

A Proposal to the Community and Economic Development Committee

Part 1: About All Hands Boatworks

All Hands Boatworks (AHB) has served Milwaukee's youth for more than 13 years with a ladder program model — meeting young people where they are, starting as early as age 10, and supporting them through workforce entry at age 22. Every AHB program uses hands-on wooden boatbuilding and watercraft projects as the vehicle for developing academic, technical, and social skills in a respectful, inclusive environment.

AHB serves Milwaukee youth from families with limited incomes, with programming running year-round:

- After-school sessions (RAFT program) during the academic year
- Intensive weeklong summer day camps for middle and high school students
- Workforce readiness training and internships (TradeWorks) for older youth throughout the year

AHB's approach is distinctive: building a real wooden boat from scratch teaches math, science, engineering, and design while fostering critical thinking, teamwork, perseverance, and confidence. These four core programs together serve an estimated 210 youth per year across select funding sources.

Part 2: Our Core Programs

RAFT (Real Apprenticeships for Teens) — Ages 13–17

RAFT uses wooden boatbuilding and woodcraft as a youth development strategy, responding directly to the underrepresentation of Milwaukee's youth of color and young women in the skilled trades. During the school year, teens participate at no cost in up to three 8-week sessions at AHB's boat shop. Each session builds progressively on hands-on skills, mentorship, and STEAM concepts embedded in the boatbuilding process.

Current annual participants: approximately 45 youth completing one, two, or three 9-week sessions.

STEAMboat Learning — Ages 10–15

Introductory Boatbuilding projects and after-school Builders Clubs for youth in grades 5-9. Hands-on projects integrate math, science, and design skills to the construction of real wooden boats and other manual arts projects. Youth gain practical woodworking skills, confidence, and the connection between academic skills and the world of work.

Current annual participants: approximately 150 youth completing boatbuilds and introductory woodworking with over 20 community partners.

TradeWorks Workforce Readiness — Ages 17–22

TradeWorks is the next step after RAFT, designed for unemployed recent graduates, underperforming 11th and 12th graders, and underemployed young adults lacking access to trades careers. The program runs in semester-long levels of 80–100 hours over 15 weeks, with merit stipends of \$500–\$1,000 for completion. Three levels progress from foundational skills through advanced project-based learning to maritime industry preparation.

In 2027, AHB will launch a new Boat Building and Carpentry Certification aligned with the Carpenters’ Union Career Connections curriculum, offering up to 16 college credits applicable toward a registered apprenticeship.

Current annual participants: approximately 12-14 trainees across two 15-week programs.

Summer Day Camps — Ages 10–15 (and up to 22 for On-The-Water)

AHB runs four summer weeklong day camps and a planned On-The-Water Skills & Jobs Camp, all of which currently have waitlists. Camps include a Boatbuilders Camp Week at the AHB shop, a Maritime Skills Camp with the Milwaukee Community Sailing Center, the Rainbow Day Camp with the Jewish Community Center, and a RiverVentures Camp on the Menomonee River.

Current annual participants: approximately 60–88 youth (15–22 per camp × 4 camps).

Part 3: How This \$25,000 Grant Helps — Specifically

The 210-youth figure above reflects AHB’s full programming across select funding sources. The \$25,000 requested here represents targeted, incremental investment that will directly expand access beyond what current funding supports. The table below shows exactly how this grant broadens each program.

Program	Ages Served	Current Annual Youth Served	Additional Youth Served	How \$25,000 Expands This Program
RAFT After-School	13–17	45 per year	+15 per year	Fund materials & supplies for 1 additional 8-week session, adding 15 more teens
STEAMboat Learning	10–15	150 per year	+ 25 per year	Fund materials & supplies for 3 additional program offerings with 2 new community partners
TradeWorks	17–22	12 -14 per year	+10 per year	Partially fund merit stipends (\$500–\$1,000 each) for 10 additional trainees; support launch of 2027 Carpentry Certification pilot.
On-The-Water Skills & Jobs Camp	15–22	Not offered currently	+10 per year	Offset equipment & waterway access costs, enabling the program to accept 5–10 additional older youth for job-skills and boating certification.

In summary: this grant would allow AHB to serve an estimated 60 additional youth beyond current capacity, across all four programs, during the 2026–2027 program year.

Part 4: Grant Budget Summary

The \$25,000 will be allocated across programs as follows:

Budget Line Item	Amount	Program
Instruction / staff time (expanded sessions)	\$8,000	RAFT + Camps
Project materials & supplies	\$7,000	All programs
Youth merit stipends (TradeWorks)	\$6,000	TradeWorks
Carpentry Certification pilot (2027 launch)	\$2,500	TradeWorks
Waterway access & equipment (On-The-Water Skills Camp)	\$1,500	On-The-Water
Total	\$25,000	

For reference, AHB's total annual program budgets across all funding sources are: RAFT (\$60,000), TradeWorks (\$70,000), Summer Day Camps (\$40,000), and On-The-Water Camp (\$10,000).

Respectfully submitted,

William J. Nimke

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June 2026