

The Association of Science-Technology Centers' *Youth Inspired Challenge*

The *Youth Inspired Challenge*, organized by the Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC), is a major new initiative designed to expand the impact of science centers and museums to assist the Nation's youth to become the innovative and creative thinkers needed for the 21st century workforce. This new national program is inspired by President Obama's goal of strengthening the science, technology, engineering and mathematics knowledge of America's students.



Every day in communities across America, people of all ages and backgrounds become "hands-on explorers" in science centers and museums, experimenting with notions about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics from the traditional to the cutting-edge. ASTC member institutions offer valuable programs in youth development and science education, and envision making science available to everyone while building on STEM literacy.

ASTC member institutions will offer valuable science education and youth employment programs outside the classroom to engage at least 25,000 youth, ages 10-19, in a minimum of 2 million hours of science enrichment. The primary goals of the *Youth Inspired Challenge* are to increase the STEM literacy of America's students; expand opportunities for STEM engagement of underrepresented groups, including minorities and women; and move America's students from the middle to the front of the pack in STEM achievement over the next decade.

ASTC and its member institutions will also collect, catalog, and share best practices for improving STEM education, and will measure and report success based on participation and reach of programs in specific audiences.

ASTC boasts nearly 600 members across the world, including over 300 centers and museums in the United States. Currently, more than half of ASTC's U.S. members offer afterschool programs, and at least 40% offer youth employment programs. These programs are often implemented in partnership with local industry partners who provide financial support and role models for youth participating in these experiences.

A rich history of commitment from partners and other organizations such as Boeing, Allstate, McDonald's, the Staples Foundation, and more, have helped ensure that ASTC members are well-positioned to accept the *Youth Inspired Challenge*.

New partners and leaders are being called on by ASTC to make critical investments in the Nation's future STEM workforce through commitments that will permit science centers and museums to engage youth – especially those from underrepresented and underserved backgrounds.

ASTC, through its network of local science centers and museums and its new *Youth Inspired Challenge*, is committed to doing its part to meet the President's goal of strengthening STEM education in America's youth.

