



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

# CSUE 4-H STEM AmeriCorps Program Program Update

## HISTORY

AmeriCorps and Colorado State University Extension (CSUE) joined forces in July, 2015 to give youth in communities across Colorado the opportunity to engage in 4-H Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) projects. This new 4-H program focuses on out-of-school time education that encourages youth to develop 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce skills, graduate from high school and consider STEM academic and career choices.

## AMERICORPS MEMBERS

Extension's AmeriCorps members represent a variety of ages and backgrounds and come from the communities in which they serve. Each has expressed the desire to serve their communities while also developing skills and exploring interests of their own. For their service, members receive a living allowance, an education award, and the knowledge that their efforts will make a difference for youth, communities and the future.



## AT A GLANCE

Twenty-three AmeriCorps members have been serving in 17 locations across Colorado since August, 2015. Select counties each identified the need for STEM education for at-risk youth and agreed to support our AmeriCorps effort. AmeriCorps members are hosted by the local Extension offices and deliver to youth a minimum of six hours of hands-on, experiential STEM education at out-of-school and afterschool locations. The AmeriCorps members serve under the guidance of local Extension 4-H youth development agents to form community relationships, deliver STEM education, recruit and train local STEM volunteers, and engage the community. STEM content is determined by community partners with student input and includes topics such as robotics, weather, electricity, rocketry, plants and gardening, GPS technology and the environment. Goals of the program are improved educational and behavioral outcomes for economically disadvantaged youth that support their success in post-secondary educational institutions and career readiness.

## PROGRAM NEED

Colorado is home to one of the most skilled workforces in the country and is projected to have above-national demand for STEM jobs; yet Coloradans are not filling these positions. In 2013, the Colorado high school, four-year, on-time graduation rate was 79.6%; the national average was 81%. In 2009, the dropout rate of economically disadvantaged students was about five times greater than their peers from higher-income families.

Out-of-school time programs that provide strong STEM-based learning experiences are shown to have a positive impact on youth. Studies demonstrate the ability of afterschool programs to support the learning that takes place during the school day and also boost students' academic performance and increase the likelihood of graduating from high school.

## FINANCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The \$210,338 AmeriCorps grant (based on 31 part-time members), administered through *Serve Colorado - Governor's Commission on Community Service*, provides communities with AmeriCorps members to deliver STEM programming at afterschool and summer programs, day camps, overnight camps and community events. The grant leverages an additional \$70,000 from CSUE and the Colorado 4-H Foundation; partners

contribute another \$70,000. The total investment for 2015-16 is approximately \$350,000. To hire these same individuals without the AmeriCorps grant would cost CSUE \$983,000. As the project progresses, CSUE may have the opportunity to request additional member slots to serve more communities and youth. The initial grant from Serve Colorado is for three years.

## FROM OUR PARTNERS

Barbara Johnson, principal for the SOAR Academy in Sheridan School District 2 in Englewood, says the 4-H STEM initiative is a good fit for her district because local students are often challenged by significant risk factors, including poverty and homelessness. "High mobility and low attendance rates lead to students struggling with academic achievement," Johnson says. "This program will provide students with a highly engaging, hands-on experience with science and math."

"In order to keep the upward mobility of our graduation rate and support STEM education, we need to work as a community to reach all students," says Teri LeFebre, K-12 Science Specialist with the Mesa County Valley School District 51 in Grand Junction. "This new program will allow for direct delivery of STEM education to youth enrolled in our out-of-school program and will positively impact high school graduation rates."

## ABOUT AMERICORPS, CSU EXTENSION, & 4-H

AmeriCorps is a national service program that engages Americans of all ages in service to their community. CSU Extension serves all 64 Colorado counties, providing information, education and engagement in regard to local, state and national issues affecting individuals, youth, families, agricultural enterprises and communities of Colorado. 4-H is the youth development program of CSU and empowers youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults. For information on CSU Extension's AmeriCorps program and opportunities, visit [www.4hstemk12.colostate.edu/ameri-corps](http://www.4hstemk12.colostate.edu/ameri-corps).

## SPECIAL THANKS TO...

Serve Colorado and the Corporation for National and Community Service, CSU Extension, the State 4-H Office, the Colorado 4-H Foundation, and our host and site partners for making this opportunity possible.

## CSU EXTENSION AMERICORPS OFFICES

Arapahoe County	Montrose County
Boulder County	Morgan County
Broomfield County	Otero County
Denver County	Prowers County
Garfield County	San Miguel County
Jefferson County	Weld County
Larimer County	Shriever AFB
Logan County	SLV Area
Mesa County	

[www.4hstemk12.colostate.edu/ameri-corps](http://www.4hstemk12.colostate.edu/ameri-corps)

*"Without the CSUE 4-H  
AmeriCorps Program,  
the Tri-River Area  
Extension program would  
not be able to provide any  
afterschool programming.  
This program has opened-up  
a new opportunity for  
youth in our area."*

-Trent  
Extension Agent,  
Tri-River Area

Material comes from various sources: SOURCE article "CSU Extension and AmeriCorps extend STEM opportunities" (<http://source.colostate.edu/csue-extension-and-ameri-corps-extend-stem-opportunities/>); the National Center for Educational Statistics, Higher Education General Information Survey, 2013; The Colorado STEM Education Roadmap, 2014; 4-H Science Initiative: Youth Engagement, Attitudes and Knowledge Study, 2013; and the CSUE AmeriCorps grant application.

*Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.*

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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