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PARTNERSHIPS SEEK TO SUPPORT WOMEN AND GIRLS TO LEAD, SUCCEED IN STEM

The Colorado Education Initiative, The Women's Foundation of Colorado, and STEM supporters partner to create equitable opportunities for Colorado women and girls to thrive in school, STEM careers, and life.

DENVER, CO – Colorado boasts more jobs in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) than the national average — and is expected to see above average growth in STEM careers over the next decade. The demand for a STEM-skilled workforce and the number of non-STEM jobs requiring these skills continues to grow, while the number and diversity of women and girls in STEM fields lags behind.

“Colorado will lead the nation in STEM talent development. We rank second in the country for technology and entrepreneurship, but Colorado won’t have enough STEM workers if we don’t prepare now,” said **Lt. Governor Joe Garcia, executive director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education**. “To meet this ambitious goal, we must ensure all Colorado learners have access to the STEM education and experiences that excite and prepare them to succeed.”

The Colorado Education Initiative ([CEI](#)) and The Women’s Foundation of Colorado ([WFCO](#)), along with two groups of STEM supporters, are partnering to create equitable opportunities for Colorado women and girls to thrive in school, STEM careers, and life.

“Historically, under-represented populations in STEM, including women, especially African-American and Latina women, are getting left out,” said **Lauren Casteel, WFCO president and CEO**. “We know we can do a better job of preparing and supporting women and girls to lead and engage in STEM whether they have a Ph.D. or a two-year degree — and that’s why we are partnering with CEI to ensure gender equity is a priority in Colorado.”

Women make up nearly half of Colorado’s workforce, but hold less than a third of STEM jobs in the state.

“It’s never been more important to help Colorado women and girls from all backgrounds capitalize on STEM career opportunities,” said **Glenna Norvelle, CEI president and CEO**. “From agriculture and aeronautics to public health and engineering, STEM is behind a vast array of growing jobs. STEM literacy, the ability to think critically and creatively, to persevere through real and perceived barriers in order to achieve success, and the ability to achieve innovative solutions to real-world problems — is critical to success in Colorado’s innovation economy.”

CEI is the lead organization facilitating the implementation of the [Colorado STEM Education Roadmap](#), while WFCO spearheads gender equity strategies, which include identifying programs that succeed in exciting girls

about STEM fields and sharing those methods across the state; providing equitable opportunities for STEM education and advancement in early grades; and increasing the number and diversity of women and girls entering STEM fields through internships, mentorships, and job training.

The STEM Roadmap is a plan to advance STEM education in ways that increase opportunities for all students, meet business needs, and attract new companies to the state. It was developed through a statewide community engagement process led by CEI in response to the Colorado Blueprint — the governor’s economic development plan — and was launched in August 2014 in partnership with state leaders, companies, foundations, educators, and numerous other partners.

A key component of the CEI-WFCO partnership is integrating two groups of STEM supporters — the WFCO STEM Coalition and CEI [STEM Champions](#) board. Members of these two groups are companies, foundations, and individual donors contributing financial resources, time, and talent to help implement the STEM Roadmap.

WFCO is now a STEM Champion and brings seven more advocates from its STEM Coalition to the board — Arrow Electronics, Goodbee SSG MEP, Lockheed Martin, MWH Global, QEP Resources, Suncor Energy, and Stephanie Copeland, President of the Zayo Group.

The STEM Champions also include: Anschutz Foundation; Ball Foundation; Battelle Memorial Institute; Campos EPC; Climax Molybdenum; Colorado Workforce Development Council; Donnell-Kay Foundation; Gay and Lesbian Fund for Colorado; ISSAC Corp; JPMorgan Chase; Orica; Terri Caine; United Launch Alliance; and Xcel Energy.

“STEM Champions realize that we can only achieve the ambitious agenda outlined in the STEM Roadmap if we commit to working together to define and invest in quality, to mentor students and support teachers, and to commit to ensuring every dollar spent on STEM education makes a real difference in the lives of Colorado students,” said **Matt Smith, vice president of engineering for United Launch Alliance and chair of the Colorado STEM Champions Board**. “I welcome our new STEM Champions and thank them for joining in this important work to achieve a vibrant, diverse, and local talent pipeline.”

In total, the 22 STEM Champions investing in the implementation of the STEM Roadmap, represent \$2.3 million in funding.

About The Colorado Education Initiative

The Colorado Education Initiative is an independent nonprofit working in partnership with the Colorado Department of Education to unlock the unique potential of every student by incubating innovation, shining a spotlight on success, and investing in sustainable change that improves outcomes for all students. CEI envisions that every student in Colorado is prepared and unafraid to succeed in school, work, and life, and ready to take on the challenges of today, tomorrow, and beyond.

About The Women’s Foundation of Colorado

The mission of The Women’s Foundation of Colorado is to build resources and lead change so that every woman and girl in Colorado achieves her full potential. We are committed to boldly leading systemic change to advance economic opportunity for all women and girls in Colorado; using research to build knowledge and guide action; building philanthropy that supports and champions women and girls in Colorado; demonstrating and promoting inclusiveness and commitment to a diversity of people, partners and ideas; and creating strategic partnerships throughout the state to service our mission.

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