

Solving America's STEM Workforce Crisis: Broadening Participation in Science Education and Careers

ACTION

To sustain a robust STEM workforce, Congress should direct NSF and other federal agencies to continue to support programs that:

- Strengthen the U.S. talent pipeline.
- Ensure individuals from underrepresented communities across the country can enter and sustain a career as part of the STEM workforce.

America's Leaking Talent Pipeline

The Problem

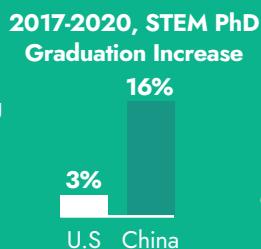


Percentage of high school graduates who intended to pursue STEM who are unprepared to succeed in their first year of college.



Percentage of undergraduate students who start as a STEM major and successfully graduate with a STEM degree.

China is now the world's leading producer of STEM PhDs.



K-12 Education

An Immediate Solution

Strengthen NSF's Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program, which supports talented undergraduates and professionals in becoming effective K-12 STEM teachers.

Undergraduate Education

Fund local, academic-year-long research experiences for undergraduate students, which increase retention rates in STEM

Graduate Education

Scale up NSF's Graduate Research Fellowships Program (GRFP) to support more domestic STEM doctoral trainees and meet the growing demand for U.S. workers with advanced degrees.

Sources: "Securing America's Future: A Renewed National STEM Workforce Strategy" by APS, 2025"

A robust STEM workforce underpins American industry

"For the semiconductor industry alone, [the] projected total gap [is] approximately 17,000 master's and PhD engineers by the end of the decade."

— Semiconductor Industry Association, Chipping Away, 2023

STEM careers support American economic mobility

Now and in the future, STEM careers offer a path to higher salaries and lower unemployment for Americans.

	Projected Employment Change, 2024–34	Median Annual Wage, 2024	Average Unemployment, 2021
STEM	+8.1%	\$103,580	2.1%
Non-STEM	+2.7%	\$48,000	6.6%

Sources: U.S. STEM Workforce: Size, Growth, and Employment, <https://www.ncses.nsf.gov/pubs/nsb20245/u-s-stem-workforce-size-growth-and-employment>

Employment in STEM occupations, <https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/stem-employment.htm>

The U.S. Thrives When All Have Opportunity

Members of Congress should:

- Support the Senate CJS Committee's FY 2026 Appropriations report language calling for "ensuring individuals from underrepresented communities across the country can enter and sustain a career as part of the STEM workforce".
- Fund programs that address systemic access issues in the education pipeline and increase participation by underrepresented groups.