



I. GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

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This page will be shared electronically with Grant Panel Members & Fund Advisors + posted online.

Date 2/27/2026

Contact Information

Organization Name: Delaware Museum of Nature and Science
Address: 4840 Kennett Pike, Wilmington, DE 19807
Phone: (302) – 658 - 9111
Website: www.delmns.org
Year Incorporated: 1957
FEIN: 51-0083535

ED/CEO Name: Mandy Santiago
ED/CEO E-mail: msantiago@delmns.org
Board Chair Name: Jennifer Kmiec
Board Chair Approval (check here):
Primary Contact Name: Rebecca Stansell
Primary Contact E-mail: rstansell@delmns.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Arts, Culture, Heritage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Education, Library	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Environment, Animals
<input type="checkbox"/>	Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	Human Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Justice, Civic Engagement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion	<input type="checkbox"/> If other, please describe:			

Mission: To ignite a life-long passion for exploring, discovering, and valuing nature and science.

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

We serve all of Delaware, Chester County, Pennsylvania, and parts of Maryland and New Jersey

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served. (Include Chester County # &/or % served.)

Annual Budget \$2,824,731

84 % of budget for program expenses

11 % of budget for administrative expenses

5 % of budget for fundraising expenses

100% = total

23 # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff

21 # of Board Volunteers

44 # of Active Non-Board Volunteers

4,700 # of Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources:

- Fair Play Foundation
- Private Individual Giver
- Bank of America
- M&T Bank
- Ellice Rosa McDonald Foundation

This grant proposal is for: Direct Service Programs & General Operating

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$1,000 – 5,000

Proposal Summary: (a few sentences, please)

To support hands-on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) programming for young people in the Brandywine Valley and beyond, including disadvantaged children.

II. GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Provide clear, concise information in 1-3 pages. Please be brief.

1. Nonprofit's overall aims, key initiatives, key achievements & distinctiveness

Formerly the Delaware Museum of Natural History, the Delaware Museum of Nature & Science (DeLMNS) was founded in 1957 and has been open to the public since 1972. Located in the Brandywine Valley, the Museum's mission is to ignite a lifelong passion for exploring, discovering, and valuing nature and science. We serve more than 90,000 visitors annually, including thousands of students, educators, and families from Chester County, Pennsylvania.

In May 2022, the museum completed a transformational renovation of its galleries and public spaces. This reopening focused on highly interactive exhibits designed to encourage personal discovery, critical thinking, and hands-on learning. This renovation helped modernize DeLMNS and position us as a regional leader in informal STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) education.

Our current strategic priorities include:

- Expanding access to high-quality education experiences
- Strengthening financial sustainability and community partnerships
- Supporting and preserving scientific collections
- Increasing outreach to multiple underserved communities and schools

DeLMNS is distinctive in its commitment to interactive, educator-led experiences. Unlike many other museums, trained interpretation staff are present throughout the exhibit floor, providing live demonstrations, helping facilitate inquiry-based learning, and creating personalized educational moments for visitors. Dedicated learning environments such as the Nature Nook for early learners and the Discovery Gallery for rotating hands-on STEAM exhibits further help to distinguish the Museum as a space where learning occurs through action rather than observations.

Key achievements include the successful reopening after renovation, steady annual attendance growth, expansion of off-site mobile programming, and the continued delivery of standards-aligned STEAM programs for schools and community organizations. The Museum has become a trusted educational partner for teachers, childcare centers, and youth-serving nonprofits throughout the region.

2. Funding Request

Amount Requested: \$5,000

Purpose: Support for underserved education initiatives, outreach programming, and after-school STEAM activities serving Chester County youth.

What Specific needs & issues are being addressed, via what programs and services?

The Delaware Museum of Nature & Science addresses inequitable access to STEAM education for children and families who may not otherwise have opportunities for high-quality science enrichment. Many schools and community organizations serving low-income populations face budgetary and staffing limitations that restrict hands-on science instruction, field trips, and after-school programming.

Funding will Support:

- **Community Outreach Programs:** Off-site educational visits that bring interactive science experiences directly into Chester County schools, libraries, and community centers.
- **After-School Activities:** Structured STEAM clubs that reinforce classroom learning while encouraging curiosity, experimentation, and problem-solving skills.

These programs provide 1-2 hours of hands-on, standards-aligned STEAM learning and are designed to be adaptable for different grade levels and learning styles. Activities may include live animal encounters, engineering challenges, environmental science exploration, and collaborative experiments that build both academic confidence and social skills.

Why is it important to fund this now?

Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds often have fewer opportunities to participate in science enrichment activities outside of school hours. At the same time, many of the fastest-growing and highest-earning career paths require strong foundations in science, technology, and critical thinking. Early exposure to STEAM concepts has been shown to help increase long-term academic engagement and career readiness.

Funding at this time allows DELMNS to meet increasing demand from schools and community partners seeking affordable, high-quality programming. It also supports the Museum's efforts to rebuild and expand outreach following recent years of educational disruption and budget constraints experienced by many districts and nonprofits. With afterschool programs increasing in demand, teachers are looking for outside programming to help enhance the student learning and provide another safe, trusted adult on site in the face of already strained teacher hours. Timely investment ensures that financial barriers do not prevent students from accessing meaningful educational experiences that can shape future academic and professional trajectories.

How will results & impact be demonstrated?

Impact will be measured through both quantitative and qualitative methods, including:

- Number of Chester County students, educators, and organizations served
- Percentage of participants from underserved or low-income communities
- Feedback from students and educators
- Attendance and participation data for after-school and outreach activities

Educator feedback consistently highlights increased student engagement, improved comprehension of science concepts, and enthusiasm for continued learning. By tracking participation trends and learning outcomes, DELMNS ensures that funded programs remain effective, responsive, and impactful.

Through this investment, the Delaware Museum of Nature & Science will continue to expand equitable access to interactive science education, inspire curiosity in young learners, and strengthen the educational ecosystem serving Chester County communities.

