



CFMC Grant Application

COMPLETE THIS APPLICATION FOR FUNDING REQUESTS FOR THE Community Foundation of Middlesex County Competitive Cycle.

Instructions: Complete the application on the website. You may "Save and Continue Later" - the site will email you a link which is active for 30 days. Review instructions document for full details before completing. Complete all questions.

Section V requires certain documents to be uploaded to the form - see the Application Instructions Document for a list of the required items. All items must be uploaded as PDF Files. The CFMC Budget Summary form is available on the website in Word. This document must be submitted as PDF file as well.

I. Application Information

Legal Name of Organization

Essex Library Association

Division or Department Name (if applicable)

Children's Department

Other Tax Exempt Entity?

Are you a 501(c)3 Organization

Yes

EIN #

06-0720076

If your organization is not a 501(c) 3 tax exempt entity or division/department of a 170(c)1 government agency or religious organization, please contact Thayer Talbott, 860.347.0025, for further information before completing the application.

Total Cost associated with request \$

\$6,912

Dollar Amount Requested \$

\$5,000

Summary Statement

The Essex Library Association proposes to use \$5,000 in grant funding to assist with the purchase of two AWE Learning early literacy workstation computers. The workstations, which are equipped with multidisciplinary educational content focused on science, technology, reading, engineering, art & music and math, are aimed for use by children ages 2 to 8.

II. Funding Request Information

1. Proposal / Purpose

Through this grant, the Essex Library Association will help provide children in Essex and surrounding towns with free access to educational online content focused on science, technology, reading, engineering, art & music and math. These subjects are an important focus of the local elementary schools' curriculum, which is aligned with state and national standards. A "comprehensive science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education is key to preparing students to be innovators, problem solvers, and critical thinkers," according to the Connecticut State Board of Education (ct.gov).

The installation of these workstations at the Library will help expose young, pre-school children to these subjects as well as complement what is being taught at the elementary schools for the older children. In terms of the number of children served by the Library, as of the 2022-23 school year, there were 300 students enrolled in Essex Elementary School, which serves pre-kindergarten to grade 6 students living in Essex ([Essex School District](#)). The Library also serves children in the surrounding towns of Chester and Deep River. Chester has 222 pre-kindergarten to grade 6 students enrolled at Chester Elementary School and Deep River has 192 pre-kindergarten to grade 6 students enrolled at Deep River Elementary School, according to the Connecticut State Department of Education ([Deep River Elementary School](#) and [Chester Elementary School](#)). In addition, Westbrook has 252 pre-kindergarten to grade 4 students enrolled at Daisy Ingraham Elementary School ([Daisy Ingraham School](#)) and Old Saybrook has 400 pre-kindergarten to grade 4 students enrolled at Kathleen E. Goodwin Elementary School ([Kathleen E. Goodwin School](#)), according to the Connecticut State Department of Education. This is a total of approximately 1,366 elementary aged students in Essex and surrounding towns that are potentially served by the workstations at Library. In general, the Library serves approximately 6,793 residents of Essex ([U.S. Census](#)), 3,749 residents of [Chester](#), 4,415 residents of [Deep River](#), 6,860 residents of [Westbrook](#) and 10,535 residents of [Old Saybrook](#) for a total of 32,352 people served in Middlesex County.

The access to educational content that these workstations provide is important for all of Essex Library's younger patrons and those in surrounding towns; however, they are especially critical for a population of families that cannot afford personal technological devices that require an internet connection and expensive subscription-based online learning software. In Essex, around one-third of households cannot afford basic needs, according to the most recent Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed data in 2023. According to this data, approximately 32 percent of households in Essex are at or below the ALICE threshold, which represents "the number of households in our communities that do not earn enough to afford basic necessities" ([ALICE, 2023, Municipality Map](#)). This means 963 of the 3,009 households in Essex are an ALICE household.

The benefits of access to a multi-disciplinary educational approach to STEM subjects through these workstations are numerous. According to [the Institute for Educational Advancement](#), a multi-disciplinary educational approach in these subjects "teaches students how to think critically, solve problems and use creativity, [preparing] students to work in career areas that are predicted to experience significant growth." Employment in STEM career areas is projected to grow by 10.8 percent between now and 2032 compared with 2.3 percent for non-STEM occupations, according to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). Yet, students are often not exposed to STEM educational opportunities until much later in their educational careers, which could potentially influence their career choice. In fact, seventy-eight percent of college students who are pursuing a career in a STEM field state that they decided to study STEM in high school or earlier while 21 percent decided in middle school or earlier, according to a study conducted by [Harris Interactive](#). Minorities are also under-represented in STEM fields, with Black workers, as an example, representing less than 10 percent of all STEM jobs, and women underrepresented in physical sciences, computing and engineering jobs, according to a 2021 report from [the Pew Research Center](#). The workstations at the Library would help expose all children to STEM subjects at a young age, which potentially could influence their career choice.

There are several goals associated with the installation of the AWE Learning workstations in the children's area of the Essex Library. The first goal is to provide an educational information resource to the community's young children. The second goal is to allow the Library to serve all young children and their families by providing them with this type of technology regardless of their financial circumstances. The third goal is to align, complement and support the educational content available at the Library with that of the elementary schools, specifically in the area of STEM subjects.

These goals will be accomplished using several objectives. The first objective is to measure increased use of the new workstations for a period of one year, as compared with historical usage of the Library's desktop computers. This objective can

be measured by accessing user statistics from the Customer Portal of the workstations. The second objective is for the parents of young families, measured in a survey conducted one year after installation of the computers in the Library, to report that their child was informed and entertained by the online educational content of the workstations. The third objective is for the parents of young families, measured in the same survey conducted one year after installation of the computers in the Library, to report that their child was able to apply information in a STEM subject area learned from a workstation to either daily life or a program at the Library.

One challenge associated with installation of the workstations is helping to ensure that patrons with young families are aware of the new technology as well as the online educational content associated with them. To overcome this challenge, the installation of the AWE Learning workstations will be located in a high traffic area of the children's room. The workstations will also be promoted through the Library's monthly newsletter, by word of mouth by the children's librarians at school visits and through different marketing collateral such as the children's department printed flyers and calendars. A flyer that specifically promotes the workstations, provides instruction on their use and the online educational content available through them will also be developed and placed near the workstations. To the largest extent possible, the children's librarians will also highlight specific online educational content available on the workstations during a series of library programs focused specifically on science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics (STEAM). This STEAM programming is already in place at the Library and takes place on Saturdays and Mondays.

2. Sustainability and Assessing Impact

The Essex Library Association's 2022 – 2026 strategic plan was developed by working groups of its Board of Trustees and employees. The strategic planning process assesses the current strengths and weaknesses of the Library as well as the threats and opportunities within the community it serves.

Technology is an important part of the Library's 2022 – 2026 strategic plan with Goal Two of the Library's strategic plan stating, "The Essex Library Association's technology infrastructure will support the community's free and unfettered access to reliable information and promote effective and equitable delivery of services, programs and collections" (Strategic Plan, p. 9). The purchase and installation of the two workstations would help the Library fulfill this goal and expand its offerings for Essex and surrounding towns. It will also help the Library remain relevant in the lives of youth in today's digital age, especially with 44 percent of parents stating that their child uses or interacts with a desktop or laptop computer or gaming device, according to the Pew Research Center [Pew, 2020]. These workstations will also, again, help provide access to technology for families that cannot afford such devices or software for personal use.

There are a variety of ways in which the Library tracks progress and evaluates impact as it relates to its information resources and offerings. One primary way is through usage statistics, which would be available through the Customer Portal of the workstation. Another way is by surveying users. There are two paper-based surveys planned to assess the impact of the two workstations. The first survey will be distributed to parents six months after installation of the workstations. The feedback garnered from the open-ended questions in this survey will inform how well the Library is generating awareness about the specific educational online content provided by the workstations. A second survey will be distributed to parents one-year after installation of the workstations and will measure whether they feel their children were informed and entertained by the online educational content of the workstation. It will also help determine the impact of the workstations in terms of whether parents feel that their children can apply what they have learned from the workstation to a Library program or daily life. These evaluation outcomes will help inform the Library's future programming, as well as strategic planning.

In terms of the Library's sustainability as it relates to the workstations, they will be purchased from AWE Learning, a reputable company that has provided safe learning solutions for children for more than 25 years, according to [AWE Learning](#). In addition, the purchase and installation of the AWE Learning workstations is a one-time cost, with the devices incorporated into the Library's service offerings and made available for long-term use by Library patrons. Overall, the Library's financial position is strong, with the majority of its funding for operations coming from the Town of Essex, an annual membership appeal and an endowment. However, the Library relies heavily on gifts, grants and other fees to fund purchases such as this one, which are outside its operating expenses.

III. Grant Program / Project Information

Organization Area of Impact (choose ONE)

Education (Community Wide/Schools)

Grant Type (choose ONE)

Equipment

Target Demographics (Select all that apply):

- Children (ages 6-12)
- Birth to 5 years old
- Families
- Students

Geographic Area(s) Served By This Application:

- Chester
- Deep River
- Essex
- Old Saybrook
- Westbrook

Total Number of People in Middlesex County Personally Impacted

32,352

IV. Organization Information

Board of Directors / Trustees Information

Percent (%) of Directors/Trustees who contribute annually to Operations

100%

Total Number of Directors/Trustees:

13

Average number attending in person:

13

Total Number of Board meetings held last year:

11

Year of Return:

2022

Date most recent IRS Form 990 was filed:

01/20/2024

Organization's Total Operating Budget

Organization's Fiscal Year

July 1 - June 30

Division Operating Budget Information

National Organization Chapter Information

Did you RECEIVE a competitive process grant in the:

- 2021-2022 process

Brief Background Statement of the Organization:

Essex Library Association, located at 33 West Avenue in Essex, CT, serves the town's three villages of Essex, Centerbrook, and Ivoryton. The library was formed in 1889. Essex Library is a 501 (c)(3) independent, non-profit organization with a 12-15 member volunteer Board of Trustees serving three-year terms. In 2023 the library served more than 44,000 visitors, offered more than 400 programs, and circulated 79,450 items from a physical collection of 61,034 materials. Funding from the Town of Essex accounts for approximately one half of the Library's operating budget revenue each year. Remaining funds must be raised by the Library and Friends of the Library.

V. Additional Information To Be Included with the Application

Please Note: Additional information requested below MUST be uploaded in PDF files. Other document formats will not be accepted by the application form. Attempts to upload other file formats could result in a loss of all application data entered.

A. Current Organization Operations Budget (Required)

- FY24-Budget-Essex-Library-Association.pdf

B. Board of Directors and Officers List (Required)

- Essex-Library-Association-Trustee-Roster-with-Affiliations.pdf

C. IRS Tax Exempt Determination Letter

- Essex-Library-IRS-501c3-determination-letter.pdf

D. For Program/Project Requests only - CFMC Budget Summary Form:

- ELA-FINAL-CFMC-Summary-Budget.pdf

E. Organizations serving a region greater than Middlesex County - county-based budget summary:

F. America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Yes

ARPA Funding detail

Designate Will Apply or Have Been Approved/Received	Amount Requested / Approved
Have Been Approved	15,842.00

Additional financial documentation, including the organization's most recent audit, annual report, and IRS Form 990 may also be required. Only provide this information if requested.

For programs or projects which are collaborations among two or more organizations or where an organization provides in-school or after-school programming for schools, the Community Foundation requires a list of organizations or schools partnering with your organization as well as Letters of Support.

For the purposes of this application, collaborations are defined as partnerships where two or more agencies are committed through staffing, funding, and resource allocation to the goals and objectives of the program described. Because the nature of the collaboration requires two or more entities to work together, for the purposes of funding, only one organization may complete the application, and in doing so, accepts responsibility for all evaluative and fiduciary reporting.

For all collaborations, the Community Foundation requires letters of support from the non-applicant organization(s) and/or from the school(s) and school district(s) at which the applicant organization is the program.

Is this application in collaboration with a School(s) or School District(s)?

No

Is this application a collaboration of two or more nonprofit organizations (NOT schools)?

No

If this is an On-Going Collaboration, how long has the collaboration existed?

If Yes, is this a New or On-Going Collaboration?

List of Collaborators

Letters of Support (if a collaboration with schools or other nonprofits))

VI. Organization Contact Information

Are you a new nonprofit applicant to the Community Foundation?

No

Title

President

Executive Officer's Name

JoAnne Carter

Executive Officer Email

carterjs51@comcast.net

Phone

(860) 395-8154

Title

Executive Director

Contact Person

Ann Thompson

Application Contact Email

athompson@essexlib.org

Phone

(860) 767-1560

Mailing Address

33 West Avenue
Essex, Connecticut 06426
United States

Street Address

Connecticut
United States

Website

www.youressexlibrary.org

Social Media Channels

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EssexLibrary>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/essexlibraryct/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/sxlibrary>

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCA6CsUPeesWyeBDDUrKeG_g/featured

VII. Non-Funding Needs

Essex Library is interested in expanding our community partnerships in the town and county. We always welcome the opportunity to have introductions to area non-profit organizations and learn how the library might help those organizations, whether through hosting open houses, providing reference services, or sharing information about events with our patrons.

VIII. Marketing and Public Relations

Organizations receiving grants from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County must promote their funding awards according to the marketing and public relations guidelines established by the Community Foundation. By signing the application below, the CEO/Executive Director understands the Community Foundation's marketing and public relations requirements if awarded a grant. The Community Foundation will host a seminar on marketing guidelines and tips for grantees annually. The Community Foundation's Grantee Communications Kit may be downloaded on our website in the Nonprofit Resources section, middlesexcountycf.org/nonprofits/resources/forms-pr-guidelines/.

IX. Tax Exempt Standing and Use of Grant Funding Certification

By signing this application, the CEO/Executive Director/Board President is certifying that your organization is a qualified 501c3 organization or other charitable organization recognized and currently in good standing with the IRS, or 170(c)(1) governmental agencies. Should a grant be approved by the Community Foundation of Middlesex County, these funds may only be used for the purpose outlined in your original application; you must notify us if you are unable to do so. If grant funding is provided, you may only use these funds for charitable purpose as described in Section 170(c)2 of the IRS code, and funds may not be used for any political or lobbying activity. In addition, no tangible benefits, goods or services may be received by our donors or by staff members of the Community Foundation of Middlesex County in exchange for grant funding.

Signature Certification

I certify that my printed name as stated and assigned below constitutes my signature and may be accepted as such.

Title

Executive Director

Printed Name

Ann Thompson

Date

03/07/2024