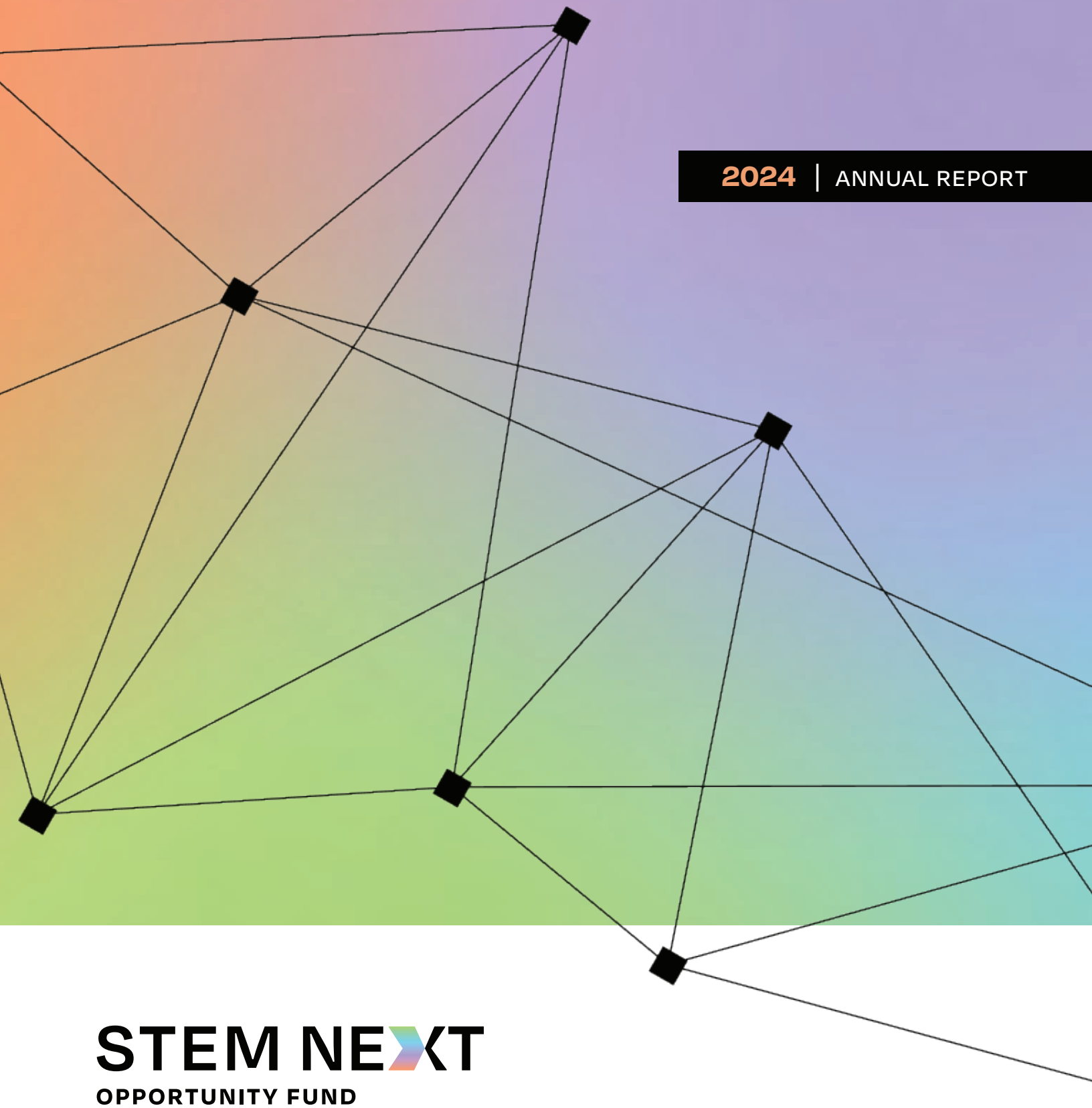


2024 | ANNUAL REPORT

STEM NEXT
OPPORTUNITY FUND

ENGAGING LEARNERS EVERYWHERE

Table of Contents

Our Mission, Vision & Core Beliefs

Our Mission:

Making out-of-school STEM opportunities a reality for millions of young people to help them thrive in STEM and beyond.

Our Vision:

Every child has STEM opportunities that inspire curiosity, innovation, and the critical thinking skills for whatever comes next.

Our Core Beliefs:

- STEM is for everyone.
- STEM is everywhere.
- Out-of-school time is critical.
- System change is transformational.

A Note from the Executive Director

Reflecting on 2024, I am energized by the momentum we have built together to expand high-quality STEM learning beyond the classroom. This year, we deepened our impact across the country—reaching more young people, elevating their voices, and laying the groundwork for the next era of career-connected STEM learning.

Thanks to the dedication of our partners, educators, and supporters, the Million Girls Moonshot engaged 1.2 million youth in STEM programs, including 620,000 girls. Over just four years, the Moonshot has reached more than 2.6 million girls—and as many boys—across all 50 states. These numbers tell a powerful story: when we work together, we can transform the landscape of opportunity for millions of young people.

In 2024, our Flight Crew youth ambassador program reached new heights, with 51 members representing every state. These inspiring teens not only shared their STEM journeys but also built community and confidence as leaders. Their voices resonated on national stages, from our Girls Build Solutions showcase in San Diego to the National STEM Challenge in Washington, D.C., demonstrating how youth can lead and shape the future of STEM.

We also launched bold new efforts to link STEM learning with the workforce ecosystem. At Girls Build Solutions, we unveiled the Institute for a STEM Ready America, a new endeavor to equip out-of-school-time programs with tools to connect STEM experiences to real-world career pathways. With the support of a $3.3 million U.S. Department of Labor investment, we launched the Institute's first signature initiative, Exploring Career Connections in STEM (EC^2), bringing workforce readiness and career exploration opportunities to youth in rural and underserved communities.

Our national partnerships also continued to thrive. Imagine Science partners have jointly served more than 50,000 youth to date across the country with remarkable outcomes in STEM enthusiasm and career interest. The Teen Science Café Network expanded into eight new states, hosting more than 200 teen-led STEM events. And through our Opportunity Fellows program, experts served across federal agencies—from the Department of Labor to AmeriCorps—advancing national STEM and out-of-school time priorities.

This progress is only possible because of you: our partners, funders, and champions who share our vision for a STEM Ready America. Together, we are opening doors, sparking curiosity, and preparing today's youth to be tomorrow's innovators and problem-solvers.

With gratitude,

Ron Ottinger

Our Leadership

PENDRED (PENNY) NOYCE
Board Chair through 12/31/24

CELINE COGGINS
Board Member

DENNIS BARTELS
Board Member

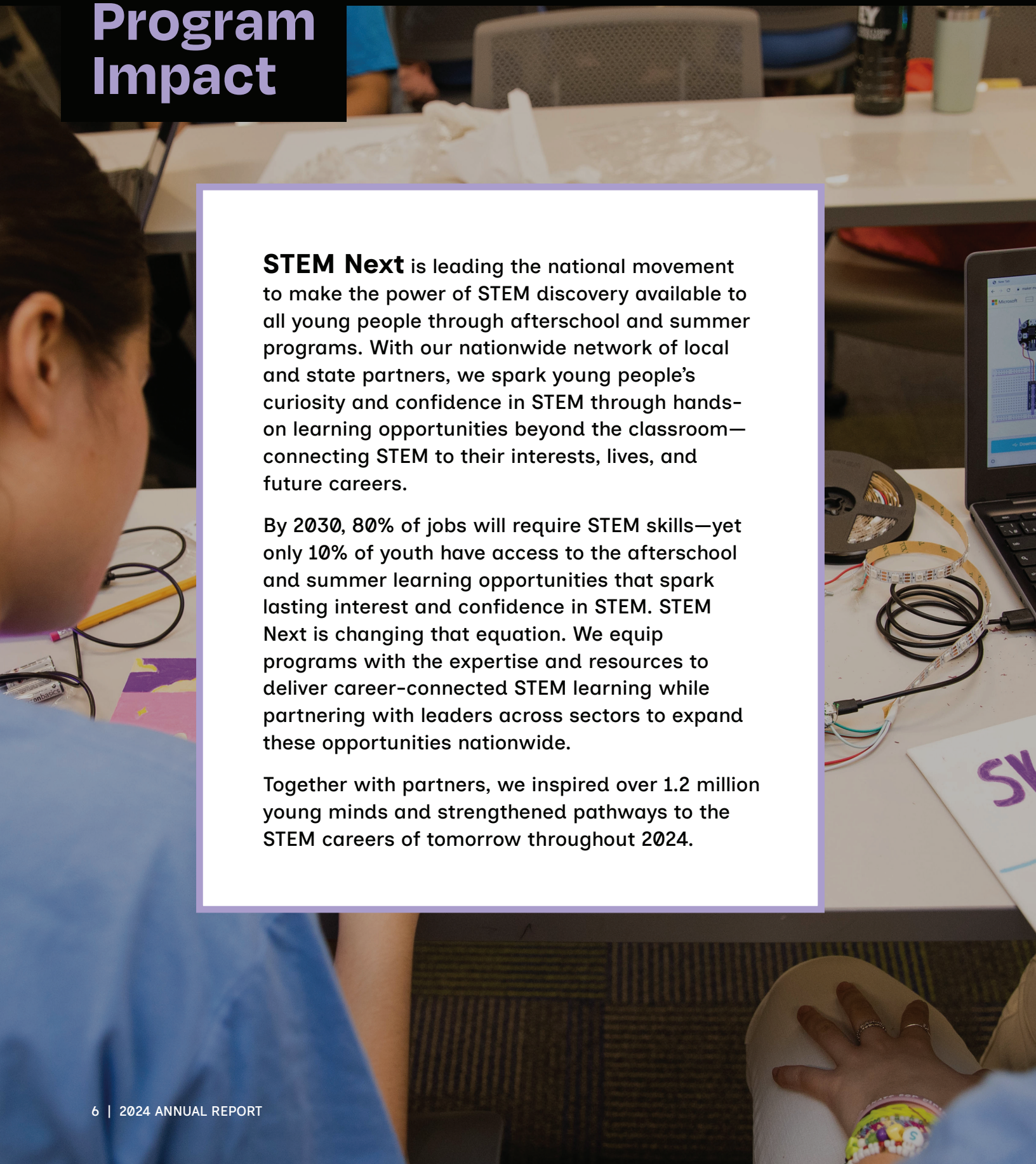
GWYNN HUGHES
Board Member

REGINALD MCGREGOR
Board Member & Treasurer

RON OTTINGER
Executive Director & Board Secretary

TERESA DREW
Deputy Director

2024 Program Impact



STEM Next is leading the national movement to make the power of STEM discovery available to all young people through afterschool and summer programs. With our nationwide network of local and state partners, we spark young people's curiosity and confidence in STEM through hands-on learning opportunities beyond the classroom—connecting STEM to their interests, lives, and future careers.

By 2030, 80% of jobs will require STEM skills—yet only 10% of youth have access to the afterschool and summer learning opportunities that spark lasting interest and confidence in STEM. STEM Next is changing that equation. We equip programs with the expertise and resources to deliver career-connected STEM learning while partnering with leaders across sectors to expand these opportunities nationwide.

Together with partners, we inspired over 1.2 million young minds and strengthened pathways to the STEM careers of tomorrow throughout 2024.

Reached & Served More Youth Across the U.S.

STEM Next gives afterschool and summer educators the proven tools they need to create rich, supportive STEM experiences in their local programs so that all youth can explore, create, and envision themselves as future innovators.

The Million Girls Moonshot

During the 2024 program year, the Million Girls Moonshot engaged 620,000 girls in STEM programs outside of the classroom. Overall, 1.2 million youth benefited from Moonshot-supported learning opportunities in 2024, with more than 70,000 afterschool professionals from 40,000 local programs engaged.

The Million Girls Moonshot has been pivotal in helping state partners expand access to STEM. A standout example is the Think-Make-Create (TMC) Labs, portable trailers outfitted with hands-on STEM activities and staffed by educators who also train local program leaders. Pioneered in Nebraska and scaled nationally through Moonshot connections, these mobile labs bring STEM learning directly to community centers and events.

By the end of 2024, five states had launched more than 80 Labs, engaging tens of thousands of youth in rural, frontier, and Tribal communities. Nebraska leads with the largest fleet, while partners in Idaho, New Mexico, Georgia, and South Dakota are adapting the model to train staff and spark youth interest in STEM careers.

Since its launch in 2020, the Million Girls Moonshot has reached 2.6 million girls–and just as many boys–in all 50 states. This tremendous success is proof that when we unite partners in a national movement with the right approaches and resources, we dramatically increase STEM opportunities for millions of kids—enabling them to build skills, confidence, and a clearer path to STEM careers.

Elevated Youth Voices & the Next Generation of STEM Leaders

The Flight Crew is a youth ambassador program of STEM Next featuring remarkable young leaders who represent their states, show what's possible, and spark their peers' curiosity in STEM. Through their voices and visibility, these teens help build a movement—showing how STEM learning beyond the classroom can change lives. In 2024, we expanded our Flight Crew program to reach more youth and deepened the program's focus on the power of peer mentorship.

51

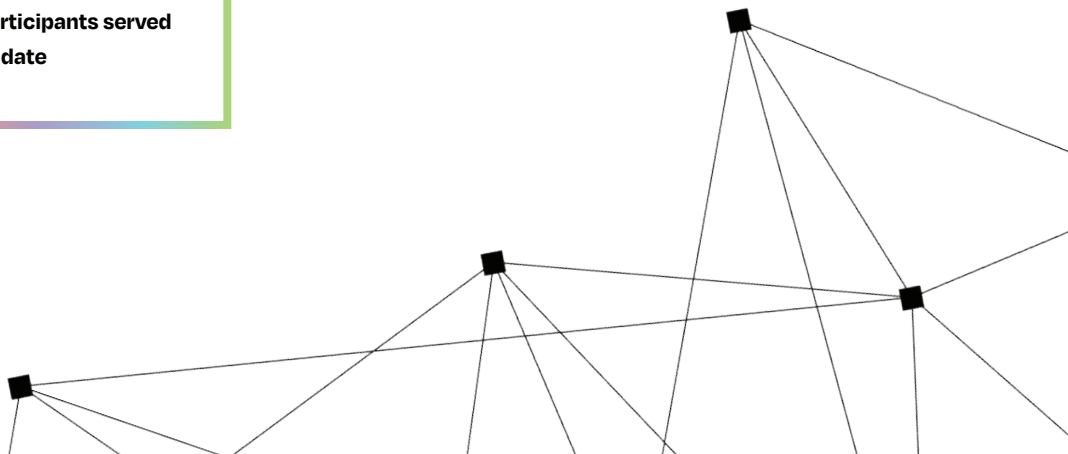
youth Flight Crew representatives from all 50 states—our largest cohort yet

111

youth Flight Crew program participants served to date

The magic of the Flight Crew program is its unique ability to foster community and connection for youth in a safe, supportive environment to grow their confidence as STEM leaders and make their voices heard. Whether it's sharing what they discovered in their afterschool science club or the excitement of internships and college applications, the connections built by shared experiences help open doors, build confidence, and spark curiosity for each young person participating in the Flight Crew experience.

Throughout the year, Flight Crew members had the opportunity to build their leadership and STEM skills through public speaking experiences, resume and interview coaching, access to scholarships and internships, near-peer mentoring and role model connections, and other exciting opportunities that invested in their potential.



That spirit of connection and collaboration was on full display at the 2024 Girls Build Solutions showcase, a three-day STEM Next convening of the Flight Crew members, afterschool network partners, and STEM industry leaders. Flight Crew members shared what got them started, their future career dreams, interacted with funders and industry partners, and spent the week at the University of California San Diego, engaging in hands-on workshop sessions with their peers.

At the 2024 National STEM Challenge in Washington, D.C., six Flight Crew members served as media correspondents, interviewing STEM leaders and students from across the country. They took on roles as youth advisory council members, guiding discussions with experts around key STEM themes and industry areas like Environmental Stewardship, Aerospace, and Tech for Good.

FLIGHT CREW IN ACTION:

Guadalupe's Story

Guadalupe's journey in STEM began in after-school programs in her Chicago neighborhood, where she first experienced the excitement of exploring science hands-on. As the oldest of five sisters and the first in her family to graduate high school and pursue college, those out-of-school opportunities helped her see STEM as a future she could claim.

That spark grew into action: she co-founded Eyes on Chicago to bring interactive science to young children and launched Resilient Hands for Latine to support families in her community. Through STEM Next's Flight Crew, Guadalupe found a national platform to share her story and inspire other young people to see themselves as leaders in STEM. Finding community with like-minded women was a highlight of her experience.

"It was amazing to be around such a supportive community and meet really cool people who are doing such amazing things to advocate for STEM education," she said.

Now pursuing a degree in biomedical computation at Stanford University, she is preparing for a future career in medicine, aiming to connect technology and women's health. Guadalupe's story reflects how afterschool and out-of-school STEM opportunities can spark leadership, perseverance, and a lifelong commitment to serving others.

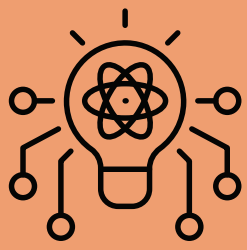
Unveiled the Institute for a STEM Ready America

At the Girls Build Solutions Showcase, we announced the latest evolution of our work with the launch of the Institute for a STEM Ready America. This bold, new endeavor of STEM Next charts the future of out-of-school-time STEM, linking afterschool and summer learning with the workforce ecosystem to connect more youth to career pathways.

Out-of-school-time STEM programs already play a vital role in igniting students' curiosity and interest in future careers through hands-on experiences. The Institute builds on this foundation to help programs turn early sparks of curiosity into clear, real-world career pathways. At the center of this work is the new Career-Connected Learning Framework, which guides programs to intentionally weave career awareness, exposure, and preparation into high-quality STEM activities. Together, these efforts create a more cohesive and effective pathway to workforce readiness—one that complements in-school learning, from K–12 classrooms and Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs to college preparation and beyond.

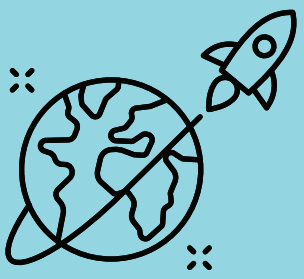
The Institute is also home to industry-focused Centers of Excellence, centered on high-growth, high-opportunity STEM learning.

In addition, 9,000 younger youth in out-of-school-time STEM programs will benefit through career exploration activities delivered by EC² high school youth trainees.



Next-Level Tech Center of Excellence

Life & Health Sciences Center of Excellence



Earth & Space Learning Center of Excellence

Launched New Workforce Readiness Initiatives

Supported by a $3.3M investment from the U.S. Department of Labor, we launched the first signature initiative of the Institute for a STEM Ready America: Exploring Career Connections in STEM (EC^2).

This innovative project integrates STEM out-of-school time programs into workforce systems, providing youth in Missouri, Nebraska, South Carolina, and South Dakota with STEM career exploration.

Over the course of the program, more than 500 youth ages 14–21 across 40 local OST program sites will:

- Receive work-based learning training (and/or college coursework), preparing them to serve as STEM facilitators in afterschool programs working with younger youth
- Engage in career exploration, develop job readiness skills, access mentors, and connect with mental health and community-based supports
- Gain connections to internships, apprenticeships, potential employers and/or post-secondary education opportunities

In addition, 9,000 younger youth in out-of-school-time STEM programs will benefit through career exploration activities delivered by EC^2 high school youth trainees.

"Exploring Career Connections in STEM is providing a new model for workforce development in STEM fields by integrating afterschool programs into the career readiness continuum," said Ron Ottinger, executive director of STEM Next Opportunity Fund.

"The power of partnerships ensures that youth from rural and underserved communities are not left behind in the fast-growing STEM economy, while also responding to the growing workforce needs of the nation."

Expanded National Collaborations to Reach More Youth

STEM Next invests in powerful partnerships that broaden access to high-quality STEM opportunities. By supporting and scaling collaborative efforts across national youth-serving organizations and community-based networks, we extend our impact to hundreds of thousands more young people — ensuring that all youth, no matter where they live, can connect with inspiring STEM experiences.

Imagine Science

Imagine Science is more than just a program; it is a powerful alliance of four leading national youth development organizations—Boys & Girls Clubs, Girls Inc., National 4-H Council, and Y-USA. By uniting their expertise and resources, they are creating a national network of local collaborations that deliver high-quality, hands-on STEM experiences.

In 2024, Imagine Science continued to demonstrate its reach and effectiveness. The program's partners successfully jointly served over 50,000 youth cumulatively across 16 communities nationwide, with 83% of participating youth living in low-income households. An independent evaluation found that 71% of participating students showed an increased enthusiasm for STEM learning, and 54% expressed interest in pursuing a STEM career, exceeding national benchmarks. By investing in and empowering local leaders to co-create and share curricula, training, and resources, Imagine Science is building a sustainable infrastructure for STEM learning that addresses the unique needs of communities while igniting the imaginations of young people who may not otherwise have access to these life-changing opportunities.

Teen Science Cafe Network

The Teen Science Café Network (TSCN), supported by the National Science Foundation, continues to be a driving force in STEM Next's mission to make high-quality out-of-school STEM opportunities prioritizing STEM careers a reality for all youth.

When STEM Next inherited the program in 2024, TSCN included 66 active and new sites across 22 states. At the start of the 2024-2025 school year the Network was poised to add 30 new sites across 33 states. This expansion reflects the program's growing impact as a powerful platform for connecting teens with authentic STEM experiences and role models.

TSCN is a youth-led program that empowers teens to take the lead in their communities, from choosing compelling topics to moderating conversations with leading scientists and engineers in an informal, engaging setting. This approach not only makes STEM relevant and exciting but also fosters critical skills in leadership, communication, and critical thinking. During the 2023-24 program year, the network hosted over 200 Teen Science Café events, an increase from the previous year. By providing a bridge between classroom knowledge and real-world application, TSCN helps youth see themselves in STEM careers and become more scientifically literate, engaged citizens.

Supported Federal Infrastructure for STEM & Out-of-School Time

Through the STEM Next Opportunity Fellows Network, experts contribute their knowledge, skills, and expertise to support government agencies in expanding access to STEM education, workforce development, and out-of-school-time learning. Fellows experience working in an agency for up to four years, depending on needs and funding. Fellows receive training and ongoing professional learning through STEM Next, including regular conversations with leadership and other STEM and informal education experts. Fellows:

» Respond to the urgent opportunities to advance STEM and out-of-school time learning.

» Establish channels of communication between local communities and the government.

» Disseminate important funding opportunities and best practices to out-of-school networks and programs.

In 2024, 12 Fellows served across federal agencies, including the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Office of the Vice President's Space Council, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Defense, and AmeriCorps.

Corporate & Foundation Supporters

At STEM Next, we're proud to work shoulder to shoulder with a diverse set of leading STEM partners, investors, and philanthropists across the many communities we serve.

Together, we're increasing access to high-quality afterschool and summer STEM learning opportunities for young people across America.

Every dollar invested in STEM Next fuels helps expand out-of-school STEM opportunities for young people nationwide. In this report, we're honored to recognize those donors and partners who supported our work at or above $35,000 in 2024.

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Steinman Foundation
Takeda
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Verizon

Driving Return on Investment

Every $1 invested in STEM Next...

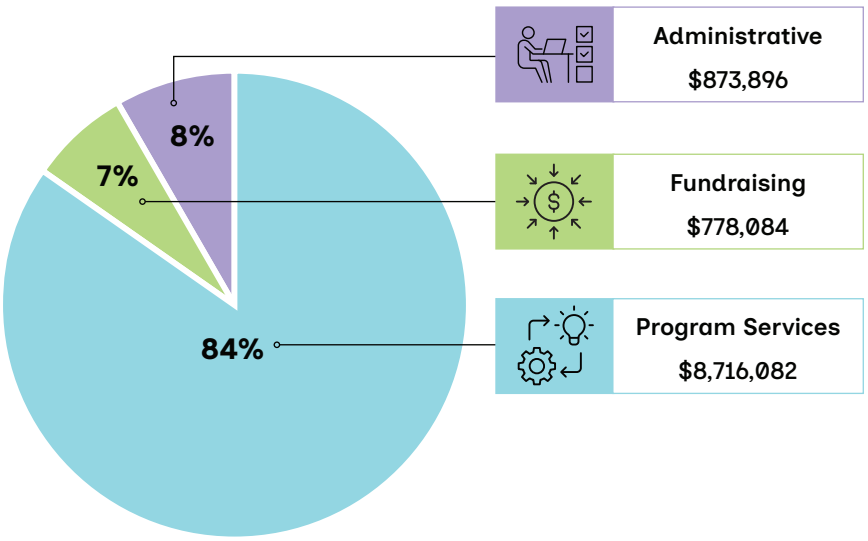
- » Enables more youth to build, invent, and discover– every afternoon
- » Sparks greater access to summer STEM learning opportunities for young people
- » Brings STEM opportunities to more families and communities across the U.S.

Financial Update

STEM Next is a 501(c)(3) organization
Federal Tax ID Number: 81-4834326

For the year ending Dec. 31, 2024

Total Income $10,445,294



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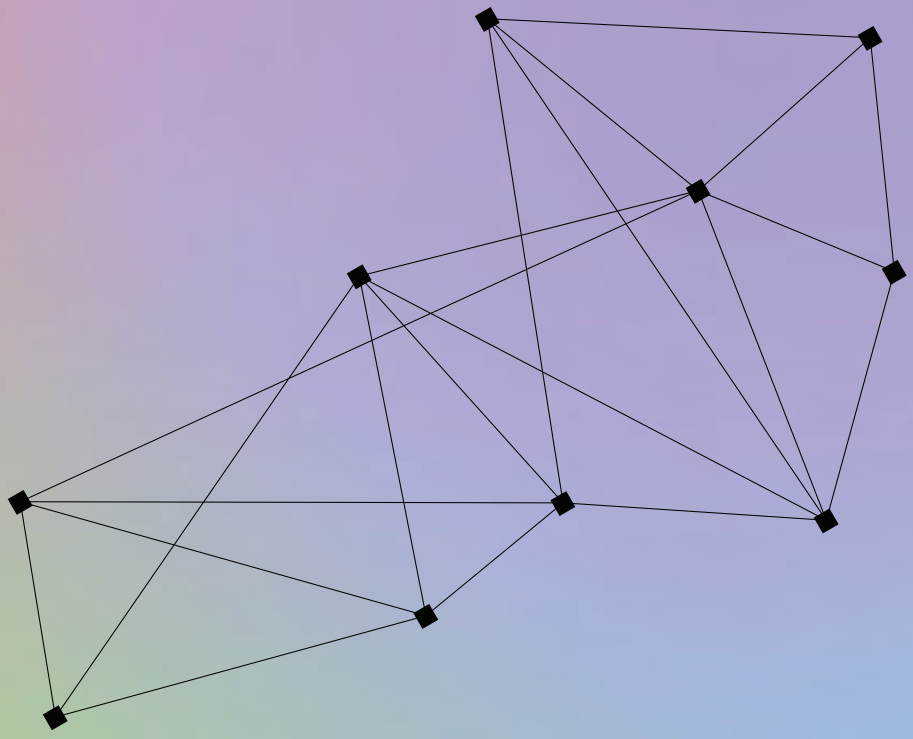
Get Involved



Thank you for your partnership and commitment to building a future where every young person has STEM opportunities that inspire curiosity, innovation, and the critical thinking skills for whatever comes next.

Together, we're working to make high-quality STEM learning available to every child through out-of-school-time experiences, with a goal to excite 20 million youth by 2030.

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stemnext.org

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