

The Clare Boothe Luce Program for Women in STEM

Proposal Guidelines for Invited Colleges and Universities

The Clare Boothe Luce Program for Women in STEM is dedicated to significantly increasing the number of women in math, science, and engineering at every level of higher education. By addressing the structural and cultural barriers that contribute to the gender gap, and advancing women's leadership in the sciences, a new – more inclusive – landscape can take shape. As of 2024, the Clare Boothe Luce Program awards grants of up to \$750,000 to fund higher education institutions' efforts to address the obstacles that prevent or discourage women on their campuses from pursuing and thriving in STEM fields. Applicant institutions must be based in the United States.

Clare Boothe Luce (1903-1987) was a remarkable woman whose career spanned seven decades and included many professional interests: journalism, politics, the theater, philanthropy, diplomacy, and intelligence. Under the terms of her will, she chose to establish a legacy that would benefit current and future generations of women with talent and ambition in areas where they continue to be underrepresented.

For 2026, the Clare Boothe Luce Program will focus exclusively on projects that address the barriers faced by women in Astronomy, Mathematics, and Physics. The Clare Boothe Luce program is especially interested in projects within those disciplines that prioritize community or public engagement, STEM leadership, or review of tenure practices. STEM leadership includes the cultivation of future leaders who are committed to equity and opportunity, are eager to engage their communities, especially through knowledge sharing, and seek to contribute to civic life.

Challenges and Opportunities

Providing colleges and universities with funding to either hire women scientists or to pay the tuition of women students pursuing science has been a successful funding strategy for many years, generally encouraging positive change in schools, departments, and institutions.

There is surely still resistance to gender diversity in the sciences, but the awareness of the obstacles is broader, the structural barriers are somewhat lower, the institutional support for women in science is greater, and the role models are more numerous. As conditions have changed, the Luce Foundation has considered whether its strategies should change too in order to continue to improve the climate for women studying and teaching in the sciences.

Today, for example, the availability of scholarships and professorships for women pursuing the sciences is only a small part of the problem: students and faculty require mentoring to persist and to thrive; they need to network with one another — both within and across institutions; and they need institutional support — like funding for child-care and equitable distribution of administrative service obligations.

Colleges and universities must train administrators and faculty more effectively to support women scientists. They need to build strong relationships with feeder high schools and community colleges to ensure that women interested in science have opportunities to explore college-level science and to matriculate into a four-year science program.

2026 Program Outline

For 2026, the Clare Boothe Luce Program will focus exclusively on projects that address the barriers faced by women in Astronomy, Mathematics, and Physics. The Clare Boothe Luce Program is especially interested in applications for projects within those disciplines that prioritize community or public engagement, STEM leadership, or review of tenure practices.

Eligible institutions will apply for funds to support undergraduate scholarships and research awards, graduate fellowships, and professorships for women students and professors in Astronomy, Mathematics, or Physics. In those instances where institutions do not have enough women in these departments/fields to fund, the Foundation will consider requests to fund scholarships or professorships for women students or professors in other STEM disciplines. CBL grant funds, though, shall not be used to hire new faculty or to provide aid to students who weren't already receiving it. Instead, grant funds must replace unrestricted institutional monies that are being used to compensate professors in the sciences who identify as women or to fund financial aid for students studying science who identify as women.

The unrestricted institutional funding "freed up" by the CBL grant during the grant period will be used to improve the climate for women in the sciences at the grantee institutions. Applicants will propose to undertake specific activities and strategies best suited to address the barriers women in STEM encounter at their institutions. For example, applicants might propose to use unrestricted institutional funds to create training programs for faculty or administrators, to conduct relevant institutional research, and to develop and pilot course redesign. Institutions may apply for CBL grants for any combination of women Undergraduate Scholars, Undergraduate Researchers, Graduate Fellows, and Professors already enrolled or hired at applying institutions. CBL grants may be used only to

cover the salaries or financial aid of individuals whose salaries or scholarships are being funded by unrestricted institutional monies at the start of or during the grant term.

Applying institutions pledge that these individuals will be recognized as Clare Boothe Luce Scholars, Fellows, or Professors while being supported by Foundation funds. Therefore, these individuals cannot simultaneously hold another named award or grant. CBL funds may not be used to support women in clinical medicine, the social sciences, or the humanities. Funds may not be used for international travel or study abroad.

Applicants **must** also have conducted or pledge to conduct a climate survey or other data collection effort to better understand the STEM ecosystem on their campus and the barriers that woman-identifying individuals face in these departments. Freed-up funding can be used to support such efforts.

Application Guidelines

Applying for a CBL award is a two-stage process. Applicants must first submit an initial application form. At this stage, applicants will provide basic institutional information (e.g., public or private status, MSI status, percentage of students who are Pell eligible, endowment per student, etc.) and briefly describe how unrestricted institutional monies freed up by a CBL grant might be used to support women in STEM on their campuses.

A smaller group of these first-stage applicants will be invited to submit full proposals. At the proposal stage, applicants will be asked to describe in detail how they intend to use the unrestricted institutional monies made available by a grant. Applicants should explain how these funded activities will positively affect women in at least one of the above-mentioned departments and how they relate to and/or build upon existing or prior activities the applicant has undertaken. Applicants will also indicate the staff and faculty who will be involved in the proposed activities, describe the timeline, short and long-term goals, and anticipated impact. Schools must also submit two detailed budgets, one for the planned spending of the CBL grant, and the second detailing how the unrestricted funds will be spent. The individual overseeing the grant must be a decanal-level administrator or a senior faculty member. They must serve as the primary contact for the project and must be supported by at least two additional individuals who can be staff or faculty.

Applicant institutions must be based in the United States.

The CBL competition does not accept applications related to medical, behavioral, or social sciences, or public health.

Institutions can request up to \$750,000 to be used over 5 years. **Only one application is allowed per institution.** Institutions with multiple campuses may submit one application per campus.

The CBL Program does not allow for indirect costs.

CBL grantees who received an award in 2023 or thereafter may not apply for another CBL grant until three years after the submission of their final narrative and budget report. CBL grantees who received an award prior to 2023 should consult their grant letter to determine when they are eligible to reapply for a CBL grant.

CBL Program Selection Committee

According to the terms of Ambassador Luce's will, the Clare Boothe Luce Program has a six-person Selection Committee consisting of three members appointed by The Heritage Foundation of Washington, D.C., and three members appointed by the Henry Luce Foundation. The Selection Committee members are Dr. Joanne Berger-Sweeney, Dr. Amy Liu, Dr. David Madigan, Dr. James Piereson, Brandon Simmons, and Bridgett Wagner.

Important Considerations

Every proposal should provide evidence that administrators understand the factors that may hinder a woman's educational or career advancement and describe institutional policies and practices that have been developed to address these factors. The proposal should indicate the value of the grant to the institution and the STEM communities it serves.

It is expected that the institution will provide a positive educational or work environment for women students and faculty and will actively prepare recipients of Clare Boothe Luce grants to progress in their education or career. Because the Clare Boothe Luce Program is committed to the advancement of women who are at the forefront of academic inquiry, the Selection Committee values institutional commitment to full and free academic inquiry by all participants among the institution's stakeholders.

If selected, an institution may name up to five Clare Boothe Luce Professors over the course of the grant. CBL Professors should be tenured or tenure-track; teaching professors will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Institutions must submit the names and departments of Clare Boothe Luce Professors, Scholars, and Graduate Fellows to the Henry Luce Foundation for approval before publicly announcing them as award recipients.

As part of the terms of a CBL grant, we ask that schools choose at least two representatives from their campus' core CBL team, the lead/primary contact, project director, and project coordinator (or individuals designated as such) to attend annual, mandatory in-person meetings. These meetings are intended to facilitate network- and relationship-building among CBL recipients, to create opportunities to connect with one another, share successes, problem solve, and exchange resources to help further women in STEM on campuses. Expenses associated with these annual meetings will be covered by the Foundation and should not be included as an expense in the grant proposal. CBL staff will provide more details about these meetings and opportunities with those schools selected for a CBL grant award.

Questions should be directed to Dr. Aida Gureghian, Director of Leadership Programs, Erica Crowley, Program Officer, or Molly Sullivan, Program Assistant at WomenInSTEM@hluce.org.

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