

# WASHINGTON STEM 2023 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



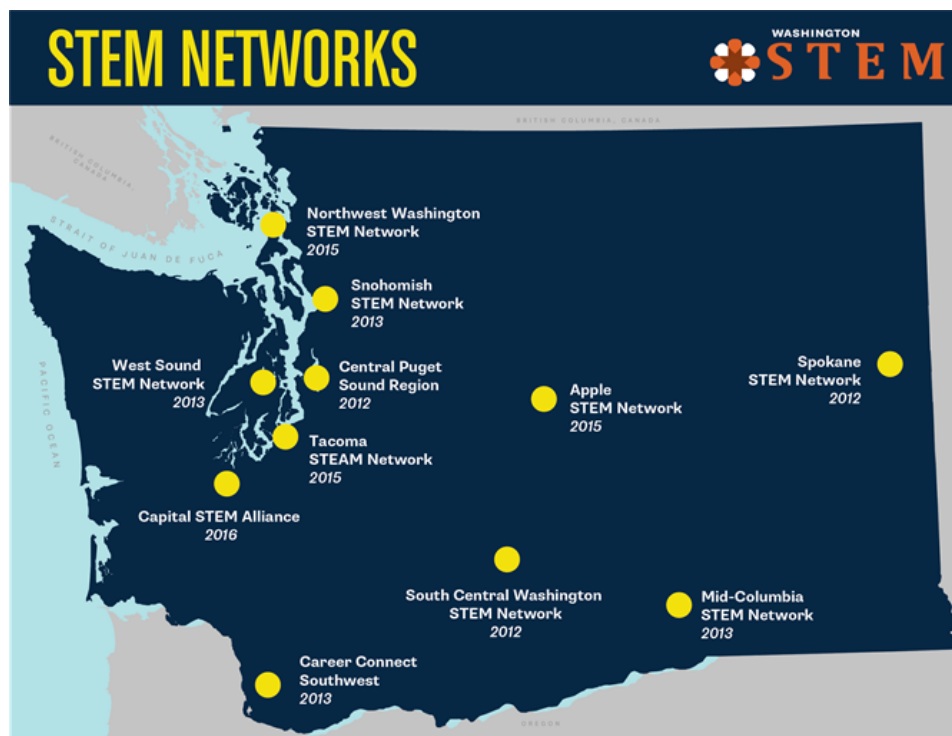
Washington STEM is a statewide education nonprofit leveraging STEM for social change, removing barriers to credential attainment, and creating pathways to long-term economic security for historically excluded students. We envision a state where skin color, zip code, income and gender do not predict educational and career outcomes.

## Legislative Priorities

**Early Learning System Improvements:** Support the equitable implementation of the Fair Start for Kids Act through improvements to agency measurement and transparency. Support community efforts for increased investments to develop the early child care workforce.

**Applying Dual Credit:** Increase equitable completion and application of dual credit by bridging the gaps between K-12 and higher education systems.

**High School to Postsecondary:** Improve the utility of postsecondary- and career-readiness strategies and tools through evidence and community voice.



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## **ABOUT US:**

At Washington STEM, our work revolves around three main strategies:

- **PARTNERSHIP:** We collaborate with 10 Regional STEM Networks across the state and the Central Puget Sound STEAM Collective to identify, scale, and spread effective local solutions and convene cross sector partners in business, education, and the community to solve big problems.
- **DIRECT SUPPORT:** We provide direct support through targeted community investments, open-source access to data and measurement tools, and technical assistance.
- **ADVOCACY:** We champion transformative solutions through educating decision makers, storytelling, and collaboration to create the foundation for lasting, equitable change in Washington.

## **OUR FOCUS:**

**Early Learning:** Early Learning sparks curiosity and provides foundational math and science literacy before Kindergarten to give students the best start possible in school and life. Our vision is that every young child develops a positive math identity, participates in high-quality early STEM learning, and has access to the best early learning environments possible

**K-12:** A strong K-12 STEM experience is a critical component to ensuring young Washingtonians are informed and thriving global citizens equipped for multiple viable career pathways of their choosing. Our K-12 work extends beyond STEM education to include systemic issues that often hinder access. These include dual credit access, enrollment and completion, financial aid awareness and completion, and the teaching workforce

**Career Pathways:** A robust cross-sector career pathways system is key to preparing students for the most in-demand, high-paying careers in our state. We work in partnership with Career Connect Washington and business, education, and community partners to expose and prepare students for exciting careers in high-demand industries in which STEM fuels innovation, economic mobility, and job growth.

**Commitment to Equity:** Washington ranks among the top states in the nation in the concentration of STEM jobs, but our systems have not equitably or adequately prepared students to take advantage of these opportunities. Furthermore, students of color, rural students, students living in poverty, and girls still lack access or face barriers to these pathways. Washington STEM is working to ensure that all students have equal opportunity to benefit from the transformational possibilities that STEM has to offer.

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# Washington Jobs Initiative

## Good Jobs Challenge



## Overview and Context

EDA's [Good Jobs Challenge](#) is making once-in-a-generation investments in high-quality, locally led workforce systems to dramatically transform America's communities. With a focus on equity, the program is expanding career opportunities for more Americans to reach their full potential and secure good-paying jobs while producing a skilled workforce to ensure the United States is prepared to innovate, compete, and succeed in a 21st Century global economy.

Washington State submitted a plan—Washington Jobs Initiative (WJI)—and won a \$23 million award to train 5,000 Washington residents and ensure that at least 3,000 are placed in jobs. WJI seeks to leverage existing Career Connect Washington partnerships and programs to meet this goal by 2025. WJI will offer competitive awards and invest in industry sector partnerships that provide training, embed paid work-based learning, and help Washington residents get onto a career pathway that leads to a good job with a family-sustaining wage.

## Target Industry Sectors

1. Advanced Manufacturing & Aerospace
2. Clean Technology & Energy
3. Construction
4. Finance
5. Health Care
6. Information Technology & Cyber Security
7. Life Science
8. Maritime
9. Education
10. Agriculture & Natural Resources

## Goals

- 5,000 people receive education and training
- 3,000 people are employed in quality jobs
- Traditionally underserved populations are prioritized, including but not limited to women; Black, Latino, Indigenous and Native American individuals, Asian American, Pacific Islander; and others who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic

## Strategy

- **Equity focus:** Consciously recruit from traditionally underserved communities and those furthest from opportunity, and encourage employers to use skill-based hiring to improve and diversify their talent pipelines
- **Immediate employment:** Ensure participants earn a living wage during training and/or are immediately placed into jobs that provide a family-sustaining wage

- Industry partnerships: Leverage regional and industry leadership to convene and organize partners to close skill gaps, deliver training, and create good jobs
- Wraparound supports: Provide participants with wraparound support services to ensure equity in access and outcomes
- Earn and Learn: Implement Registered Apprenticeship and Career Launch programs, which provide paid work experience, credentials, and academic credit, to create pathways to good jobs

## Tentative Timeline for 2023

May–June	RFP is released, and applications are submitted
August–September	Awards are granted and work begins

## WJI Competitive Grants for Two Opportunities

WJI funding will support industry sector partnerships for either implementation, or design and implementation:

### I. Implementation

- Must operate an existing program
- Recruit participants from underserved communities, including unemployed or underemployed individuals
- Provide demand-driven education/skills training
- Provide wraparound supports
- Place participants in jobs

### II. Design & Implementation

- Employers identify hiring and skill needs
- Industry sector partnerships develop demand-driven strategies
- Design training model and curriculum
- Organize community partners to provide wraparound supports
- Develop strategies for closing equity gaps
- Recruit, train, and place participants

## Design Principles

- Industry-driven and partnership-based: Awards will go to industry sector partnerships that have worked with employers on hiring needs.
- Comprehensive: Partnerships should be inclusive of employers and/or industry sector leaders, labor, K-12, higher education, community-based organizations, business, tribes, and others.
- Priority populations: Awards will prioritize underserved communities, including those disproportionately impacted the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Flexible: Awards and grant structure will allow for evolving industry needs to meet job outcomes.
- Catalytic: Awards may support relatively short-term investments to rapidly expand and accelerate training and job placement in response to the pandemic.
- Measurable: All partnerships will be required to measure progress over time to ensure funding is closing equity gaps and helping Washington residents obtain training, and secure good paying jobs.