



## CAREER PATHWAYS

A strong cradle to career STEM education prepares students for high-demand and high-paying jobs. The data also proves these benefits go beyond dollars. **Students on a strong career pathway, accessed through STEM education, contribute to the vitality of their families, communities, and local economies.**

However, we estimate only 41 percent of Washington’s students are currently on track to earn a postsecondary credential; whereas 70 percent of the plentiful high-demand and family-wage careers in our state will require such credentials by 2030. **Career connected learning is the bridge that puts young people on the pathway to a postsecondary credential and a rewarding career.**

### What does career connected learning consist of?

**Career connected learning** includes exploring career interests, engaging in real world, project-based learning, participating in worksite tours and job shadows, participating in Career and Technical Education, having access to professional mentors, doing internships and apprenticeships, and gaining competencies and credentials aligned to high-demand careers.

**29,000 NEW CAREER  
CONNECTED LEARNING  
OPPORTUNITIES**

Washington STEM and our ten regional STEM Networks build on-the-ground solutions and connect business, education, government, and community leaders to open career pathways for young people - especially those underrepresented in STEM like girls, students of color, and low-income students. **In the next two years, our efforts will engage 29,000 students in meaningful career connected opportunities.**

## CURRENT PROJECTS

**Washington STEM, along with our STEM Networks, coordinate multiple state and regional efforts to move the needle on accessing career pathways for young people.** Our accomplishments so far include developing a **Career Connected Learning Toolbox** so providers can launch efforts in their region, conducting **Labor Market Data** forums to connect business leaders and educators to support regionally-aligned career connected learning, partnering with the **Employment Security Department** to coordinate education and workforce efforts, and identifying 21 local career-related “**learning labs,**” sites to identify and spread best practices. One of these learning labs, the **Mid-Columbia STEM Network’s “STEM Like Me!” program,** which engages middle school students in career exploration, has already been successfully implemented in our Skagit Valley STEM Network and is in development in Yakima and Spokane. Washington STEM, along with Washington MESA and the South Central STEM Network, has also developed and implemented **Engineering Fellows,** a program that brings engineering professionals into the fifth grade classroom so students can engage with real-world design challenges.

**Career Connect Washington regional grants:** Our STEM Networks are co-leads for ten regional coalitions that will create 29,000 career connected learning opportunities throughout the state in the next two years and 100,000 opportunities over five years. This work is made possible through Governor Jay Inslee’s appropriation of \$6.4 million in federal funds to [Career Connect Washington](#),

**Career Connect Washington statewide initiative:** Washington STEM serves as a founding member, advisor, and leader for a Governor-led Career Connect Washington initiative designed to coordinate regional and statewide public and private efforts to support career connected learning.

**Washington Pathways Project:** With funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Washington STEM is leading a project that identifies job supply/demand data, bottlenecks for success, and actionable pathways data for eight regions in the state.

**Communities of Practice:** Washington STEM and our STEM Networks have joined Pathways to Prosperity, a nationally recognized/research-based initiative of Jobs for the Future and the Harvard Graduate School of Education to bring expertise and learnings from other states' work in preparing young people for college and career success.

**In-depth regional engagement:** With the support of investments from JPMorgan Chase, Washington STEM is partnering with the Spokane STEM Network, Southwest STEM Network and Seattle Region Partnership to develop and expand opportunities for in- and out-of-school career connected learning on a regional level. With the support of Boeing, Washington STEM, along with the Snohomish STEM Network, created industry specific career pathways maps for students at Everett Public Schools.

If you'd like more information or want to be part of our efforts, please contact Gilda Wheeler at [gilda@washingtonstem.org](mailto:gilda@washingtonstem.org).

## CAREER CONNECTED LEARNING FRAMEWORK

