



TeraBridges 18603 – FIRST Tech Challenge Robotics Team

Expanding FIRST Robotics Opportunities in Western Pennsylvania

Who We Are

TeraBridges 18603 is a high school **FIRST Tech Challenge** robotics team based in Pittsburgh. FIRST is an international STEM education program where students design, build, and program robots, while also developing essential skills such as leadership, communication, project management, teamwork, and real-world problem solving.

In 2025, our season culminated at the **FIRST World Championship in Houston**, where we collaborated and competed with teams from across the globe. This experience showed us how powerful and transformative FIRST can be when students are supported and encouraged to grow.

The Challenge in Western Pennsylvania

While FIRST programs continue to grow across the United States, **Western Pennsylvania has significantly fewer FIRST Tech Challenge teams than other regions.**

At nearly every outreach event, families ask if their student can join our team. We often must respond: "That depends—what school district are you from?"

Too often, the answer is: "Our school doesn't have a team."

Most families lack the knowledge, resources, or support to start a team. Many teachers and mentors would participate, but they need structured training and a reasonable stipend to take on the time commitment required to coach a robotics team.

Without support, students lose access to life-changing STEM opportunities.

Proposed Solution

Pittsburgh-Area FIRST Robotics Grant Program

Modeled after programs already active in Eastern Pennsylvania.

This grant program would:

- Provide **startup support and training** for new FIRST Tech Challenge teams
- Assist with **registration fees and initial equipment costs**
- Offer **coach and mentor stipends** so educators can sustainably lead teams

Why This Matters

Supporting FIRST Robotics in Western Pennsylvania will:

- Expand access to high-quality STEM education
- Empower students as innovators, engineers, entrepreneurs, and community leaders
- Strengthen our regional workforce pipeline in advanced manufacturing, AI, robotics, healthcare, energy, and technology
- **Level the playing field** between Western and Eastern Pennsylvania in youth STEM access

FIRST participants show increased interest in STEM careers, improved problem-solving and communication skills, greater leadership initiative, and long-term engagement in innovation-driven fields.

Our Commitment

We are ready to:

- Assist new teams in getting started
- Share training resources and a support network
- Continue outreach across Western PA to grow FIRST participation region-wide

We simply need the infrastructure to make this expansion possible.

Contact

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We welcome the opportunity to discuss this initiative and move forward together.

View a video we made
on this Advocacy:

