

STEM Opportunities in the Workforce System Initiative

Connecticut STEM Careers Partnership

Grantee: Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board (WIB)

Industry Focus: Advanced manufacturing, engineering, computer science, and other fields

Key Partners: Capital Workforce Partners; Northwest Regional WIB; Workforce Alliance; The Work Place, Inc.; Connecticut Office for Workforce Competitiveness; Connecticut Community College System; Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium; Connecticut Science Center; New York WIRED; Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology; Chambers of Commerce for Eastern Connecticut, Greater Meridian, Greater New Haven, Middlesex, Northwest Connecticut, and Waterbury Regional.

Grant Amount: \$2,000,000

Leveraged Amount: \$2,064,588

Location of Grant Activities: Eastern Connecticut

Challenge: Aerospace and manufacturing represent pillars of Connecticut's economy that have supplied high-quality, high-paying jobs for decades. These and other industries face labor shortages in job categories that require STEM skills. Nearly half of Connecticut's 60 fastest-growing occupations require a solid math and science education, and too many young workers lack job-specific technical and basic STEM skills. Prior to large scale retirements of skilled workers, the next decade represents a pivotal time for Connecticut to grow its pipeline of talented young workers and re-tool the skills of its mid-career workers.

Addressing the Challenge: Recognizing the economic challenge confronting its industrial base, Connecticut will establish a STEM Careers Partnership among its workforce investment boards and create a statewide virtual STEM Center. The STEM Center will serve as an initial point of entry to the One-Stop system for dislocated workers and disadvantaged youth by providing resources and classrooms for STEM-related activities. The partnership of workforce investment boards seeks to leverage the virtual STEM Center in five ways. First, STEM Coaches will coordinate regional activities and connect those efforts statewide. Second, STEM Mentors will provide individual academic and career support to dislocated workers and disadvantaged youth. Third, a technology-based learning model will aid youth and dislocated workers in overcoming barriers to training such as transportation. Fourth, the Center will house a customized online planning tool that counselors and students can use to design personal educational and career pathway plans. Finally, the partnership seeks to grow the STEM talent pipeline so as to create a seamless education system from pre-school to graduate school that prepares young people for the demands of the 21st Century workplace.

Projected Outcomes:

- 1,000 disadvantaged youth, dislocated and low wage workers will receive enhanced training to gain the skills necessary for advancement along STEM careers pathways;
- 680 participants will receive WIB and/or community college certificates and/or college credit through completion of STEM programs

