

Innovations for an Emerging Workforce in Wyoming's Changing Economy



Jobs related to STEM, including healthcare, advanced manufacturing, construction and computer science, are driving economic growth in Wyoming.¹ Our state needs a workforce with the skills, enterprising aspirations and readiness to build our future economy.

In Wyoming, STEM jobs are growing, but the workforce is retiring, forcing employers to import the talent they need.²

To address the STEM workforce gap, young people across Wyoming need access to expanded learning opportunities made possible by out-of-school time programs that help them develop computational skills, entrepreneurial thinking, leadership, career and technical education readiness. These programs also foster connections that encourage young people to stay in Wyoming, increase their earning potential and contribute to building a prosperous economy.

Out-of-school time programs help bridge our state's workforce gap by:

Helping young people develop career-ready skills.

Out-of-school time programs broaden opportunities for young people. These programs can add 1,080 hours of academic learning to a child's school year, equivalent to 144 school days. This time can be used for career exploration and development, inventions and innovations, job shadows, mentorships and internships in an environment where experimentation is supported.

Preparing Wyoming's future workforce.

Expanding learning opportunities exposes students to real-world projects that allow them to practice hands-on skills they need to prepare for the jobs of the future. Students learn by doing, by strengthening their communication, problem solving, leadership and teamwork skills, and by making connections with local businesses.

Sparkling interest in STEM and inspiring careers.

A study of afterschool STEM programs found that among participating students:³

- 80%** gained a deeper understanding of science careers
- 78%** increased their interest in STEM
- 73%** developed a "STEM identity," a personal belief that he/she can do well and succeed at science
- 72%** developed perseverance and critical thinking skills

Businesses benefit by partnering with WYAA.

For more than a decade, the Wyoming Afterschool Alliance (WYAA) has been connecting out-of-school time providers to necessary resources, technical assistance and training opportunities. WYAA is forward thinking; our new Innovations in Learning initiative is accelerating, broadening and enhancing Wyoming's efforts to prepare students to thrive in the emerging economy (2023 – 2030) and to lead the reinvented economy (2031+). With a network of more than 87 afterschool and summer programs across the state, chambers of commerce and businesses partnering with WYAA have the opportunity to scale their workforce development investments in new and exciting ways and leverage a trusted, knowledgeable voice to reach new audiences and meet specific regional needs.

WYAA Innovations aligns with the ENDOW (Economically Needed Diversity Options for Wyoming) vision⁴ through a scaffold of out-of-school time supports:

Set A Content:

- Computational thinking
- Entrepreneurship
- Making and tinkering
- STEM skills
- Career exploration

SET B Content:

- Artificial Intelligence
- Biomedical
- Creative thinking/explore
- Digital media and virtual reality
- Nanotechnology

Set C Content:

- Content aligned to tribal culture and history
- Infuse to Set A and Set B

Join us in preparing Wyoming's young people for our future economy. You can:

Join our Business Partnership Council

- Engage with local and community leaders to build a statewide strategy for high-quality out-of-school time programs that support workforce development.
- Guide local- and state-level policy to coordinate resources that lead to sustainable and quality programs that can address our skills gap and prepare our future workforce for Wyoming's changing economy.

Participate in our Annual Conference

- Share your story, employability skills, products or resources with more than 200 informal and formal educators and diverse stakeholders, including business and community leaders who reach thousands of young people across our state in our most under-resourced communities.
- Participate as a volunteer, panelist, exhibitor or sponsor.
- Be recognized for your community leadership.

Get connected! Engage with WYAA as a convener to assist your community

- Take advantage of opportunities to transform education pathways and inspire young people by providing technical expertise in your industry.
- Link educational objectives with current and emerging workforce needs.
- Support affordable, quality options beyond the school day. Helping to alleviate family concerns is a dual investment in the current workforce and a critical part of developing future employees.

Sources

1. Wyoming Department of Administration and Information Economic Analysis Division (2018), Economic Summary: 3Q2018. http://eadiv.state.wy.us/wef/Economic_Summary3Q18.pdf
2. Houser, A., Fox-Grage, W., Ujvari, K. (2018), Across the States: Profiles of Long-Term Services and Supports, AARP. <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2018/08/across-the-states-profiles-of-long-term-services-and-supports-full-report.pdf>
3. Allen, P. J., Noam, G. G., Little, T. D., Fukuda, E., Chang, R., Gorall B. K., Waggenspack, L. (2016), Afterschool & STEM Systems-Building Evaluation. https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/e45463_e14ee6fac98d405e950c66fe28de9bf8.pdf
4. Economically Needed Diversity Options for Wyoming (2018), Transforming Wyoming: 20-Year Economic Diversification Strategy. https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/e4e133_2c1746a901754418be4d6fbd50b19f32.pdf



Contact:

Kate Foster

Wyoming Afterschool Alliance

katefoster@wycf.org

307-335-9922



wyafterschoolalliance.org

Twitter: @WyomingOST