

RFP: William & Elizabeth Charitable Fund for the Trades

Bridge Builders Community Foundations

Request for Letters of Intent

William & Elizabeth Charitable Fund for the Trades

Purpose of the Funding Opportunity

Bridge Builders Community Foundations invites Letters of Intent for grants from the **William & Elizabeth Charitable Fund for the Trades**, a field-of-interest fund established to promote and support trades, applied technology, apprenticeships, and nursing careers, programs, and projects in Venango County.

Through this funding opportunity, BBCF seeks to strengthen educational, training, and career pathways that help Venango County residents pursue practical skills, technical careers, applied learning opportunities, and employment in fields that are important to the region's economy and quality of life.

Grant Award

Average grant award size: \$20,000 to \$30,000

Requests outside of that range will be considered.

Funding Priorities

Letters of Intent may focus on one or more of the following areas:

- **Trades and Technical Career Pathways**

Programs that introduce, prepare, train, or support individuals pursuing careers in:

- skilled trades
- applied technology
- mechanical fields
- construction-related fields
- manufacturing
- technical services
- other practical career pathways

- **Applied Technology and Hands-On Learning**

Programs that provide:

- hands-on learning
- technical instruction
- equipment-based training
- career exploration
- applied STEM education
- work-based learning experiences

- **Apprenticeships and Work-Based Learning**

Programs that create or strengthen:

- apprenticeships
- pre-apprenticeships
- internships
- job shadowing
- mentorship
- career readiness
- employer-connected training opportunities

- **Nursing and Health Career Pathways**

Programs that support:

- awareness, preparation, training, credentialing, or advancement in nursing careers
- related pathways that help build the local health workforce.

- **Career Access and Student Support**

Programs that reduce barriers to participation in:

- trades
- applied technology
- apprenticeship
- nursing career pathways

Including supports related to:

- transportation
- materials
- certification costs
- testing fees
- uniforms
- tools
- mentorship
- career navigation

Geographic Focus

This funding opportunity is focused on **Venango County, Pennsylvania**. Proposals should clearly describe how the project will benefit Venango County residents, students, workers, employers, institutions, or communities.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants may include nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, public institutions, municipalities, authorities, workforce development organizations, charitable initiatives, or organizations operating through an eligible fiscal sponsor. Collaborative proposals involving schools, employers, training providers, nonprofits, and public agencies are encouraged.

Churches and faith-based organizations may be eligible when the proposed project serves a charitable community purpose and does not require participation in religious instruction, worship, or proselytization as a condition of receiving services.

Preferred Applicant Characteristics

BBCF is especially interested in ideas that demonstrate:

- A strong fit with trades, applied technology, apprenticeships, or nursing
- Clear benefit to Venango County
- Strong understanding of local workforce needs
- Direct connection to education, training, credentialing, employment, or career advancement
- Meaningful partnerships with schools, employers, training providers, health care organizations, or community institutions
- Evidence of organizational capacity and responsible financial management
- A practical plan for reaching participants and supporting completion
- A proven track record, or a compelling case for a new initiative
- Matching funds, employer participation, in-kind contributions, or other leveraged support

Eligible Uses of Funds

Grant funds may support expenses such as:

- Program materials, tools, equipment, or supplies
- Training or instructional costs
- Certification, testing, credentialing, or licensing expenses
- Career exploration activities
- Apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship supports
- Student or participant supports that reduce barriers to participation
- Employer engagement or mentorship activities
- Curriculum development or program expansion
- Outreach and recruitment
- Evaluation and reporting

Ineligible Uses

Grant funds generally may not be used for:

- Activities outside Venango County without a clear Venango County benefit
- Activities unrelated to trades, applied technology, apprenticeships, or nursing career pathways
- Political campaign activity or lobbying
- Religious instruction, worship, or proselytization
- Debt reduction or prior expenses
- General operations unrelated to the proposed project
- Funding endowments

Two-Step Application Process

This funding opportunity will use a two-step application process.

Step 1: Letter of Intent

Interested applicants should first submit a brief Letter of Intent. The LOI is intended to help BBCF understand the basic idea, its fit with the William & Elizabeth Charitable Fund for the Trades, the community need being addressed, the population and geography served, and the applicant's capacity to carry out the work.

Step 2: Full Proposal by Invitation Only

BBCF staff will review submitted LOIs and invite selected applicants to submit a full proposal. Submission of an LOI does not guarantee an invitation to apply or a grant award. Full proposals will request additional detail about project design, budget, partnerships, outcomes, implementation timeline, and evaluation approach.

What to Include in the Letter of Intent

Please submit a Letter of Intent of no more than one page that addresses the following:

- Who is applying, including the organization's name, contact person, location, and service area?
- What is the proposed project, program, service, partnership, or initiative?
- How does the idea support trades, applied technology, apprenticeships, nursing careers, or related career pathways?
- What Venango County need, opportunity, or workforce challenge would the project address?
- Who would benefit, and where would the work take place?
- What is the estimated amount of funding requested, if known?

- Why is the applicant well positioned to carry out the work?
- Are there key partners, employers, schools, training providers, or community organizations involved?
- What would success look like?

Full Proposal by Invitation Only

Applicants invited to submit a full proposal should expect to provide additional information, which may include:

- Detailed project description and work plan
- Project budget and funding plan
- Description of partners, employers, schools, or community collaborators
- Evidence of organizational capacity
- Expected outcomes, such as participants served, credentials earned, training completed, career exposure provided, or employment-related results
- Sustainability or continuation plan
- Additional documentation requested by BBCF

Review and Selection Process

BBCF will review LOIs for alignment with the William & Elizabeth Charitable Fund for the Trades, benefit to Venango County, community or workforce need, feasibility, organizational capacity, partnerships, and potential impact. Selected applicants may be invited to submit a full proposal. BBCF may also request follow-up conversations, interviews, or site visits as part of the review process.

Final grant decisions will be made according to BBCF's grantmaking policies and procedures.

Grant Reporting and Partnership Expectations

Grant recipients may be asked to provide periodic updates, a final report, financial documentation, outcome data, participant stories, photographs, or other information that helps BBCF understand and communicate the impact of the grant.

Timeline

- RFP Released: September 7, 2026
- LOI Opens: September 14, 2026
- LOI Deadline: September 25, 2026

- Invitations for Full Proposals Issued: October 12, 2026
- Full Proposal Deadline: October 30, 2026
- Applicant Interviews / Site Visits, if applicable: Throughout September, October, and November
- Grant Decisions Announced: December 18, 2026
- Grant Disbursed: Throughout late December and early January
- Final Reports Due: September 30, 2027

Submission Instructions

Letters of Intent should be submitted through the grant portal, which can be accessed on the Grants page of the BBCF website. Questions may be directed to Tessa King, Grant & Scholarship, at tessa@bbcf.org or 814-677-8687.