



STEDTRAIN

We put a man on the moon.
Help our children reach the stars.

STEDTRAIN 2025-26 Grant Year Report

February 1, 2025 through April 30, 2026

Mission and History

STEDTRAIN encourages and supports the development of the next generation of Tennessee Valley scientists, engineers, and technical professionals by providing local educators with funding to conduct innovative, hands-on STEM programs in their classrooms.

These funds are called "Seed Grants" because they are intended to "seed" the students' enthusiasm for science and technology while also encouraging them to pursue technology-oriented higher education opportunities and careers. Tax-deductible donations from forward-looking companies, professional societies, and individuals in the community enable STEDTRAIN.



STEDTRAIN is a Committee of The Huntsville Association of Technical Societies (HATS) that administers a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Seed Grant program that provides Type I and Type II Grant funding of \$250 to \$1000 and \$1500 to \$2500 respectively to an educator for innovative hands-on classroom projects that will stimulate children's interest in science and technology.

Since the Program began in 1988, it has distributed over \$707,779 for 636 individual grants and other worthy educational projects. The grants currently benefit approximately 10,000 students directly and about 20,000 indirectly a year.

The STEDTRAIN program covers Limestone, Madison, Jackson, Morgan, and Marshall Counties in Alabama and Lincoln County in Tennessee.

The U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) introduced the acronym STEM in 2001. STEDTRAIN and our Seed Grant program were already well established by that time, so we retain the names and the pseudo-acronym to acknowledge the history of our Committee.

HATS is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization supporting Huntsville area technical and professional societies dedicated to the advancement of science and engineering. Founded on June 17, 1969, HATS has grown from seven charter societies to the current organizations representing more than

18,000 individuals. The STEDTRAIN Committee encourages the next generation of scientists, engineers, and technical professionals within our community. We put a man on the moon. Help our children reach the stars.

HATS is grateful to many of its Member societies, corporate, and individual donors for their support. The economic situation of the past few years has substantially increased the number of grant applications received. The increase has required funding substantially beyond what was previously possible.

HATS is listed on Charity Navigator, the nation's largest and most-used charity evaluator, but has not been assigned an Encompass Rating because the organization does not file a full IRS form 990s.

Federal EIN: 23-7070415

Alabama Solicitation License: AL21-068

Key Personnel



Mr. Paul Agarwal
Project Specialist
COLSA Corporation
STEDTRAIN Chair



Jesse Widner
Software Design Engineer III
Torch Technologies, Inc
STEDTRAIN Vice Chair



Ron Hackett, PE
Electrical Engineer, President & CEO
US Air Force (Ret), Hackett Information
Systems Engineering
STEDTRAIN Website Administrator



Allison Cash
Capture Manager
Stratolaunch
HATS Treasurer



Allison Rhen
 Project Manager - Technical
 Torch Technologies, Inc.
 HATS President

Calendar

The STEDTRAIN Seed Grant cycle is 15 months long beginning on February 1st and ending on April 30th of the following year. It is built around the school year and allows for collecting and evaluating proposals and then awarding and executing grants. This causes a three month overlap with the calendar year. To eliminate confusion from these overlapping cycles, this report will focus on one complete Seed Grant cycle.

In the year the Seed Grant is awarded:	
Request for Proposals begins	February 1st
Deadline for proposals submission	April 1st before midnight
Deadline for principals to accept proposals	April 3rd before midnight
Deadline to notify STEDTRAIN of problems	April 15th before midnight
Awards published and notices sent	On or about August 5th
Deadline to accept awards	15 days after notification
Deadline to verify award ceremony attendance	4 days before the ceremony
Award Ceremony	Usually the last Saturday in August except Labor Day Weekend,
In the year following the Seed Grant award:	
Midterm reports due	January 20th before midnight
Final reports due	Thursday at noon before presentations
Final presentations	Usually the last Saturday in April

Proposal Statistics

HATS rules prohibit STEDTRAIN taking money from other HATS programs, so STEDTRAIN funds as many acceptable proposals as possible each year without running a deficit. Some proposals do not qualify for funding and are not funded for cause. There can be proposals that were deemed to be acceptable that are not funded because of a lack of funds.

Submitted	14
Funded	9
Not funded for lack of funds	2
Not funded for cause	2
Total Funds	\$18,577
Funding Shortfall	\$4,685

Selected Proposal Abstracts

Roger B. Chaffee Elementary (Madison County, Alabama)

Mrs. Joni Graley

Greenpower Club

Students involved in Greenpower learn about keeping our environment clean, team work, using technology to build presentations, engineering a drivable car, and about laws of motion. We are in constant need of parts and are trying to get enough funds for the school to purchase a new car.

Hazel Green High School (Madison County, Alabama)

Mrs. Teresa Hodge

First Person Drone Program

Our school would like to create a FPV, First Person Vehicle, Drone program. The students would fly and operate a FPV drone, which are currently being added to many commercial and military programs. Once trained on these drones our students would be able to participate in online virtual drone competitions. We will be partnering with our JROTC program to make this program available to a wide range of students. FPV drones are an emerging technology that incorporates virtual reality with flying drones. The students use a headset to either maneuver a virtual world or fly using cameras on the drone itself.

Limestone County Career Technical Center (Limestone County, Alabama)

Ms. Monica Hobson

25-26 Team 34 Robotics

Team 34 participates in the FIRST FRC competition. It is a program that teaches students the principles of engineering and how to work as a team. In a short amount of time, students must work together and design and program a functioning robot to compete in that year's game. It is designed to promote interest in careers in the STEM fields. The competitions are opportunities to work with teams all over the country to achieve their goals. They will showcase and demonstrate at these competitions. This program is designed to give students real-world experience applicable to the STEM industry.

A complete list of funded proposals and abstracts can be found on our website at </showpage.php?pageld=84&gy=2526>

Selected Final Reports

At the end of each Seed Grant cycle, the teachers participate in a conference that is intended to facilitate networking and the sharing of ideas for future STEM education projects. The teachers prepare a tri-fold display and are encouraged to bring in hardware and other examples of their project. They also prepare a final report in Microsoft PowerPoint format and a single overview slide. The overview slides are compiled into a single presentation that runs on a timed loop that is display during the networking period. The following are selected examples of the overview slides.

Photos

Tour of HCT

1st place
HCS district
race- April

April 25, 2026

1st place HCT/Whitesburg

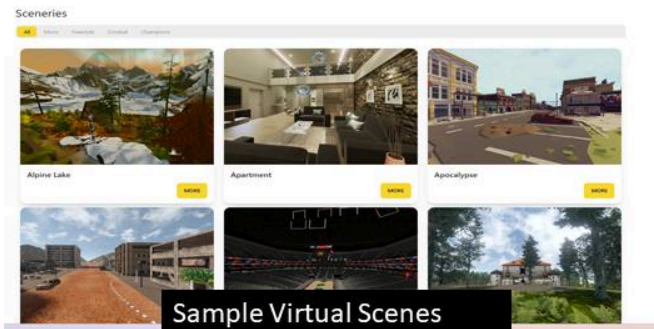
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Drone's in School

Proposal Purpose:

- Grant was used to purchase FPV Drones
- Worked with JROTC to create Competition Drone TEAMS
- Purpose was to Enhance STEM opportunities for Students
- 3 ways to Compete
 - Simulator(unlimited attempts)
 - Virtual(within time frame)
 - Live Events



Sample Virtual Scenes

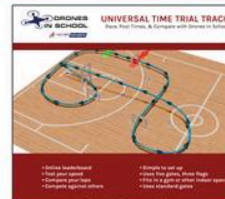
February Virtual Race

February Track

Click on the UTT Track Setup Guide to view the specs for this month's race.

NOTE: For Virtual Races teams can fly their stock frame and carrying payloads is not required for head-to-head course timing. If Official STEM Alliance Gates are not available, any gate with a 36" wide by 30" high opening can be used. (you can make a gate with standard 1/2" PVC pipe or even cardboard)

Entries must be uploaded by 11:59 PM ET on March 7, 2026.



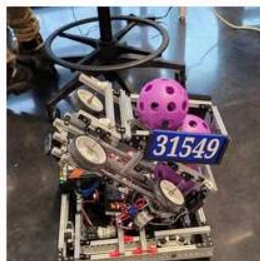
Virtual Race Guidelines



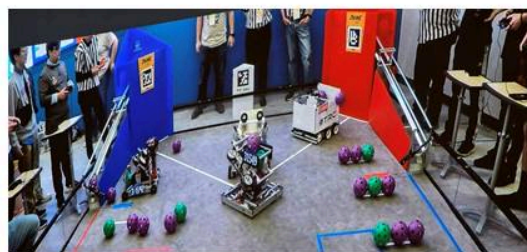
Photos



Our new FTC Team #31549 competed in Chattanooga at a regional tournament and at the State Championships!



We also participated in numerous outreach events in the community and ended our season with LCHS STEAM Night!





Overview

Let's Start Flying



- **Proposal Purpose:**
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April 25, 2026

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Impact on the Community

As part of the final report process, teachers report on the participation in their projects. This includes teachers and students who directly participate in the project and teachers and students who are exposed to the project through demonstrations and presentations. Teachers are encouraged to collaborate with other schools, and to bring in external advisors from the area's technical community. The following table summarizes the teachers input for this Seed Grant cycle.

Involvement	Teacher's School	Other Schools	Total Involvement
Number of students involved	326	915	1241
Number of teachers involved	24	15	39
Number of classes involved	29	23	52
Number of external advisors involved	26	8	34

Donors

Thanks to the following companies, corporations, institutions, and individuals who contributed generously to the HATS STEDTRAIN program.

2025-26 Donors and Contributors

Cash Donors:

Space and Missile Defense Working
Group of the
National Defense Industrial
Association (NDIA),
Tennessee Valley Chapter



IEEE, Huntsville Section



Redstone Federal Credit Union



Vertiv Corporation



Website And Communication Donors:

Hackett Information Systems
Engineering



Georgia Tech Research Institute
Huntsville Research Center



Individual Donors:

Paul Agarwal



Financial Report

As a small organization with less than \$50k in annual revenue, HATS files an annual IRS form 990N. The financial information included in the 990N report may not be sufficiently detailed for some potential donors considering making donations to the HATS STEDTRAIN Seed Grant program, so we provide the following financial report.

Other sources of income include interest on the savings account, PayPal donations, Amazon Smile, and Facebook fundraisers.

Credits	
Rollover from previous Grant Year	2,583.87
HATS	0.00
Donations from HATS members	17,000.00
Outside donations	989.56
Grants	0.00
Other sources	0.27
Total Credits	20,573.70
Debits	
Grants to Educators	18,476.81
Prizes and special awards	300.00
Event costs	0.00
Website and Communications	0.00
Other expenses	10.00
Rollover to next Grant Year	1,786.89
Total Debits	20,573.70

The Program Expense Ratio is a number that tells how much of an organization's funding went toward the stated mission of the organization. It is defined as the ratio of Program Expenses (how much was spent on the mission) to Total Expenses.

The STEDTRAIN Program Expense Ratio for this cycle is 99.8913%.

Contact Information

Committee Chair Mr. Paul Agarwal pagarwal@colsa.com 256.651.5693

Administrator Ron Hackett, PE ron@rhackett.net 931.438.3298