

# TVA STEM AWARD PROGRAM APPLICATION PACKAGE

The TVA STEM Award Program is sponsored by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in partnership with Bicentennial Volunteers Incorporated (BVI, a TVA retiree organization).



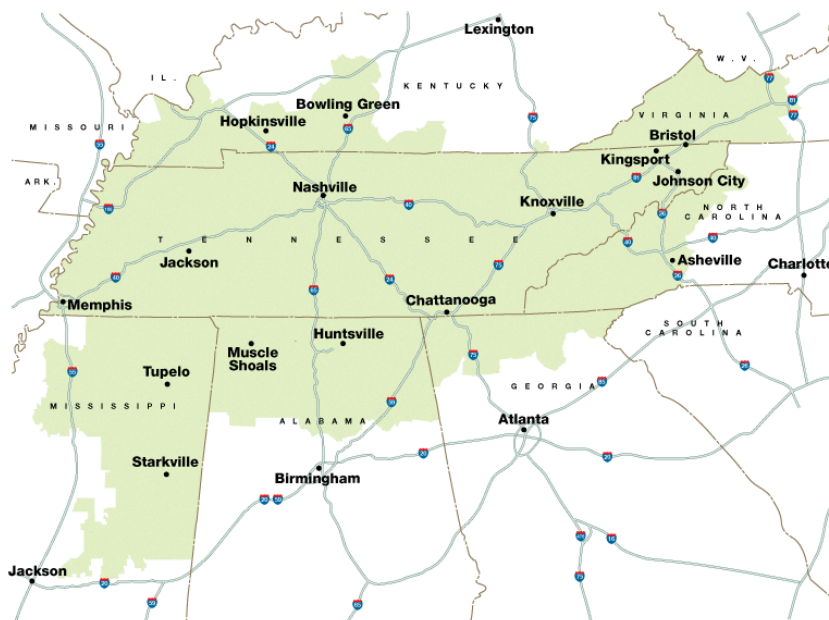


## AWARD OVERVIEW

This competitive award opportunity is designed to support classroom teachers who are passionate about bringing innovative, hands-on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) experiences to their students.

We are seeking creative projects that not only engage students in active learning but also align with one or more of the TVA key areas of focus:

- Community Problem-solving
- Energy
- Environment
- Economic and Career Development



Successful proposals will demonstrate interdisciplinary approaches, foster real-world problem-solving skills, and inspire the next generation of STEM leaders. We encourage you to think creatively and collaboratively as you design projects that will make a meaningful impact in your classroom and community!



# AWARD GUIDELINES

## Eligibility

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### Who Can Apply

Public or private schools serving one or more of grades K-12 located in the TVA service area and receiving electricity from a TVA local power company --OR-- Located in the TVA Watershed Area. (See additional rules for religious affiliated schools.)

[View Service Area Map](#)

[View Watershed Area](#)

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### Submission Instructions

Submit proposals online by **Sept. 15, 2025** with a clear project description, budget, budget template, and plan for outcomes.

All proposals should be the unique work written by the teacher who will perform/facilitating the project.

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### Award Spending

Awards may be requested in the amounts of \$1,000, \$1,500, \$2,500, \$3,500, or \$5,000. Funds may not be used for furniture, cash, gift cards, travel, salary, food, professional development, construction projects, renovation projects, general office supplies not related to STEM activities, or sports.

## Additional Rules

1. Non-profit organizations, homeschools, homeschool pods, and pre-k organizations are not eligible.
2. A religious affiliated school must meet the following qualifications to be eligible:
  1. The school does not restrict attendance or any of its activities based on a particular religious view;
  2. The school does not restrict any membership or employment to a specific religion; and
  3. The school operates independently from the church as a separate 501c3 with a separate EIN/IRS number.
3. A teacher may only submit ONE application. If multiple applications are submitted by the same teacher, only the first one will be considered.
4. A school may submit more than one application from different teachers. However, multiple applications from the same school will be in competition with each other. (Consider putting in an application together.)
5. AI may be used to help inform question responses. However, all submissions should be your own, unique work and not copied verbatim from an AI response.



## FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

Payments will only be made to an organization via ACH and cannot be made to an individual.

A W9 for the organization and ACH form will be required from the school district (or private school).

Organizations unable to accept ACH payments are not eligible unless a special arrangement is made.

Paper checks will not be issued for award funds.

Awards in a district will be combined and 1 payment will be made to the district with instructions for disbursal.

Payments are made to districts only and not to individual schools (unless charter/private school).

## BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- ☐ Read this packet cover to cover at least once.
- ☐ Ensure your organization/school qualifies for the opportunity.
- ☐ Download the required budget template from our website.
- ☐ Discuss your application with your Principal and colleagues to ensure you will not be competing against others in your same school. (Consider collaborating!)
- ☐ Draft your application fully offline using a word processor or similar tool.
- ☐ Have a friend or colleague read your draft before uploading your final responses into the application portal.

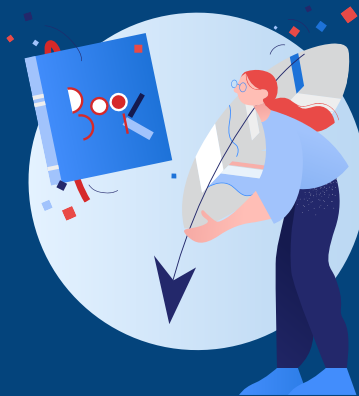


**TOTAL FUNDING: \$1.5M**





# DO'S AND DON'TS FOR YOUR PROPOSAL



This opportunity is intended to support **creative STEM projects**, not just the purchase of materials. Proposals must outline a creative and innovative STEM project that actively engages students in hands-on learning. Below are some examples of how you can transform a list of needed materials into a meaningful, project-based experience.

## ✗ Don't - ask for materials



### My classroom needs iPads

I need a classroom set of iPads for my students.



### Our Library needs a 3D Printer

A 3D printer would be a great addition to our makerspace.



### Drones are fun!

Drones would be fun for the students and would enhance the after-school programs.



## ✓ Do - write a project



### Water Quality Analysis Study

We will be doing a water quality study of the local river, and students will use be using a classroom set of iPads for data collection and analysis.



### Designing the Playground

Students will design their own playground equipment in tinkercad and print their designs with the 3d printer for prototyping, testing, and learning the engineering design process.



### Agriculture Survey with Drones

We will be partnering with a local agriculture survey company that uses drones to track the growth of crops and analyze nutrient deficiencies.

**Project Ideas are available on our website!**

[www.tsin.org/TVASTEM-Awards#Examples](http://www.tsin.org/TVASTEM-Awards#Examples)

**TVA**

**BVI**

**tsin** Tennessee  
STEM  
Innovation  
Network

## AWARD APPLICATION

The following information has been carefully assembled to provide you with helpful tips, examples, and reputable resources as you prepare your award application. Each section is designed to guide you through the process, clarify expectations, and offer practical supports to strengthen your proposal. We highly recommend that you draft your application fully offline—using a word processor or similar tool—before uploading your final responses into the application portal. This approach will help you organize your thoughts, avoid accidental data loss, and ensure your submission is as strong as possible.



# AWARD QUESTIONS SUPPORTS

## AND AVAILABLE POINTS

### Demographic Questions (No points)

1. Applicant name, title, address, email, and phone number
2. School name and address
3. If this is a charter school, does the school have its own unique EIN (employee identification number) separate from that of the school district?
4. School district name, mailing address, and financial contact information (name, address, phone number)
5. Has this school or applicant received TVA funding in the past?
6. School demographics - Please provide a short narrative about the student demographics of your school.
7. Total number of students and grades served at the school
8. Is the school rural, suburban, urban, or other?
9. Percent free and reduced lunch
10. Is this a title one school?




## AWARD APPLICATION

Question	Helpful Hints	Supports	Points
11. Name of project	We encourage you to be creative! This could be thematic or might name the program or class that will be involved	<a href="https://www.projectmanager.com/blog/top-ten-project-code-names">https://www.projectmanager.com/blog/top-ten-project-code-names</a>	(See questions 17, 18, and 19)
12. Which TVA area of focus does your project most closely align to? a. Community Problem-solving, b. Energy, c. Environment, or d. Economic and Career Development	<b>Community Problem-solving:</b> Projects in this area help students identify and address real-world challenges in their local community. Example: Students design and implement a recycling program at their school to reduce waste and educate others about sustainability. <b>Energy:</b> Projects in this area focus on energy production, conservation, or innovation. Example: Students build and test solar-powered charging stations that can be placed on school campus (common areas, playground) or community spaces to learn about renewable energy and how it can benefit the community. <b>Environment:</b> Projects in this area explore environmental science, conservation, or stewardship. Example: Students monitor water quality in a local stream and develop action plans to protect local wildlife habitats. <b>Economic and Career Development:</b> Projects in this area help students develop skills for future careers or understand economic concepts. Example: Students interview professionals and create presentations a collection of displays or presentations that explore different STEM career pathways or showing the trail from idea to product manufacture in different industries.	<a href="https://www.tsin.org/TVASTEM-awards#Examples">https://www.tsin.org/TVASTEM-awards#Examples</a>	5 points (Projects that do not align will be disqualified.)
13. How does the project align to the selected TVA area of focus?			
14. Which grade(s) will be involved in the project?  15. How many students will the project serve?  16. Amount of funds requested: \$1,000, \$1,500, \$2,500, \$3,500, or \$5,000.			10 Points  (Points are awarded for a low dollar-to-student ratio.)



## AWARD APPLICATION

Question	Helpful Hints	Supports	Points
<p>17. Provide a narrative describing an overview of your project: How will it be implemented in your classroom? We should be able to understand the basics of your project after reading this description. (2,000 characters max)</p> <p>18. What will the students be doing while engaging in your project?</p> <p>19. What will you, the educator, be doing while instructing your students on this project?</p>	<p>All proposals must have a specific project outlined.</p> <p>Focus on the main idea, the steps you will take, and what students will do. Be sure to include the purpose of the project, the activities involved, and how it fits into your teaching. Avoid too much technical detail—just give a clear, big-picture summary.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.pblworks.org/">https://www.pblworks.org/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.edutopia.org/blog/pbl-pilot-project-planning-standards-matt-weyers-jen-dole/">https://www.edutopia.org/blog/pbl-pilot-project-planning-standards-matt-weyers-jen-dole/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.edutopia.org/article/more-buzzword-making-interdisciplinary-learning-reality/">https://www.edutopia.org/article/more-buzzword-making-interdisciplinary-learning-reality/</a></p>	<p>15 Points for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Creative Projects</li> <li>· Innovative Projects</li> <li>· Interdisciplinary projects</li> </ul> <p>Proposals for just materials without a project outline will not be funded.</p> 
<p>20. How does the project incorporate design thinking? (1,000 characters max)</p>	<p>Design Thinking is a real-world problem-solving approach that uses a structured framework to help students develop creativity, resilience, and collaboration skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Empathy:</b> Understand the needs of the people or problems you're designing for</li> <li>• <b>Ideation:</b> Brainstorm ideas and solutions</li> <li>• <b>Planning:</b> Create a roadmap for action</li> <li>• <b>Prototyping:</b> Create tangible prototypes of your solutions</li> <li>• <b>Testing and iterating:</b> Refine your solutions based on feedback</li> </ul>	<p><a href="https://www.ideo.com/blogs/inspiration/what-is-design-thinking">https://www.ideo.com/blogs/inspiration/what-is-design-thinking</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.gettingsmart.com/2015/11/15/design-thinking-in-action/">https://www.gettingsmart.com/2015/11/15/design-thinking-in-action/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.edutopia.org/blog/design-thinking-betty-ray">https://www.edutopia.org/blog/design-thinking-betty-ray</a></p>	<p>10 Points</p>
<p>21. What 21st century skills will students learn when completing this project? (1,000 characters max)</p>	<p>The 21st century skills are a set of abilities that students need to develop in order to succeed in the information age. These include learning skills, such as critical and creative thinking, collaboration, and communication, literacy skills, such as information, media, and technology literacy, and life skills, such as flexibility, initiative, productivity, leadership, and social skills.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.battelleforkids.org/insights/p21-resources/">https://www.battelleforkids.org/insights/p21-resources/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/ccte/wbl/wbl_employability_skills_checklist.pdf">https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/ccte/wbl/wbl_employability_skills_checklist.pdf</a></p>	<p>10 Points</p>

## AWARD APPLICATION


Question	Helpful Hints	Supports	Points
22. How does the project enhance college and career readiness? (1,000 characters max)	College and Career Readiness means students exit high school prepared for success in a wide range of high-quality post-secondary opportunities. Specifically, it refers to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to be successful in post-secondary education and/or training that lead to gainful employment.	<a href="https://www.act.org/content/act/en/college-and-career-readiness.html">https://www.act.org/content/act/en/college-and-career-readiness.html</a>	10 Points
23. Does the project involve a community partner? If yes, please briefly explain how the community partner will be involved. (1,000 characters max)	<p>A community partner is someone from outside the school who is assisting with your project. This could be a local business, nonprofit, university, government agency, or other group.</p> <p>A community partner is not a local business or individual who has donated funds but is not actively participating in the development or facilitation of the project.</p> <p>A community partner is not a parent chaperone who is not actively contributing to the project.</p> <p>Those with a plan for a community partner that has not yet been secured may still receive some points. However, a secured and confirmed community partner will receive full points.</p>	<a href="https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/cpm/fce/AC_R360_FCE_Toolkit07_PartnershipsDistrictsSchoolsFamilies.pdf">https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/cpm/fce/AC_R360_FCE_Toolkit07_PartnershipsDistrictsSchoolsFamilies.pdf</a>	5 Points
24. Are there any safety concerns with this project, and if yes, how will they be addressed? (1,000 characters max)	Projects with safety concerns that have not been addressed cannot be funded.		0 Points

## AWARD APPLICATION

Question	Helpful Hints	Supports	Points
<p>25. TSIN is committed to supporting STEM for All by exposing traditionally underserved students to STEM exploration. How does this program or project support the concept of STEM for All? (1,000 characters max)</p> <p>26. What traditional underserved students, if any, does this project support? (255 characters max)</p>	<p>“STEM for All” means making science, technology, engineering, and math learning accessible and engaging for every student, especially those who have been historically underrepresented or underserved in these fields. This includes students from diverse backgrounds, students with disabilities, girls, and students from low-income families. When answering, describe how your project will reach and support these students—such as by removing barriers, providing inclusive activities, or creating opportunities for all students to participate and succeed in STEM.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.nsta.org/promoting-equity-diversity-inclusion-through-science-and-stem-teaching-miniseries">https://www.nsta.org/promoting-equity-diversity-inclusion-through-science-and-stem-teaching-miniseries</a></p>	10 Points
<p>27. Which content areas and learning standards does your project address? How will this project deepen your students’ understanding of STEM? Please be specific. (1,000 characters max)</p>	<p>Content areas are the subjects your project covers, while learning standards are the specific skills and knowledge students are expected to learn, often set by your state or district. When answering, list the specific subjects and standards your project addresses. Then, explain how your project will help students go beyond basic knowledge—such as by applying concepts to real-world problems, engaging in hands-on activities, or developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills in STEM.</p>	<p>Please select your state for supports:  <a href="#">Tennessee</a>  <a href="#">Kentucky</a>  <a href="#">Virginia</a>  <a href="#">North Carolina</a>  <a href="#">Georgia</a>  <a href="#">Alabama</a>  <a href="#">Mississippi</a></p>	7 Points
<p>28. What formative and summative assessments will be used to measure learning outcomes? Please be specific. (1,000 characters max)</p>	<p>Formative assessments are ongoing checks for understanding during a project (like quizzes, exit tickets, observations, student reflections, project benchmark check-ins or team updates) that help guide instruction.</p> <p>Summative assessments are final evaluations at the end of a project (like tests, presentations, final reports, or projects) that measure what students have learned. When answering, describe the specific formative and summative assessments you will use to track student progress and measure learning outcomes in your project.</p>	<p><a href="https://my.pblworks.org/resource/document/project_based_teaching_rubric">https://my.pblworks.org/resource/document/project_based_teaching_rubric</a></p>	7 Points



## AWARD APPLICATION

Question	Helpful Hints	Supports	Points
29. Budget Narrative: Please briefly explain the items and quantities (where applicable) that you plan to purchase with the funds. (1,000 characters max)	Consideration for points: A. Are the items appropriate for the described project? B. Can the bulk of the items be used more than once? C. Are the costs fair and reasonable for the items requested?	Funds may NOT be used for: furniture, cash, gift cards, travel, salary, food, professional development, construction projects, renovation projects, general office supplies not related to STEM activities, or sports. (See below for additional examples.)	6 Points
30. Budget Template: Please download and complete the budget template found at <a href="http://www.tsin.org/TVASTEM-Awards">www.tsin.org/TVASTEM-Awards</a> and submit it as an Excel document along with this application.	Budgets must outline all funding requested. Example: If you request \$1,000 in funding but only outline \$823 on the budget, we are unable to process this application and it cannot be accepted. 		(See above)

## UNALLOWABLE PURCHASES

UNALLOWABLE ITEM	EXAMPLES
Furniture	Tables, desks, chairs, picnic tables, benches, bookshelves, beanbag chairs, standing desks, workstations or workstation desks.
Travel	Field trips, bus drivers or bus rentals, transportation off site, gas, hotels
Food/Catering	Snacks, drinks, bottled water, candy, catering for events or meetings
Professional Development	Teacher training
Salary and/or benefits	Payroll expenses, substitute costs, bus driver costs
Construction Projects	Construction of new buildings or structures, costs to assemble kits
Renovation Projects	Painting, replacing flooring, building walls or partitions
General office supplies not related to a STEM project	
Cash or Gift Cards	
Sports Activities	

### QUESTIONS?

**Are “smartboards” considered furniture?** No, this is equipment and is allowed.

**Can I purchase storage totes for my other items?** As long as they are a small portion of your overall budget and the need is clearly defined, this request will not disqualify your application.

**Can I purchase shelves to store my supplies?** No, shelving is considered furniture. However, a mobile cart is considered equipment and is allowed.

**Can I buy paint to decorate my classroom?** No, construction/renovation projects are not allowed.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## Do I have to have the exact pricing for each item on my budget?



No. We understand prices can change over time and vary by store. Just estimate as closely as possible.

## How do I know if my school is in a TVA service area and receives power from a TVA distributor?



Awards are open to all teachers or school administrators in public schools, grades K through 12. Schools must be located in the TVA service area and receive power from a TVA distributor OR be located in the TVA Watershed Area. [View TVA Service Area](#) [View TVA Watershed Area](#)

## When will we be notified about the status of my award application?



We will notify all applicants regarding the status of their application by November 15, 2025.

## Can I apply by email instead of the online form?



We're sorry but all applications must come through the online form. If your school internet or computer blocks our form, please try applying with a different computer or on a Wi-Fi connection from home or a public place outside of your school building.

## Can my school apply for more than one award? Can I apply for more than one award?



A teacher may only submit one application. If multiple applications are submitted by the same teacher, only the first one will be considered. A school MAY submit more than one application from different teachers. Please note that it is unlikely a school will have more than one proposal funded, so multiple applications from the same school will be in competition with each other.

 **APPLY NOW** 