SOUTHEAST SERVICE COOPERATIVE

CAREER-CONNECTED LEARNING CATALOG

CAREER & COLLEGE READINESS | CTE | STEM

2026-2027

EMBEDDING THE 3Es Roadmap™



EXPLORATION
DISCOVER YOUR INTERESTS

EXPOSURE
SEE WHAT'S POSSIBLE

EXPERIENCE
BUILD YOUR FUTURE

Real Experiences.
Stronger Pathways.
Brighter Minnesota.

EXPLORE | CONNECT | SUCCEED

Southeast Service Cooperative

EXPLORE THE CCL CATALOG

Find What You Need



Southeast Service Cooperative Career Connected Learning

- About Southeast Service Cooperative
- SSC Membership
- Career Connected Learning Specialists
- CCL Student Survey
- SSC Lending Libraries
- Other Regional Learning Resources
- Discover Healthcare Event
- I AM CTE Initiative
- Middle School Career Academy

Minnesota Service Cooperatives

- MSC CTE Network
- Statewide CCL Community of Practice
- CoE Teacher Externship Program

Future*Forward*

- Features
- Internships/Mentorships
- State Information & Statistics
- Tekne Award
- Events Calendar
- Career, College, & Job Fair
- Group Job Shadow Experience
- Industry Partner of the Year Awards
- Pitch Grant Competition
- Internship Program
- MDE Testing & Assessment Task Force

FORGE

- Manufacturing Day Tours
- Instructor Training
- Welding Competition

STEM Forward

- About STEM Forward
- Reasons To Join STEM Network
- How To Join STEM Network
- Solar Suitcases
- Employer Grant Internship Opportunities
- Resources for Planning Internships
- Mark Cuban Foundation AI Bootcamp
- Outstanding Educator Awards
- Annual Educator Forum
- Future STEM Educators
- STEM DAY At The Fair
- Mayo Clinic RET Program
  - (Research Experience For Teachers)

Workforce Development

- About Workforce Development

Southeast Service Cooperative

REAL EXPERIENCES.
STRONGER PATHWAYS.
BRIGHTER MINNESOTA.

EXPLORE | CONNECT | SUCCEED

Southeast Service Cooperative

Southeast Service Cooperative

Serving Southeast Minnesota



The Southeast Service Cooperative (SSC, ISD #921) is a public, non-profit agency established in 1976 to support schools, local governments, and organizations across southeast Minnesota. SSC helps members work more effectively together through shared services, educational programming, and regional collaboration.

Who We Serve

- Over 100 public and private school districts, cities, counties, and other organizations
- Serving an 11-county region in southeast Minnesota
- Member institutions include nearly 82,000 preK–12 students
- Supporting approximately 17,500 employees across member organizations

What We Do

- Deliver cooperative services that create efficiency and value for members
- Provide administrative support such as facilities management, cooperative purchasing, and health insurance pool management
- Offer educational programming including professional development, student enrichment, and mobile science learning opportunities
- Support regional workforce and career-connected learning efforts
- Operate through collaboration with advisory groups, member leaders, and partners across Minnesota

Why SSC Matters

- Public, non-profit regional service agency
- 10-member Board of Directors
- 33 staff members plus independent consultants
- Recognized for innovation, strong service, and financial stability

Working Together for Greater Impact

SSC collaborates with the other Minnesota service cooperatives to support education, local government, and nonprofits through shared expertise, strategic partnerships, and responsive regional services.

Southeast Service Cooperative
210 Wood Lake Drive SE, Rochester, MN 55904
(507) 288-1282
www.ssc.coop

Shaping the Future for Communities of Leaders and Learners

MEMBERSHIPS

Southeast Service Cooperative

Membership-based programming enables organizations to pay a single fee for unlimited access to resources for their staff. The more these programs and services are utilized within the organization, the lower the cost per person for participation, promoting equity as usage grows.

Eligible organizations for membership-based programs encompass those in education (PK-12 districts and post-secondary), out-of-school-time learning providers (non-profits, museum's, and community programming), industry, and more!













INTERESTED IN BECOMING AN SSC MEMBER?

Contact **Amy Grover**, Associate Director
507-281-6693
agrover@ssc.coop

COST-EFFECTIVE
Lower cost per person as usage grows.

COLLABORATIVE
Connect with others and share best practices.

ACCESS
Unlimited access to high-quality resources and services.

IMPACT
Stronger programs. Stronger organizations. Stronger communities.

CAPACITY & SUPPORT

Career Connected Learning
MSC Agile • Local • Impact

CAREER-CONNECTED LEARNING SOLUTIONS

By Southeast Service Cooperative

LINKING EDUCATORS & INDUSTRY TO...

Best Practices | Coaching & Training | Grants | *FutureForward*™
Event & Experience Support | Industry Connections | Minnesota
Service Cooperative CTE Grant Resources | Pathways Development



Jeannie Meidlinger
jmeidlinger@ssc.coop

Jami Schwickerath
jschwickerath@ssc.coop

Mike Schnell
mschnell@ssc.coop

Lane Powell
lpowell@ssc.coop



TOOLS & RESOURCES

Southeast Service Cooperative

STUDENT CAREER-CONNECTED LEARNING SURVEY

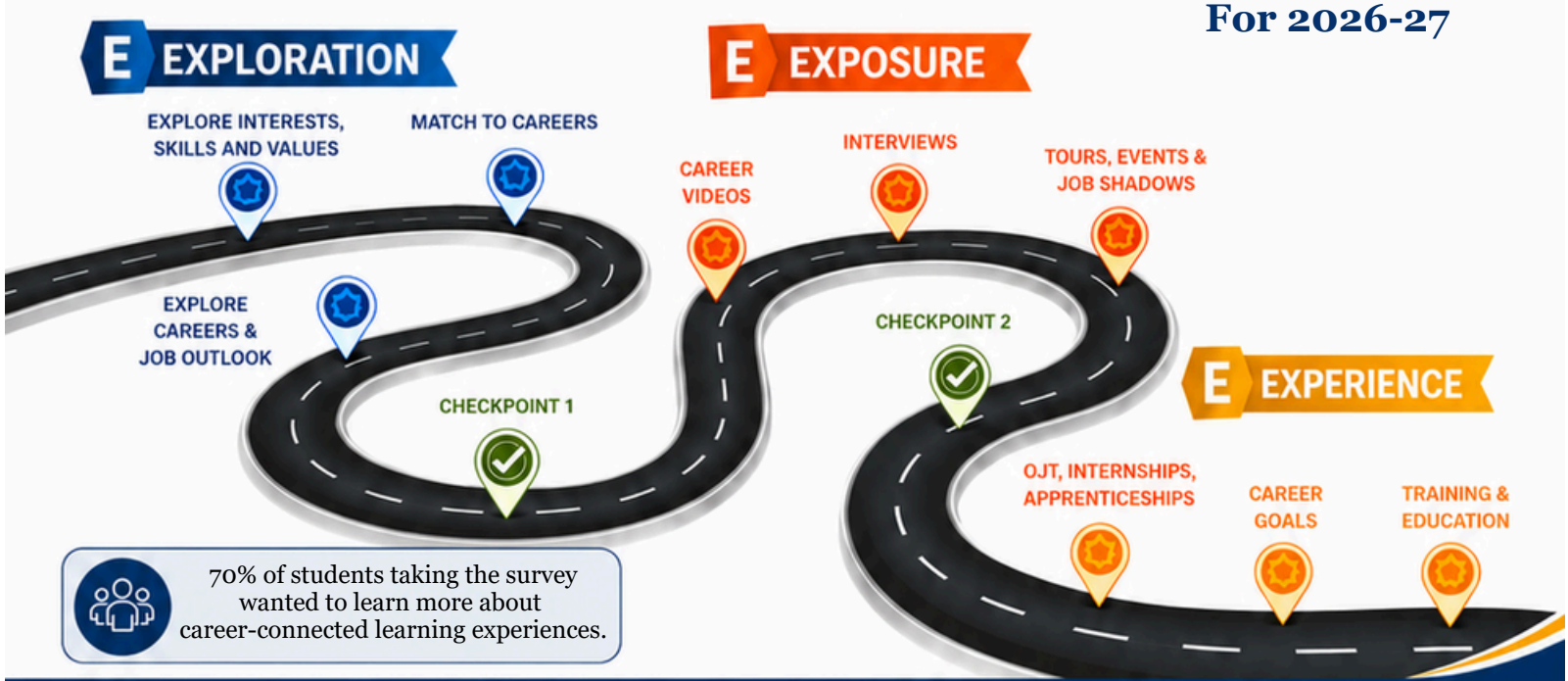
Southeast MN high school students were invited to participate in a survey to gather insights on career aspirations, areas for growth, interest in internships/mentorships, and more.

The feedback will help you as educators tailor curriculum and programs to prepare students for their desired career paths. Responses are confidential and will be used to identify trends and align learning with workforce needs. You will be given access to your local data and can see how it compares to southeast Minnesota.

	Where are you now? 2024-2025	Where are you now? 2025-2026
Exploration	78%	57%
Exposure	17%	33%
Experience	6%	11%

ACCESS THE SURVEY

For 2026-27



70% of students taking the survey wanted to learn more about career-connected learning experiences.

DATA-DRIVEN | STUDENT-CENTERED | LOCAL IMPACT | STRONGER PATHWAYS

Southeast Service Cooperative

LENDING LIBRARIES
NEW ONLINE PORTAL!

Imagine sparking curiosity and bringing real-world connections right into your classroom – without breaking the budget! Our SSC Lending Library provides educators with **FREE** access to innovative resources that enhance lessons, ignite student interest, and deepen understanding across various subjects. From hands-on science exploration to immersive virtual reality and sustainable energy solutions, we've got the tools and lessons to take learning to the next level with your students. Explore the possibilities below!

Please note that some items may require an active membership or completion of professional development before checkout.



Mobile Science Lab: *Hands-On Science, Delivered!*

Bring exciting, inquiry-based science investigations directly to your students. Our Mobile Science Lab is packed with a diverse range of equipment and materials covering various scientific disciplines. From microscopes and robotics to environmental science tools, this library allows you to conduct engaging experiments and foster a love for scientific discovery. Perfect for all grade levels!



SSC VR Lending Library: *Explore New Worlds!*

Get ready to transport your students beyond the classroom walls! Our VR Lending Library will offer a collection of virtual reality headsets and curated educational experiences. Imagine exploring ancient civilizations, dissecting a human heart, or traveling through the solar system – all through the power of immersive technology. Prepare for unforgettable learning adventures!



Solar Suitcase Lending Library: *Powering Up STEM Learning!*

Introduce your students to the fascinating world of renewable energy with our Solar Suitcase Lending Library. This hands-on kit provides a complete, portable solar electric system, allowing students to learn about solar energy generation, circuits, and sustainable technology in a tangible way. Curriculum and training provided by We Share Solar. Empower the next generation of energy innovators!

HOW TO ACCESS THE LENDING LIBRARY:

1. Review SSC Lending Library information & library registration at https://www.ssc.coop/stemforward/lending
2. Login/Register on the SSC Lending Library platform at https://stemforward.lend-engine-app.com/
3. Review and/or Check out Items and Kits for your classroom

The Southeast Service Cooperative Lending Library is supported by:

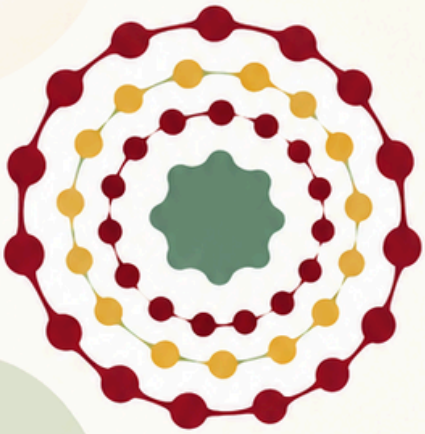
MAYO CLINIC

MINNESOTA STEM ECOSYSTEM

Contact: Eric Christians | echristians@ssc.coop

OTHER REGIONAL LEARNING RESOURCES

Free resources. Stronger classrooms. Inspired learning.



Lending Library at the Hormel Institute

Enhance science education in classrooms. Free to use following a summer training class. Equipment reservations are made through a Google Form. Teachers work with Institute staff for material pick-up and return. Lending Library materials include models and activities, modules (lesson plan, consumables and equipment to complete labs), and lesson plans created by teachers for teachers.

Contact: Katie Young | k-young@umn.edu



WDI VR Career Exploration Experience

Workforce Development Inc. brings virtual reality career exploration directly to classrooms and events. Participants can explore a variety of careers in a virtual environment while WDI staff guide them through simulations and facilitate conversations about career pathways and workforce opportunities.

Contact: Megan Horton for more information. | mhorton@wdimn.org

DISCOVER HEALTHCARE

A Health Care Exploration Event

at Rochester Community & Technical College's Heintz Center

Jan. 8, 2027

Two sessions:
9-11
11:40-1:40



Contact: Jami Schwickerath

507-273-8365

jschwickerath@ssc.coop

MEDICAL PROFESSIONS REPRESENTED INCLUDE:

- Dental
- Lab
- Laparoscopy
- Pharm Tech
- Trauma
- Vet Tech



Hands-on Experiences



Networking



Career Fair

What is this about?

SSC and RCTC, in partnership with Minnesota HOSA bring you "Discover Healthcare" at the Heintz Center on January 8, 2027. Experience hands-on learning with real-life medical professionals.

Southeast Service Cooperative

Rochester Community and Technical College

hosa future health professionals

Your Future, Your Choice. Start learning about Medical Options Today.

- Schools choose a 2-hour block
- Students participate in four sessions and an additional career fair
- 15-minute sessions
- Hands-on learning opportunities
- Presentations from professionals about jobs and training needed

#IAMCTE

ARE YOU?

GET READY FOR #IAMCTE MONTH THIS FEBRUARY! WE'RE LAUNCHING A SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN TO CELEBRATE THE IMPACT OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION. WATCH FOR COMPELLING STORIES AND RESOURCES THAT YOU CAN USE TO EDUCATE AND INSPIRE STUDENTS AND PARENTS. LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO SHOWCASE THE POWER OF CTE! #IAMCTE

STUDENT ORGS

CLASSES

EXPERIENCES

PATHWAYS

JOBS

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN SUPPORT

RPS/ZED CONSORTIUM PRESENTS:

JUNE 8-10, 2027

REGISTRATION CLOSES MAY 1



Middle School Career Academy

For students in current grades 6, 7, 8
400 seats available - Register today!
Interactive career exploration
25 students per session
AM Session 8am - 11am
PM Session 12pm - 3pm
Lunch provided!
Half-day with one pathway or Full-day with two pathways





PATHWAYS: Agriculture, Construction, Culinary, & Hospitality, Health Science "SCRUBS Camp", Information Technology, Manufacturing, Public Safety and Emergency Services, Transportation

RCTC Heintz Center
1926 Collegeview
Road East, Rochester, MN

Contact:
Jami Schwickerath
jschwickerath@ssc.coop

Rochester Public Schools
Southeast Service Cooperative
ROCHESTER/ZED
ROCHESTER COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Career Connected Learning
MSC Agile • Local • Impact

2026–27

LEAD CTE NETWORK



Build the knowledge, tools & statewide connections to lead stronger CTE programs.

1 WHO IT'S FOR

- School & district administrators
- District leaders who influence CTE programming
- New CTE leaders
- Coordinators & instructional coaches
- Counselors, curriculum leaders & business managers

2 CORE OBJECTIVES

- Strengthen leadership capacity
- Foster collaboration
- Align with industry standards
- Promote access & opportunity
- Advance systems thinking

3 PROGRAM EXPERIENCE

- Orientation (virtual; choose Aug. 19, Aug. 20, or Sept. 9)
- Oct. 5–6, 2026 | In person | St. Cloud
- Virtual meetings every other month
- Coaching, mentorship & inquiry groups
- June 21–22, 2027 | In person | St. Cloud

4 COST & SUPPORT

$400

Includes 2 hotel nights, 6 meals, and instructional facilities & materials.

Funding may be available through your Perkins Consortium or Service Cooperative.

A statewide cohort designed to provide district leaders, administrators, and decision makers without a background in Career and Technical Education with the **knowledge, tools,** and **resources** needed to better understand, design, and implement impactful CTE programming.

APPLY NOW ›

mncte.org/mentoring/leadcte/

Career Connected Learning

MSC Agile • Local • Impact

STATEWIDE CAREER CONNECTED LEARNING COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (CCL CoP)

The Statewide Career Connected Learning Community of Practice (CCL CoP) brings together educators, workforce professionals, employers, intermediaries, and community partners committed to expanding meaningful career connected learning opportunities for Minnesota students.

Participants share promising practices, explore statewide resources, build partnerships, and identify opportunities to strengthen career awareness, work based learning, employer engagement, and career pathways across Minnesota.

FREE TO PARTICIPATE
Supported by the Minnesota Service Cooperatives CTE Consortium

2026–27 KICKOFF CONVENING

October 13, 2026
Owatonna High School
Owatonna, MN

Full-day,
in-person event

Virutal Meetings Will Be Held:
Tuesday,12/1/26 10-11 am
Monday, 2/1/27 10-11 am
Tuesday, 4/13/27 10-11 am

To learn more or register, contact **Eriann Faris** at **eriann.faris@swwc.org.**

Career Connected Learning

SSC Agile • Local • Impact

TEACHER EXTERNSHIPS

CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE (COEs) TEACHER EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Program Overview. The COEs Educator Externship program offers comprehensive professional development experience for educators, including:

- $2,000 Educator Stipend
- 32-hour Externship Experience
- Immersive Professional Development (24 CEUs)
- Guided Local Industry Connections and Engagement
- Curriculum Development, Review, and Publishing Support
- One-on-one Access to Centers of Excellence Coordinators
- CTE Works Registration & Lodging
- Reflective Learning Banquet
- Mileage to CTE Works and Professional Development

Objectives:

- Enhance educators' confidence in integrating career exploration & STEM into their curriculum.
- Broaden educators' knowledge of careers and industries in Minnesota.
- Prepare educators to engage students in discussions about careers related to their area of focus.
- Incorporate CTE concepts into educators' curriculum through guest speakers, field trips, and hands-on activities.

Share your interest or learn more today!

bit.ly/4xdveqK

Questions? Vic Dreier
vdreier@ssc.coop

FutureForward™



Where education meets opportunity.

www.FutureForward.org

FEATURES

DIRECTORY
A comprehensive hub, facilitating seamless connections offering search filters, personalized profiles, and a rich multimedia platform, fostering meaningful career-connected learning.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS
Discover, engage, and promote industry-specific events and real-world learning opportunities.

RESOURCES
A curated collection of tools, guides, and activities, empowering each user to navigate and enhance their career-connected learning experiences.

Internship BOARD
Job shadow, internship, and mentorship opportunities for high school students.

> "I didn't know they had that job here. I thought I had to move to do that!"
>
> ★★★★★ - High School Sophomore

FREE & ACCESSIBLE

- FREE FOR ALL USERS
- NO GEOGRAPHICAL LIMITATIONS
- INCLUSIVE LEARNING TOOLS
- MOBILE APP ACCESSIBILITY
- FORMAL & INFORMAL LEARNING APPLICATION

EXTENSIVE FEATURES & CUSTOMIZATIONS

- ADVANCED SEARCH FILTERS
- FLEXIBLE CALENDAR VIEWS
- TAILORED RESOURCES
- CREATIVE DIRECTORY PROFILE OPTIONS
- RICH MULTIMEDIA FEATURES

USER OWNERSHIP & CONTROL

- CUSTOMIZABLE PROFILES & EVENTS
- COMMUNITY-NEUTRAL BRANDING

CONTACT US

www.FutureForward.org

info@FutureForward.org

Minnesota's TekNe Awards 25 Years
Tech for Good Award Winner

Career Connected Learning MSC Agile • Local • Impact



Find Your Next Opportunity

REAL EXPERIENCES.
REAL CONNECTIONS.

Explore job shadows, internships and mentorships with local employers through ***FutureForward.***



Explore

Connect

Grow

New Opportunities
ADDED REGULARLY.

FutureForward.org/jobs

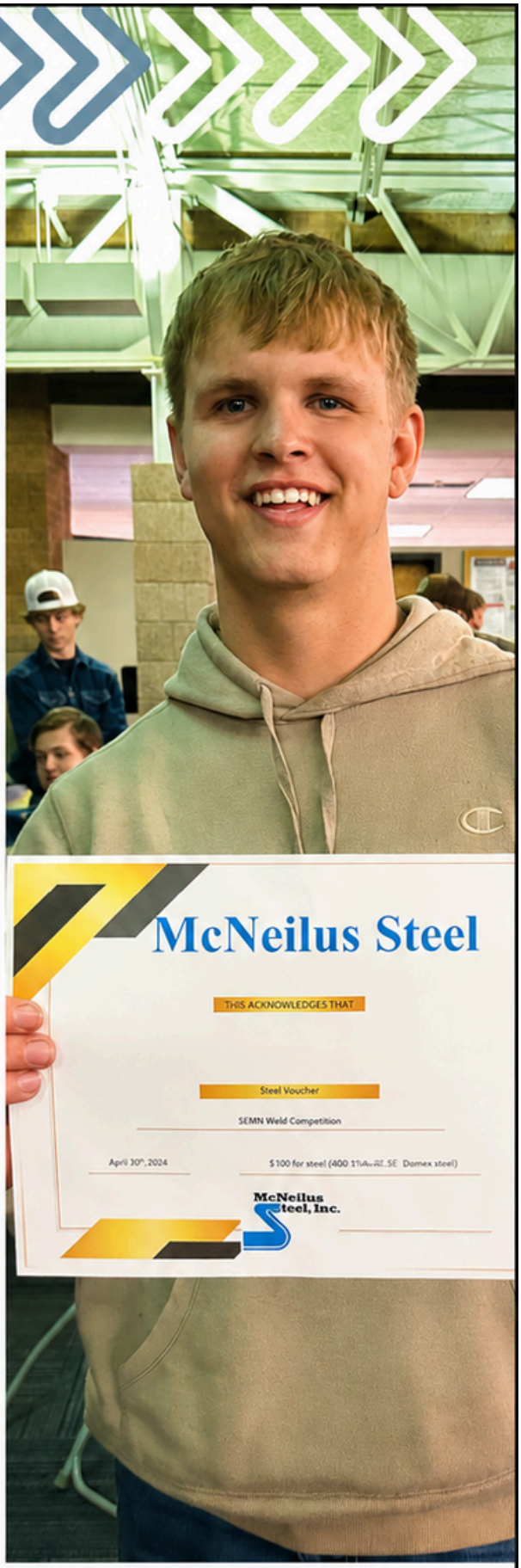
FutureForward™

Southeast Service Cooperative

FutureForward™

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

BUILD THE FUTURE



The FutureForward™ Internship Program is committed to building a sustainable, industry-led system for providing authentic career experiences to students in Minnesota.

Program participants will connect with resources and students to create a high-impact internship to build a robust talent pipeline for our region.

Why Choose Us?

The FutureForward™ Internship Program offers employers the flexibility to engage with students through two distinct options.

- **Micro-Internship:** A project-based, short-term experience lasting between 10–20 hours. This option allows employers to introduce students to a specific project or task and is ideal for organizations that want to test an internship program without a significant time commitment.
- **Immersive Internship:** A more in-depth experience lasting 30+ hours. This option allows students to immerse themselves in a professional environment and gain a more comprehensive understanding of a career field.

CONTACT US

Vic Dreier
Regional STEM Specialist
vdreier@ssc.coop
www.futureforward.org

FutureForward™

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Funding & Support

Grant funds are provided to support the development and execution of these high-quality internships. These funds are used to pay student wages and provide critical support for employers.

The grant provides two funding options to align with your program type:

- **Micro-Internship:** A total of $450, with $250 designated for student wages and $200 for employer support.
- **Immersive Internship:** A total of $2,750, with $1,750 designated for student wages and $1,000 for employer support.

Employer support uses:

- Staff time for planning the internship experience.
- Necessary supplies or materials.
- Student supports, such as uniforms, safety equipment, or training materials.
- Industry-recognized credential or certificate for the student.

Requirements & Expectations

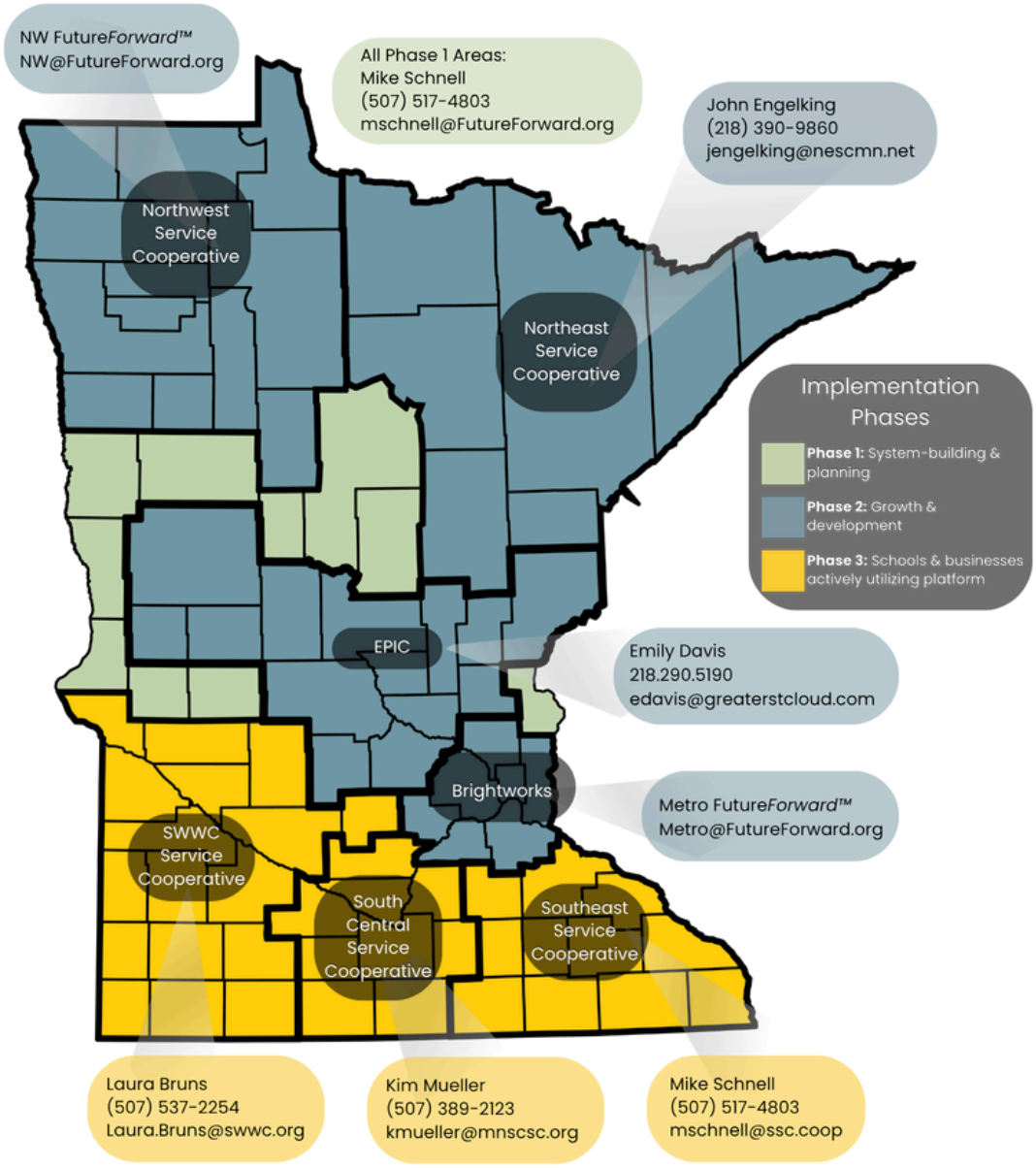
Employers must agree to the following commitments:

- **STEM Alignment:** The internship experience must focus on a STEM career pathway or demonstrate how your organization utilizes STEM competencies or emerging technology.
- **Student Compensation:** Students must be compensated for their work. The student must be put on the payroll or issued a 1099 form.
- **Provide a Credential:** At the conclusion of the internship, the student must receive a formal document they can use for future career pursuits. This can be an industry-recognized credential or a professionally printed certificate of completion.
- **Post the Opportunity:** Employers must post the internship on the FutureForward.org job board. This involves creating a directory page for your organization on the website.
- **Complete Exit Surveys:** Employers and students must complete a short, five-minute exit survey on the final day of the internship to provide feedback on the program.

How to Get Started

- **Complete the Interest Form:** The first step is to fill out our digital form to let us know you would like to host an internship. https://bit.ly/FutureForwardInternshipEmployerInterestForm
- **Awaiting Approval:** Our team will review your submission and contact you via email to confirm your acceptance into the program.
- **Design and Post Your Internship:** Once approved, you will use the provided guides to create your organization's directory page and post the internship opportunity on the job board.
- **Host Your Intern:** Connect with a student and deliver the high-quality, hands-on experience you've designed.
- **Submit Surveys & Payroll/1099 Records:** At the conclusion of the experience, complete the employer exit survey and ensure the student completes theirs.
  - **Employer Exit Survey** https://bit.ly/FutureForwardInternshipEmployerExitSurvey
  - **Intern Exit Survey** https://bit.ly/FutureForwardInternshipInternExitSurvey

FutureForward™



User Statistics as of April 14, 2026

16,750 Total Users
312,634 Activities Completed
149,785 Pages Viewed
359 Minnesota Communities accessed FutureForward™
81 Minnesota Counties accessed FutureForward™
528 Businesses completed Directory Pages

CONTACT US

www.FutureForward.org

info@FutureForward.org



DID YOU KNOW...

FutureForward™

JOINED THE RANKS OF TARGET AND THE LITTLE FREE LIBRARY AS WINNERS OF THE 2023 TEKNE AWARDS, THE 25TH ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION WITHIN MINNESOTA'S TECHNOLOGY ECOSYSTEM.

Thank you to the 16,750 engaged users in 2025-26!



EXPLORE FUTURE*FORWARD*™

VIEW NEWS COVERAGE

Career Connected Learning

MSC Agile • Local • Impact

DID YOU KNOW...

YOUTH, PARENTS, & EDUCATORS CAN EXPLORE & ATTEND EVENTS ORGANIZED BY INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS?

VISIT THE EVENTS CALENDAR

FutureForward™



www.Future*Forward*.org/events/

Download the app
IOS & GOOGLE PLAY STORE

FutureForward™

CAREER, COLLEGE & JOB FAIR

Connecting Dreams with Opportunities

HIGHLIGHTS

- Career Exploration
- Training Pathways
- Job Openings

EVENT DETAILS

March 2, 2027

Cannon Falls HS | Field House



> This is the single best event we attend! Students are engaged, and I find the way it focuses them on careers, not just entry level jobs, to be very valuable.
>
> **Dana - Dairy Farmers of America**

LEARN MORE!

FutureForward™

Industry Immersion Day

GROUP JOB SHADOW EXPERIENCE

Explore Careers Beyond the Classroom



AVAILABLE FALL & SPRING

Available to Middle School & High School

FutureForward™ Industry Immersion Day offers middle and high school students a meaningful opportunity to explore career pathways beyond the classroom. With hands-on exposure to real-world professions and direct engagement with industry professionals, this is more than just a tour...
it's a launchpad for future dreams!



"This was the best field trip I have ever been on."
– Senior student

"One student was so engaged that, while touring with HR, he even asked about getting a job!"
– Kahler Staff

KIMT Student Interviews

Scan to Watch Student Interviews

Questions: Jeannie Meidlinger | jmeidlinger@ssc.coop | (507) 206-9963

Career Connected Learning
MGC Agile · Local · Impact

Southeast Service Cooperative

FutureForward™

Industry Partner of the Year Awards

Friday, May 7, 2027
7:30–9:00 AM
Rochester, MN

These awards acknowledge individuals and organizations who enhance K-12 student achievement, show leadership and commitment to ongoing development, advocate for career and technical education paths, and display collaboration among K-12 schools, businesses, trades, and higher education institutions.



NOMINATE AN INDUSTRY PARTNER

REGISTER TO ATTEND

FutureForward™

PITCH COMPETITION

AT THE ANNUAL STEM EDUCATOR FORUM

BIG IDEAS
BIGGER
IMPACT

The FutureForward Pitch Competition is your chance to bring a bold idea to life! Educators pitch innovative STEM projects that inspire students, strengthen career readiness, and build connections with industry.

Finalists present their ideas live at the annual STEM Educator Forum, where winners receive funding and resources to turn their vision into reality.



WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

K–12 educators, school teams, and community partners across Southeast Minnesota.

HOW IT WORKS

1. **Submit Your Idea** – Share your innovative STEM project proposal.
2. **Finalists Selected** – Top ideas are invited to pitch live at the annual STEM Educator Forum.
3. **Pitch & Inspire** – Present your idea to a panel of educators, industry partners, and community leaders.
4. **Winners Receive Support** – Awarded funding and resources to implement their project.

HAPPENS ANNUALLY AT THE STEM EDUCATOR FORUM

Connect, collaborate, and help shape the future of STEM education in Southeast Minnesota.

WHY PARTICIPATE?

FUND INNOVATION
Access funding and resources to bring your STEM ideas to life.

BUILD CONNECTIONS
Network with educators, industry partners, and community leaders.

STRENGTHEN IMPACT
Create meaningful, real-world experiences that empower students.

GAIN RECOGNITION
Showcase your ideas and inspire others across the region.

Ready To Pitch?

Southeast Service Cooperative

FORGE

by FutureForward™

CONNECTING BUSINESSES TO CLASSROOMS.™



FORGE MN

MANUFACTURING DAY TOURS

SEE CAREERS IN ACTION

WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER 28, 2026

Local students. Real manufacturers.
A closer look at the people, technology and careers that build Minnesota.



BUS ON US!

TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE MAY BE AVAILABLE FOR SCHOOLS THROUGH Future Forward™
DON'T LET TRANSPORTATION BE THE BARRIER!

QUESTIONS OR READY TO PLAN A TOUR?
CONTACT YOUR SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA TOUR COORDINATOR:

Mike Schnell
mschnell@ssc.coop
507-281-6683

FutureForward™ | WHERE EDUCATION MEETS OPPORTUNITY™

FORGE by FutureForward™

INSTRUCTOR TRAINING

Strengthening instruction.
Preparing students. Building futures.



DATE: Friday, February 5, 2027

TIME: TBA

LOCATION:
Rochester Community and Technical College
Heintz Center Welding Lab
Rochester, MN

Welding instructors from across Southeast Minnesota will gather for a full-day hands-on training designed to strengthen instruction and align more closely with current industry standards.

FOCUSED LEARNING
Blueprint reading, weld acceptance criteria, hands-on welding, and direct coaching from industry experts.

PRACTICAL IMPACT
Gain real-world techniques you can immediately apply in your classroom.

STRONGER OUTCOMES
Better preparing students for careers in trades, manufacturing, and engineering.

BUILDING TOWARD THE FUTURE*Forward*™ WELDING COMPETITION

This training also prepares instructors for the FutureForward™ Welding Competition on Tuesday, April 27, in Rochester—bringing together approximately 200 student welders and more than 200 additional students for a career fair with industry engagement and opportunities.

CONTACT JEANNIE MEIDLINGER @ JMEIDLINGER@SSC.COOP FOR INFO

CONNECTING EDUCATION. EMPOWERING CAREERS. BUILDING FUTURES.

ATTENTION
STUDENT WELDERS

BE A PART OF THE FIFTH ANNUAL SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA WELDING COMPETITION FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS!

FORGE

by FutureForward™

WELDING COMPETITION • CAREER FAIR NETWORKING • VENDOR EXPO



TUESDAY • APRIL 27, 2027

LOCAL 6 PLUMBERS & PIPEFITTERS
ROCHESTER, MN

Students & Families | Explore careers offered by our industry partners at this event.

Employers & Industry Partners | Connect with the next generation workforce by registering your business on futureforward.org!

2027 School Registration

2027 Industry Registration

FutureForward™ | WHERE EDUCATION MEETS OPPORTUNITY™

www.FutureForward.org

MINNESOTA STUDENTS AND PARENTS:

Here's a chance to have your voice heard — and get a firsthand look at how statewide education policy and recommendations are developed!



Join the Testing and Assessment Task Force

The Minnesota Department of Education is seeking both **students** and **parents or connected adults** to serve on its new **Testing and Assessment Task Force.** Participants will help review Minnesota's statewide assessment system and contribute to conversations about its future.



APPLICATION DEADLINE

October 9, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.

APPLY TODAY

Student application | **Parent/connected adult application**

https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/test/

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION | FutureForward™

STEM FORWARD



Your local STEM connection.

STEM Forward brings together schools, higher education, employers and community organizations committed to expanding high-quality STEM learning and career opportunities across Southeast Minnesota. Members contribute expertise, ideas and resources that strengthen the regional STEM ecosystem and create meaningful connections for educators and students.

1 MISSION & FOCUS

MISSION:
Promote STEM excellence and expand high-quality STEM learning opportunities across Southeast Minnesota.

VISION:
Inspire a future-ready workforce by connecting education, community and career pathways through meaningful STEM experiences.

THE OPPORTUNITY:
- Strong regional need for STEM-ready talent and career awareness.
- Students learn best when academics connect to real-world applications.
- Regional collaboration helps schools expand access, resources and opportunity.

2 WHY JOIN US?

Membership helps organizations build meaningful connections between classrooms, communities and careers. Partners collaborate, exchange ideas, support educators, and help shape new opportunities for students across the region.

- **Collaboration across schools, higher education, employers and community organizations**
- **Support for educators through professional learning and practical resources**
- **Stronger student connections to careers, pathways and hands-on learning**
- **A shared regional network working to advance STEM education**

3 CURRENT PROGRAMS & OPPORTUNITIES

STEM Educator Forum
Hands-on professional learning, emerging STEM content, practical classroont ideas, and regional networking for educators.

STEM Lending Library
Access classroom-ready resources such as the Mobile Science Lab, virtual reality experiences, and Solar Suitcase materials. Please note that some items may require active membership or completion of professional development before checkout.

STEM Day at the Fair
Hands-on STEM exploration that connects students, families, educators and community partners.

Outstanding Educator Award
Recognizes K–12 professionals who demonstrate excellence, leadership, continuous improvement and collaboration in STEM education.

We Share Solar Suitcases
Renewable energy learning resources that build STEM engagement and real-world discovery.

4 LEARN MORE / JOIN STEM FORWARD

1. Visit www.ssc.coop/stemforward
2. Complete the STEM Forward Participation Agreement
3. Connect with our team to learn more

CONTACT US

Vic Dreier, Regional STEM Specialist
vdreier@ssc.coop
507-910-9587

www.ssc.coop/stemforward

STEM FORWARD

www.ssc.coop/stemforward

JOIN THE STEM FORWARD NETWORK

STEM Forward brings together schools, higher education, employers, and community organizations to expand high-quality STEM learning and career opportunities across Southeast Minnesota. Members share expertise, ideas, and resources that strengthen the regional STEM ecosystem.

MEMBER CONNECTIONS & COLLABORATION

Participate in a regional STEM ecosystem where educators, employers and partners can exchange ideas, identify needs, build partnerships, and help shape opportunities for students throughout Southeast Minnesota.

STEM EDUCATOR FORUMS

Educators gain hands-on professional learning, practical classroom strategies, emerging STEM content, and connections with regional STEM partners. Forums are designed so educators leave with tools and ideas they can use directly with students.

STEM LENDING LIBRARY

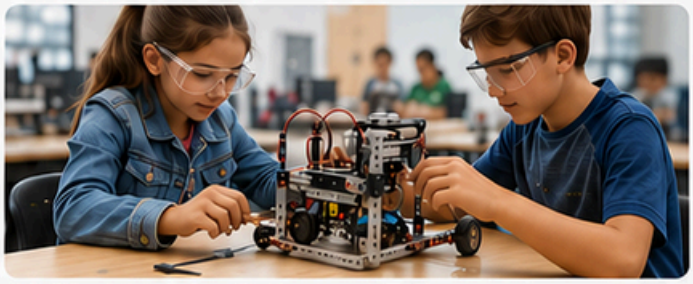
Access high-quality tools, kits and hands-on learning resources through SSC's Lending Library. Current resources include the Mobile Science Lab, virtual reality experiences and Solar Suitcase materials. Some items may require active membership or completion of professional development before checkout.

OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR AWARD

STEM Forward recognizes K–12 professionals who demonstrate excellence, leadership, continuous improvement, STEM career awareness and collaboration among schools, businesses and higher education. Nominations are generally accepted in November and December, with recognition at the annual February gathering.

STEM EXPERIENCES & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

STEM Forward creates opportunities for students, families, educators and industry partners to experience STEM together. STEM Day at the Olmsted County Fair connects youth with hands-on activities, careers and organizations from across the region.



LEARN MORE / JOIN STEM FORWARD

1. **Explore STEM Forward**
   Visit www.ssc.coop/stemforward to learn about programs, resources, and events.
2. **Complete the Participation Agreement**
   Join STEM Forward by completing the STEM Forward Participation Agreement on the Members page.
3. **Connect with Us**
   Contact our team for membership questions, program details, or next steps.

LEARN MORE

Vic Dreier, Regional STEM Specialist
vdreier@ssc.coop | 507-910-9587

Join through the STEM Forward Participation Agreement

Southeast Service Cooperative.

MINNESOTA STEM ECOSYSTEM

JOIN US!

STEM FORWARD

CONNECT • COLLABORATE • INSPIRE • INNOVATE

Join Our Ecosystem! Become a member of STEM Forward today to access all initiatives and opportunities aimed at promoting STEM excellence in southeast Minnesota.

To Join:

1. Go to https://www.ssc.coop/stemforward/about
2. Complete the hyperlinkclt form
3. Email or mail it to: Sarah Ness | 210 Wood Lake Drive SE, Rochester, MN 55904 | sness@ssc.coop

What We Do:

- **Networking & Professional Development:** Five advisory meetings and an annual Educator Forum facilitating professional growth, sharing best practices, and inspiring innovation-enhancing local STEM pedagogy
- **Career Awareness:** Increasing access to STEM sector career awareness and experiential learning
- **Grant & Resource Catalyzation:** Facilitating grants for STEM programs and initiatives
- **Educator Recognition:** Celebrating excellence in STEM education
- **Youth Engagement:** Encouraging STEM career pathway and influencing programming
- **Serve as Regional Hub for MN STEM Ecosystem:** Interactive STEM experiences and legislative advocacy.
  - MN's inaugural regional hub that serves as a channel partner connecting state entities to local network partners. State partners include:

State Partners

MINNESOTA STEM ECOSYSTEM

SCI MATH MN

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Value We Bring:

- **Cross-sector Collaboration:** We build partnerships for high-quality STEM education.
- **Enhanced Learning Experiences:** Connecting students with real-world applications.
- **Educator Development:** Empowering teachers for effective STEM pedagogy.
- **Financial Support:** Facilitating grants and resources for educational growth.



SSC STEM LENDING LIBRARY

Bring engaging, real-world STEM learning into your classroom!

Members can borrow innovative resources like the Mobile Science Lab, VR experiences, and Solar Suitcase materials to spark curiosity, support hands-on learning, and empower the next generation.



EXPLORE RESOURCES:

www.ssc.coop/stemforward/lending

STEM FORWARD

Light up the Future!



Solar Suitcases Available At The STEM Lending Library

The "We Care Solar" Suitcases in the STEM Lending Library is a FREE STEM resource and curriculum for 5th through 12th Grade Teachers in our STEM Forward Collaborative.

Teachers attend a two-day training at WoodLake Meeting Center in Rochester, Minnesota, then can borrow a set of "We Care Solar" suitcase kits for their classroom for 2 weeks.

In the 5 lessons curriculum, students learn about the need for solar power in remote areas, build a functioning model of the solar suitcases, and discover how solar energy is affecting the world around them.

It's project-based learning with a real-world impact. Empower your students to become the next generation of change-makers!

For more information about SSC's STEM Lending Library

Email Vic Dreier at vdreier@ssc.coop or Eric Christians at echristians@ssc.coop

STEM FORWARD

Employer Grant Opportunity

INTERNSHIPS

Both Opportunities Include

- Program or Project Based Learning
- Paid Experience
- Earn a Credential

MICRO INTERNSHIPS

- 25 Youth
- 10-20 Hours
- $450 / Experience
  up to $250 student wage
  + $200 employer support

IMMERSIVE INTERNSHIPS

- 15 Youth
- > 30 Hours
- $2,750 / Experience
  up to $1,750 student wage
  + $1,000 employer support

Employer Expectations

A STEM professional must serve as the intern's mentor.
Post internship(s) on job board by April 2026 (Spring Recruitment) or September 1, 2026 (Fall Recruitment)
Provide paid work experience.
Provide a credential (industry or organizationally recognized).
Interns complete an Intern Exit Survey provided by STEM Forward.
Employers complete an Employer Exit Survey provided by STEM Forward.
Retain documentation of payments and uses.

Contact: Vic Dreier | vdreier@ssc.coop
www.ssc.coop/stemforward

INTERNSHIPS

Resources for Planning

FutureForward Job Board

Grab high school students' attention by using these four best practices for your internship listing:

Use an Intriguing Title & Lead Sentence:

- Post one internship position per listing.
- Use action verbs and highlight the cool aspects of the internship. (Ex: "Code Like a Pro: Summer Web Development Internship"

Highlight the "Why" & Hands-on Learning:

- Explain why this internship is unique and how it connects to their interests.
- Mention specific skills they can develop.

Fun & Perks (if applicable):

- Mention any perks that might excite students.
- Highlight a project with a fun outcome they will experience.

Call to Action:

- End with a clear call to action.

Exit Interview Surveys

Exit interview questions unlock the secrets to a stellar internship experience! Knowing what interns will be asked helps you:

Anticipate Feedback:

- Prepare discussions & activities that address learning goals before interns even mention them.

Continuously Improve:

- Use exit survey data to refine your program and provide an even better experience for future interns.

Get a Head Start:

- Review sample questions from the QR codes (see below) to brainstorm activities that hit those key learning targets. Schedule regular check-ins with interns for open communication and course correction.

By proactively integrating these exit interview concepts, you'll be a master internship provider in no time!

Contact Us For Start-Up Funding!

Internship Information

Employer Exit Form

Inern Exit Form

Contact: Vic Dreier | vdreier@ssc.coop
www.ssc.coop/stemforward

STEM FORWARD

STEM FORWARD

AI BOOTCAMP MARK CUBAN FOUNDATION

Presented by
Southeast Service Cooperative

A FREE AI LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

AI BOOTCAMP
FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED. *Just curiosity.*

Explore artificial intelligence through a **free**, hands-on learning experience—no coding or computer science experience required!



Learn. Create. Explore.
Shape your future.

THREE SATURDAYS
OCT. 31 • NOV. 7 • NOV. 14
11:00 AM – 4:00 PM

IGNITE INNOVATION HUB
Downtown Red Wing, MN

TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED
For accepted students within 30 miles of downtown Red Wing

WHO CAN APPLY?
High school students who will be age 13 or older at the time of the bootcamp. You ***do not need*** to attend Red Wing Public Schools.

WHAT YOU'LL DO
- Learn about AI
- Solve real-world challenges
- Work with emerging technology
- Collaborate and build new skills

APPLICATIONS OPEN
AUGUST 1 – SEPTEMBER 30
Space is limited. Apply today!

LEARN MORE & APPLY:
markcubanai.org/students

SUPPORTED LOCALLY BY:

ignite · Jones Family Foundation · Red Wing Public Schools · Flight Path 2030 Funded by Dwight and Dion Diercks

QUESTIONS? Email val@igniteMN.org | **STEM FORWARD. STRONGER TOGETHER.**

STEM FORWARD

2026–2027

OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR AWARDS



Celebrating educators who inspire achievement, innovation and the next generation of STEM talent.

FEBRUARY 10, 2027
5:30–7:30 PM

ACHIEVEMENT | **LEADERSHIP** | **STEM CAREERS** | **COLLABORATION**

Nominations Now Open!

Help us recognize exceptional K–12 educators making a lasting impact in STEM.







Hosted by: STEM FORWARD

35 YEARS OF CELEBRATING OUTSTANDING EDUCATORS

STEM FORWARD

Presented by
Southeast Service Cooperative



STEM FORWARD EDUCATOR FORUM

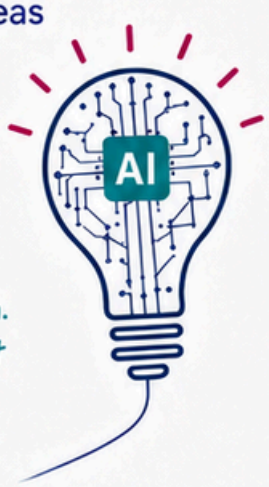
AI IN EDUCATION

PRACTICAL • LOW-TECH • NO-TECH • UNPLUGGED

Educational Sessions | Networking | Practical Classroom Ideas

SESSIONS FOR EVERY K–12 EDUCATOR, FUTURE EDUCATOR, PROFESSIONAL HIRING A STEM WORKFORCE, AND STEM ENTHUSIAST!

Explore the power of artificial intelligence in education through engaging sessions that emphasize practical, accessible applications—including low-tech, no-tech, and unplugged approaches—plus computer science, STEM integration, and classroom innovation.



Ideas, not intimidation. Impact, not hype.

Wed, Feb 24, 2027
4:30–7:30 PM

210 Wood Lake Dr. SE,
Rochester, MN 55904

Free | STEM Forward Members
$125 | Non-members



"Valuable, practical, and immediately usable in my classroom."
– Zumbro Education District

"Great sessions, relevant topics, and ideas I can use right away!"
– Pine Island Public Schools

"A local conference with big impact. I left inspired and better prepared."
– Rochester Public Schools

REGISTER: WWW.SSC.COOP

WWW.SSC.COOP | STEM FORWARD. STRONGER TOGETHER.

STEM FORWARD

STEM FORWARD EDUCATOR FORUM

FUTURE EDUCATOR?

SHAPE TOMORROW. START TODAY.



Build your skills.
Expand your network.
Inspire your future.

Join future educators and innovators who are shaping the future of learning with AI.

YOU'LL GAIN:

Real-World Insights
Explore how AI is used in education and beyond.

Practical Ideas
Discover low-tech, no-tech, and unplugged strategies you can use right away.

Meaningful Connections
Network with educators, mentors, and future employers.

Career Inspiration
See where a career in education and STEM can take you.

Wed, Feb 24, 2027
4:30–7:30 PM

210 Wood Lake Dr. SE
Rochester, MN 55904

REGISTER TODAY: WWW.SSC.COOP

STEM FORWARD. STRONGER TOGETHER.

MAYO CLINIC | STEM FORWARD



Research Experiences for Teachers (RET) Program

AI-Powered Learning for Today's Classrooms

June 14 – Aug 6, 2027 | 8 Week Summer Intensive

The Mayo Clinic Research Experiences for Teachers (RET) Program is a summer opportunity for **SE MN STEM educators** to explore the real-world power of AI in healthcare and bring that knowledge back to their classrooms.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

Hands-On Research:
Pair with a Mayo Clinic scientist to observe and assist in AI-guided research.

Professional Development:
Weekly sessions with education experts to turn research insights into classroom-ready curriculum units.

Curated Lectures:
Topics include AI ethics, regulatory affairs, real-world AI use, and prompt engineering.

Classroom Impact:
Teachers gain new knowledge and skills and return to their classrooms inspired to educate the next generation of STEM leaders.

14K stipend
for completing the 8-week program

Ideal for:
SE MN STEM educators

Learn More:
Overview - Research Experiences for Teachers Program - Mayo Clinic Research

STEM DAY

AT THE

Olmsted

COUNTY FAIR



Join us for engaging, hands-on STEM experiences for young people and their families, nurturing their curiosity and helping them envision themselves in STEM fields. Our hands-on activities are designed to create a ripple effect, encouraging continued exploration of STEM subjects, activities, and future careers.

JULY | 28 | 2027

11 AM - 4 PM

Olmsted County Fairgrounds
1403 3rd Ave SE, Rochester, MN 55904

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

CAREER EXPLORATION

RESOURCES

ADMIT ONE FREE ENTRY ADMIT ONE FREE ENTRY ADMIT ONE FREE ENTRY ADMIT ONE FREE ENTRY ADMIT ONE

HOSTED BY:

STEM FORWARD

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Vic Dreier | vdreier@ssc.coop







NEED A HAND

WITH FINDING A JOB OR GETTING INTO COLLEGE?

Workforce Development, Inc. offers **FREE** career counseling and exploration services for youth, including scholarships and paid work experiences in the career field you're interested in.

CAREER ASSESSMENTS
WORKPLACE READINESS TRAINING
COLLEGE SEARCH/APPLICATION
WORKPLACE TOURS
APPRENTICESHIPS
MENTORING
AND MORE!

SCAN TO LEARN MORE!

We have offices in every county in SE Minnesota! Scan the QR code on the left or go to **https://bit.ly/WDIyouth** to connect with your local career planner and find out what you may qualify for.

Workforce
DEVELOPMENT, INC.
The Workforce Development Board of Southeast Minnesota