

**2026 Core Mission Grant  
Executive Summary  
White Committee Finalist**

**1. Organization Name: Center for Aquatic Sciences**

**2. Organization website:** [aquaticsciences.org](http://aquaticsciences.org)

**3. County where organization headquartered:** Camden County

**4. County(ies) being served by proposed project:** Camden County

**5. Organization Mission and Vision Statement:** The Center for Aquatic Sciences provides unique learning experiences that empower youth to lead the way in understanding, appreciating, and protecting the environment. We believe that investing in young people, strengthening their connection to nature, and positioning them for success is our best hope for creating a better world for future generations.

**6. Organization's Current Annual Operating Budget 2026:** \$1,365,520

**7. Proposed Project Name:** Community And Urban Science Enrichment (CAUSE) Youth Development

**8. Proposed Project Summary:** The CAUSE program is a STEM-based (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), youth development program serving Camden City, NJ. Forty (40) CAUSE youth in grades 7-12 give back to their communities by designing and delivering locally impactful, culturally relevant STEM programming focusing on the understanding and stewardship of local ecosystems. CAUSE students are recruited in cooperation with the Center's 20 partner schools in Camden. CAUSE takes a whole-person approach to youth development, emphasizing academic learning, communication and interpersonal skills, resume building, and college preparation. CAUSE youth serve 3,000+ Camden students and their families annually through tabling events and outreach.

In 2026-2027, CAUSE youth will create new, unique programming centering around highly local environmental issues, and take that programming to new neighborhoods, venues, and audiences in Camden. CAUSE youth will identify environmental threats and opportunities in their neighborhoods, for example water quality, point source pollution, invasive species, or stormwater management. CAUSE youth will develop hands-on demonstrations, activities, creative skits and artwork, collateral materials, games, and resource guides that can be tailored to various age groups, events, and venues. A concentrated focus on hyper-local environmental stewardship and effort to encourage behavior change to further conservation goals will benefit both the CAUSE youth and their communities, promoting ecological literacy, agency to act, and STEM enrichment opportunities.