

Explore STEM Careers

For Counselors

Improving America's Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education is one of the top priorities for the U.S. government. President Obama has said repeatedly that efforts to improve STEM education are "going to make more of a difference in determining how well we do as a country than just about anything else that we do here."^[1]

A world-class STEM workforce is essential to virtually every goal we have as a nation—whether it's broadly shared economic prosperity, international competitiveness, a strong national defense, a clean energy future, or longer, healthier, lives for all Americans. White House correspondent Phil Larson writes, "If we want the future to be made in America, we need to redouble our efforts to strengthen and expand our STEM workforce."^[1]

With motivations to sustain U.S. capacity and increase global competitiveness for technological innovations, it is essential for people from a diverse representation of cultures, ages, and genders to enter STEM occupations. A diverse workforce creates competitive advantage through greater creativity and innovation, increases the quality of team problem solving,^[2-4] and enables economic equity. Despite the substantial demand for STEM professionals and the tremendous value of diversity in the workplace, women and people of color continue to be significantly underrepresented

in many STEM disciplines. In order to effectively compete in the global marketplace, it is imperative that we advance the full and equitable participation of all Americans in STEM fields.

Counselors play a tremendous role in educating students about career opportunities. To strengthen and expand the STEM workforce, and positively influence the disparity, we must focus our efforts to effectively reach and encourage all students to consider a future career in STEM. This document provides an overview of the demand for, and disparity within, STEM careers, introduces positive language for talking about STEM careers with students, and connects the messaging with tools, activities, and resources for counselors.

