

STEM LEARNING ECOSYSTEMS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE



APPLICATION PROCESS

INVITATION ONLY



2019

WWW.STEMECOSYSTEMS.ORG

STEM LEARNING ECOSYSTEMS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

- WHY CULTIVATE A STEM LEARNING ECOSYSTEM?..... 3**
 - Initiative Overview 3
- APPLICATION OVERVIEW..... 4**
 - Applicant Criteria..... 4
 - Participation Requirements..... 5
 - Eligibility..... 5
 - Review Criteria – Level of Readiness 6
- APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS 6**
 - Online Application Instructions..... 7
- APPLICATION..... 7**
 - Applicant Summary..... 7
 - Your STEM Learning Ecosystem Snapshot 8
 - Readiness Assessment 8
 - Key Partners 8
 - Elements of a STEM Learning Ecosystem..... 10
 - Focus Areas of a STEM Learning Ecosystem 11
 - Additional Application Information..... 12
 - Webinars 12
 - Submission Process 12
 - Selection Process 13
- CONTACT INFORMATION 13**
- APPENDICES..... 14**
 - Recommended Reading 15
 - Considerations for Communities: Lessons from Years 1 & 2..... 15
 - Elements of a STEM Learning Ecosystem 17
 - Submission Checklist 18

WHY CULTIVATE A STEM LEARNING ECOSYSTEM?

The STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice is designed to empower local communities to thrive through collaboration and communication to deliver results for students, educators and business leaders. The Initiative believes STEM Learning Ecosystems possess the tools and knowledge to create change. Just as STEM education has embraced innovation at the program level, it must also embrace innovation at the infrastructure level. Community partners across sectors must do more than merely coordinate efforts. Stakeholders must work cohesively at a new, deeper level to provide more students with quality learning in and out of school. It will require Ecosystem members to properly scale efforts to serve as many students as possible. Communities in collaboration are in the best position to change the conversation about quality growth for STEM education.



INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

To be ready for the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow, the next generation needs to be equipped to make thoughtful decisions and solve problems. If our communities make sure that all learners have a chance to be immersed in STEM then we will develop the kinds of thinkers we need today and in the future. And we need to make sure that students can move through an ecosystem of learning opportunities to grow their knowledge and skills: schools, libraries, science centers and STEM-based businesses, to name a few.

STEM Learning Ecosystems unite all community stakeholders to ensure that all students and people are engaged STEM learners who are competent and college and career ready, that the educational system and its out-of-school time partners are equipped with the resources they need to engage, teach and develop STEM competency, and that communities thrive through a robust and competitive STEM skilled workforce.



These Ecosystems develop their knowledge, strengthen their persistence and nurture their sense of identity and belonging in STEM disciplines. Lastly, STEM Ecosystems enable young people to connect what they learn in and out of school with real-world learning opportunities, leading to STEM literacy, further education and careers.

The STEM Learning Ecosystems Initiative cultivates and supports nearly 70 Ecosystems working to improve access to high-quality STEM learning for all students across the globe. Launched in September 2015, the Initiative empowers communities to bring together unlikely local partners and create systemic change to ensure more students, particularly underserved and underrepresented students, develop the STEM knowledge and skills they need to learn and thrive in today's world. To visit a complete list of participating STEM Learning Ecosystems, visit: <http://stemecosystems.org/ecosystems/>

APPLICATION OVERVIEW

APPLICANT CRITERIA

The STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice is inviting communities to apply to join the growing initiative. All communities, regardless of the stage of their ecosystem development, are required to fully complete the application process to participate in this Global Initiative.

To be eligible for consideration, the applicant must meet the following criteria:

- **Type of Organization:** Applications will be accepted from the following types of organizations: (Please note: Lead applicant should be determined by community-based ecosystem and there shall be only one application per community.)
 - Non-profit organization, with a significant focus on and interest in STEM education, that is exempt (with Section 501(c)(3) designation) or public organization, or
 - Local educational agency (LEAs)
- **Location:** Applicants are expected to represent a wide community base, such as a city, region or state. An applicant such as a school within a larger school district, where the Ecosystem Initiative is limited to that school site only, for example, would not qualify. The intent is for Ecosystems to represent communities with a diverse composition of community stakeholders and reach.

Communities outside the United States are encouraged to apply. Should you be interested in applying from outside the United States, please contact us at info@stemecosystems.org.

- **Cross-Sector Partnerships:** Applicants are expected to represent emerging or established collaborative relationships with their cross-sector counterparts and provide clear evidence how their connections support the development of their STEM Learning Ecosystem. Communities must demonstrate established or emerging relationships with multiple partners, including but not limited to: preK-16 schools; community settings such as after-school and summer programs; institutions of higher education; STEM-expert organizations such as science centers, museums, corporations,



intermediary and non-profit organizations or professional associations; businesses; funders; and informal experiences at home and in a variety of environments.

- **STEM Learning Ecosystems Attributes and Strategies:** Applicants should review Considerations for Communities, the Elements of a STEM Learning Ecosystems and STEM Learning Ecosystems Strategies located in the Appendices and our website for more information.

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

All selected STEM Learning Ecosystems will be expected to actively participate in the Community of Practice, including but not limited to:

- **Administration:**
 - Provide and maintain contact information for all identified leads.
 - Send out information to Ecosystem members, when necessary.
 - Provide and maintain lead contact information.
- **Coaching:**
 - Actively engage with your coach throughout the course of the initiative period
- **Active Participation:**
 - Attend Community of Practice convenings.
 - Participate on periodic Community of Practice Webinars.
 - Sign-up on the internal online community website and actively engage, including participating in online Community of Practice discussions and practice groups as relevant to your work.
- **Deliverables:**
 - Administration of the STEM Learning Ecosystems Indicators Tool virtually within the first 60 days and again by end of the reporting period.

Failure to meet accountability requirements will jeopardize potential future participation in this global effort with the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice.

Effective 2019; Newly admitted STEM Ecosystem sites outside of the United States do not receive airfare to/from the convenings. An additional nominal international administrative fee may be applied to sites outside of the United States.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for consideration, the applicant must complete the following:

- Complete the brief Online Interest Form at www.stemecosystems.org.
- Participate in two webinars about the Initiative: (All webinars will be posted at www.stemecosystems.org.)
 - **Webinar #1: Overview of the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice**
Thursday, January 24, 2019
10:00am PT | 11:00am MT | 12:00pm CT | 1:00pm ET



- **Webinar #2: Supporting your Community through the Application Process**
Wednesday, February 13, 2019
10:00am PT | 11:00am MT | 12:00pm CT | 1:00pm ET
- Complete and submit an application, including all supplemental materials via the online form by one of following due dates:
 - **Spring Submission:** 5:00pm PT | 8:00pm ET on Thursday, February 28, 2019
 - **Fall Submission:** 5:00pm PT | 8:00pm ET on August 30, 2019

REVIEW CRITERIA – LEVEL OF READINESS

The STEM Learning Ecosystems is seeking to understand your community's interest and honest assessment regarding your level of readiness in cultivating a STEM Learning Ecosystem. Each community will be evaluated individually by a review committee comprised of global STEM leaders and members of the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice. The leadership of the STEM Learning Ecosystem does not expect every community to be fully developed and hopes the application process will be useful to applicants.

The review committee will be reviewing all application responses and supplemental materials. They will use the Considerations for Communities, the Elements of a STEM Learning Ecosystems and STEM Learning Ecosystems Strategies as guides in the review process. Please refer to the Appendices for more information.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

The application process is designed to: (1) be collaborative in nature and (2) provide an opportunity for you and your partners to understand your community's level of readiness for potential inclusion into the STEM Learning Ecosystem Community of Practice. In the past several years, we have received feedback that lead applicants and their community partners found the application process helpful in understanding their strengths and weaknesses in advancing STEM teaching and learning in their communities.

The STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice is seeking to understand your community's interest and honest assessment regarding your level of readiness in cultivating a STEM Learning Ecosystem. We encourage communities in all stages of ecosystem development to apply. Therefore, we understand and expect diverse experiences and capabilities. The application and supplemental materials are designed to help your community partners engage in a self-assessment process, determine your level of readiness for participation in the Initiative, to spur conversation among your cross-sector partners, and to help the review committee understand where your community is so that we can effectively provide support as targeted to your community's needs and interests.

We anticipate this assessment to be completed with your stakeholders and partners. Accordingly, we advise that you plan ahead with your key partners for a collective response to the application, in particular the readiness assessment.



All questions from the online application are provided to you as a guide that you can work from with your partners. Each of these questions, will be asked on the online application.

The application and supplemental materials must be submitted via the online form by 5:00pm PT | 8:00pm ET on Thursday, February 28, 2019. Faxed or courier deliveries will not be accepted. Incomplete applications will also not be accepted.

ONLINE APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be submitted online at: www.stemecosystems.org. All invited communities will be provided a password with their invitation to apply.

Before you begin the application process, you will be required to create an account.

To create the account, you will be asked to generate a username and password with an email address. Once your account is created, you will be able to save and resume your application before you are ready to submit. The online application has been designed for applicants to save and return to your application at any time. To save the application, simply click “Save Progress” button at the bottom of the application screen.

Make sure to save before you exit the screen. You can log-in when you return to the application.

APPLICATION

The application is comprised of the following sections:

- Applicant Summary
- Your STEM Learning Ecosystem Snapshot
- Readiness Assessment
 - Key Partners
 - Elements
 - Focus Areas
 - Key Priority Areas

APPLICANT SUMMARY

Please provide the following information:

- **Proposed or existing STEM Learning Ecosystem Name.**
- **Brief description of your proposed or existing STEM Learning Ecosystem.** (200 words maximum) (This will be used on the website and other print materials, if selected.)
- **Name of the city, county, region or state as defined in the application.**
- **Lead applicant agency/organization name, street address (and/or mailing address, if different); phone, website.**
- **Lead contact person name, title, phone number, and e-mail address.**



YOUR STEM LEARNING ECOSYSTEM SNAPSHOT

Please provide an overview of your emerging or established STEM Learning Ecosystem. Include quantitative and/or qualitative data, citing the specific source when possible.

Include the following elements:

- **Describe the demographics of the area (city, regional, state) being served by your STEM Learning Ecosystem.** (500 words maximum)
 - a. Please include: youth (0-24) population size and demographics, including but not limited to: race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, education indicators, etc.
 - b. If possible, please include:
 - Number of PK-12 school districts being served
 - Number of children and young people or students (0-24)
 - Number of teachers served
 - Number of out-of-school time programs/partners
- **Describe your STEM Learning Ecosystem.** (500 words maximum)
 - a. Describe your key components, including but not limited to diverse stakeholders representing a variety of settings; shared vision and/or goals; design principles, etc.
 - b. Identify key leaders, including but not limited to their individual and organizational capacity to design and cultivate STEM Learning Ecosystems.
 - c. Identify content experts, including but not limited to partners with cross-sector collaboration expertise and STEM content expertise in a variety of learning contexts (professional development, workforce development, career technical education, etc.).
 - d. If possible, please include:
 - Number of business and industry partners
 - Number of philanthropic partners

READINESS ASSESSMENT

The STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice has developed a brief readiness assessment to help you - as the applicant - understand your community's own level of readiness for potential inclusion into the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice.

We anticipate this assessment to be completed with your stakeholders. Accordingly, we advise that you plan ahead with your key partners for a collective response to the readiness assessment.

We recommend following the hard copy version to make sure you have all of your attachments ready when you begin the online application.

KEY PARTNERS

As communities begin to coalesce around the cultivation of a STEM Learning Ecosystem, there are a few critical elements that we have found are necessary. The first element is: identification of key partners.

- a. **How has your STEM Learning Ecosystem built relationships with key partners such as:** PreK-12 school system; out-of-school time (after-school, summer learning, intermediaries, etc.) systems; STEM-expert institutions (museums, science centers, etc.); post-secondary or institutions of higher education; business or industry; parent serving organizations; public or private philanthropy; or local, regional, and state government? Please select “Yes” or “No.”
- b. **And, how would you describe those relationships?** Please select one response on a scale of 1-5, 1 being *Early Stages: No relationship* and 5 being *Later Stages: Our organizations plan and implement programs/practices/policies together on a regular basis*.

Key Partner	Currently engaged? (Select one)	Scale of 1-5 (Please select one)				
		1 = Early Stages: No relationship 2 = Our organizations know of each other 3 = Mid Stages: Our organizations have collaborated in the past 4 = Our organizations interact on a regular basis 5 = Later Stages: Our organizations plan and implement programs/practices/policies together on a regular basis				
PreK-12 school system	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Out-of-school time (after-school, summer learning, intermediaries, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
STEM-expert institutions (museums, science centers, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Post-secondary or institutions of higher education	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Business or industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Parent serving organizations	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Public or private philanthropy	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Local, regional, or state government	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

Optional: Please share information on any additional key partners not listed above. (200 words maximum)

LIST OF KEY LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERS

Please provide a list of key leadership and partners, including name, title, organization, and cross-sector representation for at least four of the following (12 key leaders or partners maximum):

- Formal PreK-12 Learning (schools and school systems)
- Out-of-School Learning (out-of-school time and/or summer learning provided by schools or community-based organizations where available)
- STEM-expert organizations (science centers, museums, corporations, non-profit organizations or professional organizations)
- Business and industry
- Post-secondary STEM and higher education
- Local and/or regional public or private funder
- Local, regional, or state government
- Regional network/alliance
- Parent and family serving organization



LETTERS OF COLLABORATION

Upload **at least three** letters of collaboration from your partners through the online application portal. Letters of collaboration should: (maximum of 10 letters will be accepted).

Guidelines for Community Partners:

- Confirm the length and nature of your relationship with the organization (lead applicant), etc.;
- Provide evidence of past or current collaboration between your organizations;
- If applicable, provide information about your role in cultivating the STEM Learning Ecosystem (in-kind support, leadership, resource development, etc.); and
- Describe why you support the organization (lead applicant) to lead this work.

Letters can be addressed to Ron Ottinger and Gerald Solomon, Co-Chairs of the STEM Learning Ecosystems Initiative. The letters should be dated and signed.

The letters of collaboration can be uploaded in either Word or PDF file types.

Submissions that demonstrate support from different sectors and stakeholders within your STEM Learning Ecosystem will be viewed favorably.

ELEMENTS OF A STEM LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

The second component of the Elements for a successful STEM Ecosystem is the Attributes of such an Ecosystem. These attributes include the following critical components.

- Do you currently have these attributes?** Please select “Yes” or “No.”
- And, how would you describe the current status of these attributes for your community?** Please select one response on a scale of 1-5, 1 being *Early Stages: Not started* and 5 being *Later Stages: In place, engaged and functioning*.

Attributes	Currently engaged? (Select one)	Scale of 1-5 (Please select one)				
		1 = Early Stages: Not started	2 = In process of identifying	3 = Mid Stages: Beginning to have initial conversations	4 = Have identified and are engaged on some regular basis	5 = Later Stages: In place, engaged and functioning
Have you identified a leader(s)/champion(s) for your STEM Learning Ecosystem?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
If yes, please provide: (if more than one, please provide their information.)						
Name: _____						
Organization: _____						
Position or Title: _____						
% of time dedicated to STEM Learning Ecosystem efforts: _____						
Do you have a shared vision among your stakeholders?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Do you currently have a strategic plan or business plan that demonstrates the shared vision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
If yes, please upload a copy. (Word or PDF only)						
Do you have philanthropic or public sector support?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

Attributes	Currently engaged? (Select one)	Scale of 1-5 (Please select one)				
Describe your philanthropic partner support for the cultivation of STEM Learning Ecosystems. How will your philanthropic partners support your efforts? (200 words maximum)						
Do you have in-kind support from your stakeholders and partners?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
If yes, please provide a few examples that demonstrate in-kind support to help the cultivation of your STEM Learning Ecosystem. (200 words maximum)						
Optional: Please share additional information: (200 words maximum)						

FOCUS AREAS OF A STEM LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

There are seven focus areas that the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice has found to be important in developing STEM Learning Ecosystems.

- Do you currently engage in efforts around any or all of these focus areas?** Please select “Yes” or “No.”
- How would you describe the current status of these focus areas for your community?** Please select one response on a scale of 1-5, 1 being *Early Stages: Not started* and 5 being *Later Stages: In place, engaged and functioning*.

Focus Areas	Currently engaged? (Select one)	Scale of 1-5 (Please select one)				
Is your STEM Learning Ecosystem currently engaged in building the capacity in all sectors?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Is your STEM Learning Ecosystem currently providing professional learning or professional development equipping educators with tools and structures to enable sustained collaboration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Is your STEM Learning Ecosystem currently linking in and out-of-school STEM Learning?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Is your STEM Learning Ecosystem currently focusing instruction on inquiry, project-based learning and real-world connections to increase relevance?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Is your STEM Learning Ecosystem currently engaging families and communities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

Focus Areas	Currently engaged? (Select one)	Scale of 1-5 (Please select one)				
		1 = Early Stages: Not started 2 = In process of identifying 3 = Mid Stages: Beginning to have initial conversations 4 = Have identified and are engaged in implementing 5 = Later Stages: In place and functioning				
Is your STEM Learning Ecosystem currently exposing young people to potential STEM careers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Is your STEM Learning Ecosystem currently engaged in sustainability planning and efforts?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Describe your plan to sustain your STEM Learning Ecosystem beyond your participation in the STEM Learning Ecosystems Initiative. Are there opportunities to build upon your STEM Learning Ecosystem? (500 words maximum)						
Is your STEM Learning Ecosystem currently engaged in evaluation efforts?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Briefly describe any evaluation planning, including tools, measurements, and partners your STEM Learning Ecosystems are currently engaged with: (500 words maximum)						
PRIORITY AREAS Describe your STEM Learning Ecosystem's three key priorities. (500 words maximum) Describe up to three key priorities or already established shared goals that your STEM Learning Ecosystem is addressing or intends to address (as part of the Initiative).						

ADDITIONAL APPLICATION INFORMATION

WEBINARS

The STEM Learning Ecosystems will provide support for the application process via webinar, where staff and leadership will provide an overview of the project, submission guidance and opportunity for questions.

Two webinars will be offered: (visit our website to register)

- **Webinar #1: Overview of the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice**
Thursday, January 24, 2019
10:00am PT | 11:00am MT | 12:00pm CT | 1:00pm ET
- **Webinar #2: Supporting your Community through the Application Process**
Wednesday, February 13, 2019
10:00am PT | 11:00am MT | 12:00pm CT | 1:00pm ET

A recording of each webinar will be made available to all applicants shortly following the sessions.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

The application and supplemental materials must be submitted via the online application portal by 5:00pm PT | 8:00pm ET on Thursday, February 28, 2019. Faxed or courier deliveries will not be accepted. Incomplete applications will also not be accepted.



SELECTION PROCESS

Your application will be reviewed by the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice as well as select individuals with experience in cross-sector collaborations and current STEM Learning Ecosystems. Further information or revisions may be requested from applicants. The estimated selection process timetable shall be as follows:

KEY APPLICATION DATES	
Launch Online Interest and Application Process	Monday, January 7, 2019
Webinar #1: Overview of the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice Thursday, January 24, 2019 10:00am PT 11:00am MT 12:00pm CT 1:00pm ET	Thursday, January 24, 2019
Webinar #2: Supporting your Community through the Application Process Wednesday, February 13, 2019 10:00am PT 11:00am MT 12:00pm CT 1:00pm ET	Wednesday, February 12, 2019
Applications Due by 5:00pm PT 8:00pm ET	Thursday, February 28, 2019
Selection Announcement (Spring) at the STEM Learning Ecosystems Global Community of Practice Convening in New Orleans, LA	Wednesday, April 3, 2019

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions regarding the application process, please visit www.stemecosystems.org for more information or email us at info@stemecosystems.org.



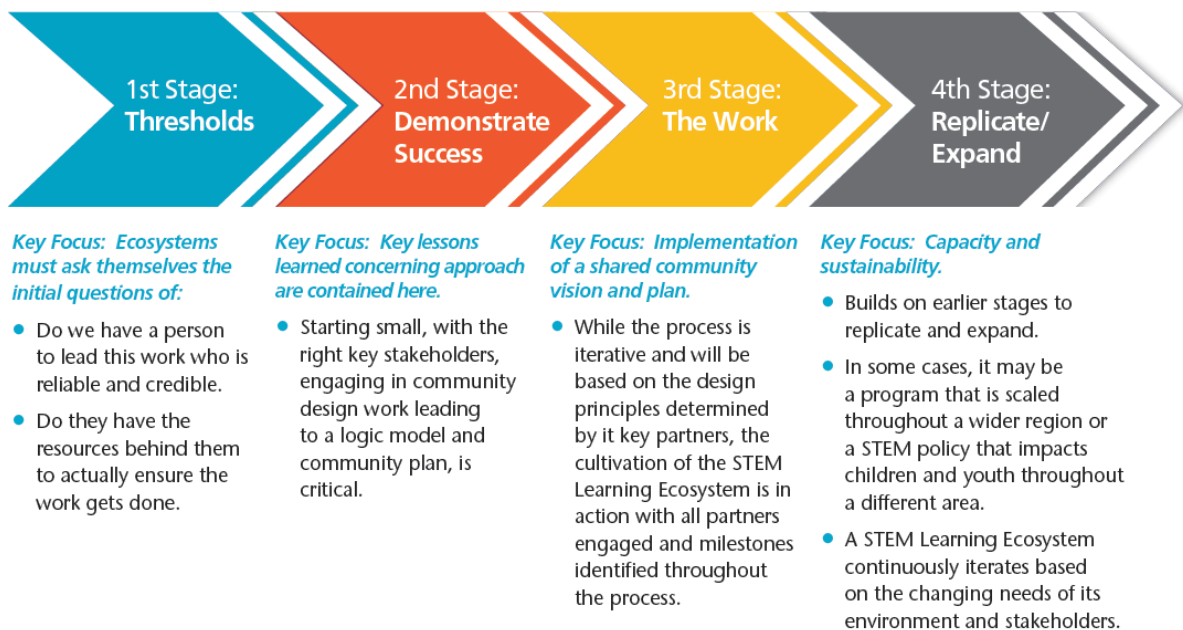
APPENDICES

RECOMMENDED READING

CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMMUNITIES: LESSONS FROM YEARS 1 & 2

Overall, the nearly 70 communities selected in last few cohorts have made great strides in the cultivation and design of their respective STEM Learning Ecosystems. In looking at inviting a new set of communities into the Community of Practice, the STEM Learning Ecosystems has developed the following “lessons learned” approach that should act as a guide for all communities applying for inclusion in the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice.

LESSONS LEARNED GUIDE



1ST STAGE: THRESHOLD

At this first stage, communities must ask themselves the initial questions of: (1) *do we have a person to lead this work who is reliable and credible* and (2) *do we the resources behind us to ensure the work gets done*.

- Do we have an anchor/project leader?
- Do we have capacity for administration of the Ecosystem (committees, work groups, etc.)? Is there funding to support the project management?
- Do we have a backbone organization?



2ND STAGE: DEMONSTRATE SUCCESS

Key lessons learned concerning approach are contained here. Starting small, with the right key stakeholders, engaging in community design work leading to a logic model and community plan, is critical.

- ❑ Start small
- ❑ Identify defined area/region to start
- ❑ Enlist the right key partners onto the bus
- ❑ Engage in “community design”...build buy-in, consensus & commitment
- ❑ Create Logic Model/Implementation Plan

3RD STAGE: THE WORK

The third stage is characterized by implementation of a shared community vision and plan. While the process is iterative and will be based on the design principles determined by key partners, the cultivation of the STEM Learning Ecosystem is in action with all partners engaged and milestones identified throughout the process.

- ❑ Launch the ecosystem work (demonstration)
- ❑ Have a “S.M.A.R.T.” (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) Focus
- ❑ Recognize it’s a “slog” (slow and messy)
- ❑ Share successes and challenges, internally & externally

4TH STAGE: REPLICATE/EXPAND

The fourth stage is about capacity and sustainability. It builds off the work from each of earlier stages to support the expansion of the STEM Learning Ecosystem. In some cases, it may be a program that is scaled throughout a wider region or a STEM policy that impacts children and youth throughout a different area. A STEM Learning Ecosystem continuously iterates based on the changing needs of its environment and stakeholders.

ELEMENTS OF A STEM LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

The basic building blocks of a connected STEM Learning Ecosystem can be categorized into three primary areas: (1) Key Partners; (2) Critical Attributes; and (3) Focus Areas.

Cultivating a STEM Learning Ecosystem requires at least one organization to be the community influencer and champion. He/she can articulate, persuade and lead the charge. In coalescing key partners within the STEM Learning Ecosystem, it is equally important for ecosystem members to pay attention to enlightened self-interest of all key partners, as the collective efforts should support individual organizations' missions. A third critical attribute is coalescing support from philanthropic and public sector support, including in-kind support from key partners to advance the STEM Learning Ecosystem.

Key partners are determined by individual communities, however, critical partners include PreK-12 school system, out-of-school time, and STEM expert museums.

When key partners have been identified and the critical attributes secured, members can begin to work together to design and implement focus areas.

STEM LEARNING ECOSYSTEM ELEMENTS

KEY PARTNERS	CRITICAL ATTRIBUTES	FOCUS AREAS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PreK-12 school system receptive to external partnerships 2. High-quality out-of-school time/youth development system and programs 3. STEM-expert museums, science centers, professional associations, and businesses 4. Institutions of higher education 5. Private sector STEM-focused businesses 6. Parent and community-based organizations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anchored by a passionate leader(s) with a collaborative vision and practice 2. Attentive to the enlightened self-interest of all partners 3. Philanthropic and public sector support and in-kind resources 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building the capacity of educators in all sectors. 2. Equipping educators with tools and structures to enable sustained collaboration. 3. Linking in- and out-of-school STEM learning. 4. Creating learning progressions that connect and deepen STEM experiences over time. 5. Focusing instruction on inquiry, project-based learning and real-world connections to increase relevance. 6. Engaging families and communities. 7. Exposing young people to potential STEM careers.

To learn more, download [How Cross-Sector Collaborations are Advancing STEM Learning](#).



SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

The STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice has provided you with this checklist to help you successfully complete your submission. This is for reference only; you do not need to include this checklist in your final submission package via the online application portal.

PRE-APPLICATION

- ❑ Submit online interest form on www.stemecosystems.org.
- ❑ Attend both technical assistance webinars (See our website for more information).
 - **Webinar #1: Overview of the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice**
 - Thursday, January 24, 2019
 - 10:00am PT | 11:00am MT | 12:00pm CT | 1:00pm ET
 - **Webinar #2: Supporting your Community through the Application Process**
 - Wednesday, February 13, 2019
 - 10:00am PT | 11:00am MT | 12:00pm CT | 1:00pm ET

APPLICATION PROCESS

- ❑ Create Account for Online Application at www.stemecosystems.org
- ❑ Complete and Submit Online Application Components:
 - Applicant Summary
 - STEM Learning Ecosystem Snapshot
 - Readiness Assessment
 - Key Partners
 - List at last four key partners
 - Upload at least three letters of collaboration
 - Elements
 - Upload strategic plan or business plan, if applicable
 - Focus Areas
 - Priority Areas