currently face challenges in funding essential tools and equipment, and we need to expand our outreach programs to meet the growing demand in our community.

Description of Our Key Initiatives & Specific Needs

We plan to use the requested funds for three core initiatives:

1. **Upgrading Our Technology & Operations:** We need to acquire a reliable **CNC machine** and other essential tools to fabricate a competitive robot. Based on our budget, we need at least **\$10,000** for tools and machinery. The tools we currently have are insufficient to support our large team and our goals.
2. **Expanding Our Outreach:** To grow our robotics pipeline, we want to expand our **summer camp** and host more workshops and demonstrations. Our goal is to reach over 200 students in the next three years.

3. **Advanced Training:** To build expertise among our members, we aim to hire specialized consultants who can provide advanced training in areas like **robotics design and programming**.

Why Funding Is Important Now

This funding is critical because we are in a foundational phase. We have the passion and a clear plan for the upcoming FRC season, but we lack the necessary equipment to execute our goals. The **\$6,300 DoD grant** provides a solid start, but it's not enough to cover the full budget for the essential tools we need. Without this support, our potential for growth and success, both in competition and in the community, will be severely limited. Securing this grant now will allow us to purchase equipment and begin training before the official Build Season, ensuring we have a strong start.

- *For capacity building grant proposals:*
 - *How will this capacity building initiative impact your nonprofit?*
 - *How will this impact be measured?*
 - *Include a description of the expected activities; timeline & costs to implement the initiative. If external consulting services are required, include the anticipated costs & expertise of the consultants to be hired. Include external consultant proposals if applicable.*

This initiative will directly enhance our team's operational efficiency and long-term sustainability. By investing in modern equipment, we will reduce fabrication time and increase the quality of our robot, improving our competitiveness. Expanding our outreach will strengthen our connection to the community and secure a pipeline of future members and mentors.

- **How We Will Measure Our Impact:**
 - **Efficiency:** We will track the time it takes to complete key build tasks, expecting a significant reduction with the new equipment.
 - **Engagement:** We will log the number of beneficiaries such as students
 - **Financial Health:** Our fundraising success will be measured by our ability to meet and exceed our budget goals in future years.
- **Our Timeline & Costs:**
 - **Phase 1 (Months 1-3): Procurement & Training** - We will research and purchase a **CNC machine** and other required power machine tools. We will also hire a consultant with expertise in advanced manufacturing to train our students on the new equipment.
 - **Phase 2 (Months 4-9): Program Implementation** - We will use the new equipment during the FRC build season and expand our outreach activities.
 - **Phase 3 (Months 10-12): Evaluation & Reporting** - We will compile our competition results and outreach metrics to create a final report for the funder.

The total cost for this initiative is estimated to be around **\$10,000** for tools and equipment, with an additional budget for external consultants. We will provide proposals and pricing from prospective consultants as part of our formal application.

III. ATTACHMENTS

E-mail or mail this support information

1. Copy of 501 (c) (3) federal tax-exempt letter
2. List of Board of Directors, with their affiliations
3. Most recent annual report & financial statement, audited if available (**First year, Not Applicable**)
4. Itemized organizational operating budget with actual results for prior fiscal year & current fiscal year to date
5. If capacity building initiative, itemized budget (including external consultant's proposal, if applicable)
6. Current strategic plan. If your nonprofit does not have a current strategic plan, explain why.

Strategic Plan

Keystone STEM Alliance, a new nonprofit, is actively seeking funding to support its operations and growth. Our fundraising strategy is centered on a diverse approach, including grants, corporate sponsorships, and community outreach, all of which are managed by our students.

Grants

We have a strong focus on securing grants from various organizations. We have already been awarded a **\$6,300 DoD STEM grant** for the 2025-2026 season. We are also exploring other grant opportunities from organizations that support robotics and STEM education.

Corporate Sponsorships

To secure corporate funding, we have a clear strategy:

- **Targeting local companies:** We are reaching out to businesses in the Mainline, PA area for sponsorships, as outlined in our meeting logs.
- **Sponsorship Tiers:** We have developed a comprehensive Sponsorship Packet that details different sponsorship levels (Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum) and their corresponding benefits, such as logo placement on our robot and merchandise.
- **Building Relationships:** We understand that sponsorships are a two-way street. We offer to bring our robot for demonstrations and presentations to show companies the value of their investment in our program.

Other Funding & Community Connections

In addition to grants and sponsorships, we are pursuing other avenues for funding and community engagement:

- **Summer Camp:** We are setting up a Robotics and STEM summer camp for younger students (grades 5-9). This not only helps us with funding but also inspires the next generation of STEM/robotics enthusiasts.
- **Community Outreach:** We have launched a GoFundMe page and are planning various fundraising events like car washes, bake sales, paid workshops, and robot demonstrations. We are also leveraging our community connections, such as the space provided by **Eadeh Enterprises**.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** We have built connections with established FRC teams like 1712 Dawgma, 1168 Malvern Robotics, and 1640 Sa-BOT-age. These partnerships provide invaluable mentorship and support, including a donated drivetrain kit from Team 1168.

- Use this form @ www.chescocf.org to apply online for grants from all Community Foundation Funds.
- **Email proposals to grants@chescocf.org**
- Proposals are considered "complete" when CCCF has **confirmed** receipt of the **Grant Proposal Summary Sheet, Narrative & Attachments**.
- Proposals are shared electronically and online with Fund Advisors, Donors & Grant Panels.
- Per IRS Regulations, applicants **must be** charitable, tax exempt organizations with 501(c)(3) certification & **cannot be** individuals.

Please contact Grants Administrator Kevin Baffa at
(610) 696-8211 grants@chescocf.org with questions.



*Connecting people who care with causes that matter,
so their legacies make a difference.*



WHAT IS CAPACITY BUILDING?

Capacity building helps bring a nonprofit to the next level of operational, programmatic, financial, or organizational maturity, in order to more effectively & efficiently fulfill its mission.

Capacity building may include (but is not limited to) projects which address:

- **MISSION, VISION & STRATEGY**
Organizational Assessment - Strategic Planning - Financial Planning
- **GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP**
Board Development - Executive Transition/Succession Planning - Leadership Development - Staff Training & Professional Development
- **PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS**
Coalition Building – Collaboration - Mergers & Acquisitions - Strategic Restructuring
- **RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING**
Major Gift Donor Identification, Cultivation, Development & Stewardship - Development Campaigns (Annual, Capital, Planned Giving) - Earned Income Development - Social Enterprise Feasibility & Development - Marketing, Branding & Communications
- **TECHNOLOGY & OPERATIONS**
Business Continuity Planning - Financial Management - Human Resources - Volunteer Management - Industry Certification - Risk Management - **Technology Improvements**