**The Resources You Need Are Available. We’re Here to Help.**

At StarLab, we understand the challenges of finding appropriate funding to implement academic enhancements. That’s why we’ve gathered what you need to help make it happen.

Letter-of-Inquiry Template Instructions

Many funders require a short Letter of Inquiry in order to consider a funding request.  These examples provide ideas of how to develop an LOI.  Just follow the format, tell your organization's story, your needs, your demographics, and use the descriptions of StarLab to complete your letter. All customizable fields are highlighted in **red** so you can easily identify and change the fields relevant to your mission.

{Foundation Name}

{Foundation Address}

{Foundation City, State, Zip}

{Date}

Dear {Insert Funding Organization Contact Name}:

This proposal is written on behalf of {Insert Library Name} whose mission is “to provide quality material and services that fulfill the educational, informational, cultural, and recreational needs of the entire community of {Insert District or Parish Name} in an atmosphere of respect, professionalism, and acceptance.” The purpose of our request is to seek resources in support of an exciting S.T.E.M. improvement project for the community we serve. Specifically, we are seeking resources to support the implementation of StarLab, a mobile planetarium package that features state-of-the-art Earth & Space videos, 360° spherical projection, and a five-meter portable dome. This technology immerses viewers in virtual reality field trips without having to leave {Insert District/Parish Name}. These engaging experiences will reach over {8,000} elementary, middle and high school students in our Parish and thousands of families throughout the year during our library hosted community events. All audiences may voyage to distant planets, wonder under starry skies or journey to the center of the Earth, guided by trained library associates along the way.

The overall cost of implementing this portable interactive S.T.E.M. experience is {$31,940}. We are asking the {Insert Foundation Name} Foundation to consider funding {$10,000} of the total amount. As important as this project is to our community improvement effort to help increase student achievement, we are unable to fund this effort on our own. Library funding issues continue at both the state and local levels. Our budget is limited, and we are doing our best to incorporate new innovative technologies and resources into our library programs. We are spreading this ask over multiple sources and are committed to providing the internal time and resources needed to implement this effort once StarLab is purchased. For more information on StarLab, please check out [www.starlab.com](http://www.starlab.com).

Our StarLab Program goals are:

* 100% of students (1,800 each year) enrolled in our 2019 Summer Reading Program (“Insert Unique Library Program Name”) will participate in StarLab programs as part of our reading enrichment curriculum;
* 24 {Insert Parish/District Public School Name} will either participate in on-site or outreach StarLab programs (8,000 students) during the 2019-2020 school year;
* To bring a S.T.E.M. enrichment resource to this rural part of {Insert State} and provide educators and families with 21st Century technology and 21st Century educational experiences only possible in more distantly located urban areas of our state.

{Insert Parish/District Name} is the most northeasterly of what are called the Florida Parishes in the boot region of Louisiana. The population of 46,367 people has a median age of 39.4 years and a median household income of $31,013; well below the state median income of $46,145 and national median income of $59,055. Both of the school districts in our service area, {Insert Parish/District Public School Name}, have 100% of students on the free lunch program under the Title I program for schools with a higher than average number of students from families living below the poverty levels. {Insert District School Name} has a minority enrollment of 77%, which far exceeds both state and national averages. Due to these socio-economic and cultural challenges, 31% of {Insert County/District School Name} students and 51% of {Insert District School Name} students read below proficiency levels as demonstrated by their performance on the state standardized test. In Math, 47% of {Insert District School Name} students and 65% of {Insert District School Name} students score below proficiency levels. Our teachers and our community need 21st century educational resources to help prepare them for 21st century careers. For many of our working, lower income families, leaving town for enriching educational experiences at museums and planetariums is not an option.

Statistically, students who read during the summer gain an average of one month of reading proficiency. Students who don’t read lose an average of 2-3 months proficiency and over time, those lost months add up to years. By high school, two-thirds of the reading achievement gap can be attributed to summer learning loss during the elementary years. That is why the {Insert District Library Name} offer Summer Reading Programs that attract over 1,800 students annually. StarLab will be the premier S.T.E.M. experience as we integrate 21st century technology with a reading program that revolves around the universe, our solar system, and the stars.

StarLab will provide a portal that permits students and teachers alike to use their collective imaginations to improve instruction and increase learning through interactive lessons. Imagine a classroom experience where:

* A “field trip” to one of our branches or, as an outreach to one of our schools, can bring Earth & Space Science to life in ways never before imagined;
* Interactive lessons in astronomy, geology, history, weather, mythology and biology are taken to an entirely new level of experience for students and teachers;
* Students are more engaged in the lesson and better equipped to retain important information - all aligned with state standards and learning objectives;
* Visual representations of the stars, the planets and other subjects are in a dynamic space that naturally invites exploration;
* Students are motivated to learn because they are actively engaged, not just a passive receiver of PowerPoint instruction;
* Student passion for Science and S.T.E.M. careers is ignited, and they can connect curriculum to real life situations;
* Students are excited about learning, and teachers are excited about teaching.

StarLab would not only be an amazing learning tool for all ages, it will give our students and families richer S.T.E.M. experiences that will result in deeper connections and retention of abstract concepts. Under the current budget constraints and with a large percentage of our children coming from economically disadvantaged households, most will never experience a planetarium-style program like the one StarLab recreates without leaving our parish. Immersing our students in new and advanced learning opportunities such as StarLab will not only inspire them to be excited and engaged in their learning, but it will stimulate their out-of-the-box engineering design skills and empower them to see themselves as leaders in our community and for the future. When students experience S.T.E.M. education directly, they are more motivated and achieve more. StarLab provides an opportunity to bring a variety of science experiences to life for our schools and community. And, it can be repeated, again and again. StarLab is all about inspiration and possibilities!

This one-time purchase will provide a sustainable technology that will be used by students, teachers, parents and community members for years to come. The potential impact of your support throughout {Insert District/Parish Name} over the next decade and beyond is priceless. Thank you for reviewing this request, and we look forward to working with the {Inset Name of Foundation} Foundation. Certainly, any help and consideration at this point is greatly appreciated by our staff and more importantly, our students. If you need additional information or a formal application completed, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe

ABC Library Assistant Manager

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