Go Beyond the Classroom 2026-2027 Community-Engaged Learning Grants:
Request for Proposals

The **Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) Grant Program** is a signature initiative of the *Go Beyond the Classroom* Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) and housed within the Office of Community Engagement. It is an internal grant program for faculty/instructors/staff to support the goals and Student Learning Outcomes of the QEP. The grant program is designed to fund one-time costs associated with a CEL student learning experience. Eligible projects include:

- A CEL-designated course. Designation form here.
- A community-engaged research project that is a collaborative inquiry between undergraduate students, faculty, and community members to identify, research, and address community-identified needs.

Eligibility
Any ETSU faculty/instructor/staff employed full time are eligible to apply. Students are not eligible to apply.

Selection and Funding Information
A review committee consisting of members of the ETSU Community Engagement Committee will read and rank each proposal. The review committee may request a follow-up conversation from the applicant to learn more about their project, clarify items, or assist with aligning their project to *Go Beyond the Classroom* outcomes. The rankings will be shared with the Vice Provost for Community Engagement/Director of the QEP who will make final funding decisions.

Request for funds may not exceed $2500 per proposal. No matching funds are required. The *Go Beyond the Classroom* CEL Grant has a limited annual budget; review of project proposals that meet all requirements will therefore be competitive, and selection will be based on those projects with the most promise of success.

Deadlines
For the 2025-2026 funding cycle, the following deadlines apply:
- Submission deadline: **February 13, 2026**
- Conversations with Grant Committee (if needed and interested): **March 2- 13, 2026**
- Awards announced: **April 3, 2026**
- Funds available to cover approved grant expenses and project activities that will take place from **July 1, 2026 to September 30, 2027.**
- A final report is due no later than **December 15, 2027.**

CEL Grant Program Requirements
If CEL founding is being requested for a for-credit course, that coursed must be approved as a CEL-designated course **prior to receiving funding**. Implementing the experience should not be dependent upon receiving funding. Funding is designed to enhance or expand CEL, not continuously support a project. **Application for CEL designation must be in process or approved before an award will be made**.

If the project is community-engaged research, it must adhere to these principles:
1. Meet the ETSU definition of Engaged Scholarship: intentionally designed research, scholarship, and/or creative activity that involves community partners

and addresses significant societal needs to impact and improve the lives of the people in our region and beyond.

2. Address and include the *Go Beyond the Classroom* "Core Four"
    1. Mutually Beneficial.
    2. Critically Reflective.
    3. Experiential Learning that is Instructionally Intentional.
    4. Integrates the *Go Beyond the Classroom* Student Learning

Outcomes

Projects must address and support the Student Learning Outcomes of the *Go Beyond the Classroom* QEP:

SLO 1 Connecting: Students will make meaningful connections between their community-engaged learning experiences and academic course content.

SLO 2 Influencing: Students will critically reflect on how community-engaged learning influences their future aspirations.

SLO 3 Contributing: Students will articulate how community-engaged learning prepares them to make productive contributions in a diverse society.

Primary Recipients

Students are the primary beneficiaries of the project.

Dissemination of Results

Grant recipients must disseminate the results of the project. This may include but is not limited to an internal faculty/staff presentation, an external presentation at a professional conference, student research presentation, a publication, and/or a creative product.

Required Approvals

Applicants will need to secure approval for submission from their chair/direct supervisor and their Academic Dean or Senior Administrator. A letter of support or an email indicating support is acceptable. This will be included in the Outlook Form application.

Priority Considerations

Priority consideration will be given to experiences that serve the geographic region of NE Tennessee known as the Appalachian Highlands. Projects that address one of the three target student populations will also receive priority consideration. Target populations include: Pell Grant recipients; Male students; Underserved students (American Indian or Alaska Native; Black or African American; Hispanic/Latino; Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; two or more races).

Supplemental Material based on the Nature of the Proposal

Applicants are encouraged to have an identified community partner prior to application. Applicants are encouraged to include letter(s) of support from community partners.

Evaluation/ Review of Grants

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

1. Completeness of application and conformance to the guidelines.

2. If this proposal is for a credit-bearing course, it must have CEL Designation pending or approved to receive funding. Seeking the designation may not be dependent upon receiving funding.

3. If this proposal is a community-engaged research project, it must meet the ETSU definition for engaged scholarship; include evidence of faculty-student-community partner collaboration; and adhere to the *Go Beyond the Classroom* Core Four.

4. Proposed project/course addresses more than one of the three *Go Beyond the Classroom* QEP SLOs.

5. Reasonableness of the budget and feasibility of completing the project in the time proposed.

6. Target geographic area is Northeast TN/the Appalachian Highlands region.

7. Potential for the project to engage the QEP target student populations Pell Grant recipients, male students, underserved students (American Indian or Alaska Native; Black or African American; Hispanic/Latino; Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; two or more races).

8. A plan for how progress in meeting the *Go Beyond the Classroom* QEP SLOs will be assessed.

Budget Requirements

Budget may not exceed $2500. Applicants should request only the amount necessary to complete the project. Budget items should directly support the development, implementation, assessment, and success of the project. Funds must provide direct support for the student-focused activity. Individual CEL courses or projects are only eligible for one CEL Grant during the five-year QEP; however, individuals involved may seek other CEL grant funding for different CEL projects.

Allowable budget items include professional development, conferences, course materials, supplies, article processing fees for journal article submission to journals that are supported by the Engagement Scholarship Consortium, student stipends, community partner expenses required to implement the project, and travel for faculty, staff, students, and/or community partners that support, enhance, or/or expand CEL and directly impact students.

Unallowable budget items include faculty/staff salary or stipends, course releases, and payments to community partners.

For additional information, please contact Dr. Susan McCracken at mccrackensd@etsu.edu