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**As White House Focuses Nation's Attention on Astronomy, STEM Funders Network
Announces Goal for 100 City and Regional STEM Networks**

(October 19, 2015 – Washington, DC) Building on more than a decade of research into successful STEM collaborations, the STEM Funders Network and 350 committed local funders and organizations are announcing a five-year effort to create 100 tight-knit local STEM networks—STEM ecosystems—that bring together broad-scale, cross-sector collaborations to nurture and scale effective science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) learning opportunities for all young people, especially girls and underserved populations. Chicago's participation through the [Chicago STEM Pathways Cooperative](#) is a demonstration of their existing progress in developing a strong STEM community and recognition of their commitment to continue this work.

The national [STEM Ecosystems Initiative](#) was launched in September 2015 with 27 inaugural communities, more than \$20 million in funding, and a goal of reaching 600,000 teachers and students in its first three years. The Chicago STEM Pathways Cooperative is one of the 27 inaugural communities participating in an upcoming workshop at the White House, which will be focused on convening and helping to expand a growing community of practice of local leaders who are expanding STEM opportunities in their communities.

"The White House Astronomy Night exemplifies how bringing together scientists, astronomers, industry leaders and others can inspire youth and stargazers from across the country," said SFN co-chairs Gerald Solomon, executive director, Samueli Foundation, and Ron Ottinger, executive director, Noyce Foundation. "The STEM Ecosystems Initiative creates these kinds of partnerships locally and in a sustained way to ensure STEM learning is truly 'everywhere' and is a top priority for communities supporting youth to develop the skills and knowledge they need for success in a global workforce."

"We are thrilled that Chicago has been selected to be a part of the STEM Ecosystem Community of Practice," says Mike Cassel, director, Boeing Global Corporate Citizenship, Great Lakes Region. "At Boeing, we work towards a future where all students have access to learning so that they can develop their skills, do what they dream and build something better. This endeavor will provide opportunities that expose students to STEM subjects and experiences that will give them the ability to apply this knowledge in real and relevant ways."

The 27 communities in the initial cohort of a [national Community of Practice](#) are demonstrating cross-sector collaborations to deliver rigorous, effective preK-16 instruction in STEM learning. These collaborations happen in schools and beyond the classroom—in afterschool and summer programs, at home, in science centers, libraries and other places both virtual and physical. They spark young people's engagement, develop their knowledge, strengthen their persistence and nurture their sense of identity and belonging in STEM disciplines. As these STEM Ecosystems evolve, a student will be able to connect what they learn in and out of school with real-world learning opportunities, leading to STEM related careers and opportunities.

Launched in Denver at the Clinton Global Initiative, the [STEM Funders Network STEM Learning Ecosystems Initiative](#) forms a national Community of Practice with expert coaching and support from leaders such as superintendents, scientists, industry and others. The first gathering of this Community of Practice will be hosted at the White House in November.

The following sites were selected from an invited pool of 70+ applicants to join the STEM Ecosystems Initiative's first cohort creating a national STEM Community of Practice:

- Arizona SciTech Ecosystem (Phoenix, AZ)
- Bay Area STEM Ecosystem (San Jose, CA)
- BoSTEM (Boston, MA)
- Chicago STEM Pathways Cooperative (Chicago, IL)
- Colorado STEM (Denver, CO)
- East Syracuse Minoa Central School District STEM Learning Ecosystem (East Syracuse, NY)
- ecosySTEM KC (Kansas City, MO)
- Great Lakes Bay Regional STEM Initiative (Freeland, MI)
- Greater Austin STEM Ecosystem (Austin, TX)
- Greater Cincinnati STEM Collaborative (Cincinnati, OH)
- Indiana STEM Ecosystem Initiative (Indianapolis, IN)
- Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering Partnership in Western New York (Buffalo, NY)
- EvanSTEM (Evanston, IL)
- Los Angeles Regional STEM Hub (Los Angeles, CA)
- NC STEM Ecosystem: Driving the Future (Research Triangle Park, NC)
- Northeast Ohio STEM Learning Ecosystem (Cleveland, OH)
- NYC STEM Education Network (New York, NY)
- Orange County STEM Initiative (Corona Del Mar, CA)
- Oregon's Statewide Regional STEM Hub Network (Salem, OR)
- Pittsburgh Regional STEM Ecosystem (Pittsburgh, PA)

- Providence After School Alliance (PASA) AfterZone STEM – FUSE Initiative (Providence, RI)
- Queens 2020 (Corona, NY)
- San Diego EcosySTEM (San Diego, CA)
- STEMcityPHL Regional Network (Conshohocken, PA)
- Tampa Bay STEM Network (Tampa, FL)
- Tulsa Regional STEM Alliance (Tulsa, OK)
- Ventura County STEM Regional Network (Learning Ecosystem, Camarillo, CA)

Learn more about the initiative at stemecosystems.org.

About the STEM Funders Network: The SFN was formed in 2011 by a small group of funders from the [Grant Makers for Education](#) community to focus attention and better coordinate funding in support of robust STEM programs across the country. The SFN members fund individually as well as collectively and their work has supported the adoption and implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards in all 50 states as well as dozens of STEM programs of promise.

STEM Ecosystems funding members of the STEM Funders Network include: [Samueli Foundation](#), [Noyce Foundation](#), [Overdeck Foundation](#), [Charles and Lynn Schusterman Foundation](#), and [Simons Foundation](#) with support by [Amgen Foundation](#), [Broadcom Foundation](#), [KDK Harman Foundation](#), [Pinkerton Foundation](#) and [Tiger Woods Foundation](#).

About the Chicago STEM Pathways Cooperative: The Chicago STEM Pathways Cooperative is a citywide effort to improve, identify, and connect opportunities for STEM learning for children and youth in the city of Chicago from cradle to career, regardless of ability or background. The Chicago STEM Pathways Cooperative works to build a robust strategy and backbone for coordination across diverse sectors involved with STEM teaching and learning. Ultimately, informed by shared data, the Cooperative aspires to build instructional leadership amongst partners, ensure access to STEM opportunities for all Chicago young people, and improve quality across programmatic settings.

The Cooperative has cross-sector commitment from diverse stakeholders including: the Chicago Public School system; afterschool, out-of-school time and summer programs; STEM-focused community institutions including museums; institutions of higher education; STEM professional associations; private sector STEM-focused companies; and philanthropic foundations. The Cooperative has its origins in a 2012 year-long, community-based effort to survey out-of-school time programs and consider the ways in which education institutions, businesses, and city services could cooperate to build and support equitable and accessible pathways into STEM for Chicago's young people.

Partners in the Chicago STEM Pathways Cooperative include: [Albert Pick Jr. Fund](#), [Boeing](#), [The Brinson Foundation](#), [Chicago Architecture Foundation](#), [Chicago Botanic Garden](#), [Digital Youth Network](#), [Education Development Center, Inc.](#), [The Field Museum](#), [HIVE Chicago](#), [University of Illinois at Chicago](#), [Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy](#), [Illinois Institute of Chicago](#), [Motorola Solutions Foundation](#), [Project Exploration](#), and [Shedd Aquarium](#).

For more information, please contact info@stemecosystems.org. For information about the Chicago STEM Pathways Cooperative, visit www.stemchicago.wordpress.com or contact ecosystem@projectexploration.org.

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