



## TEN WAYS STEM STRENGTHENS THE ECONOMY

Equipping Americans with science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) skills ensures a more innovative and prosperous economy. STEM workers boost productivity and drive competitiveness, while generating a host of new ideas. These workers advance our nation by doing everything from building roads and bridges to conducting life-saving medical research.

1. **Drives productivity gains:** Since 1980, aggregate productivity in R&D- and STEM-heavy industries increased far faster than the rest of the economy. Supporting industries that drive productivity growth is important during a time of overall slowed growth.
2. **Generates high-earning potential:** STEM workers earn an average of \$14,000 more per year than non-STEM workers at nearly every education level.
3. **Creates new jobs:** The STEM workforce is projected to grow by at least 2.5 million workers by 2026.
4. **Offers middle-skills pathways:** In 2018, 35 percent of all STEM job openings will not require a bachelor's degree. A majority of those jobs will require at least some postsecondary education, such as an associate degree, industry-recognized credential, or similar certificate.
5. **Increases women's earnings:** Women in STEM earn 33 percent more than women in non-STEM jobs. But despite filling nearly half of all jobs in the United States, women hold less than one-fourth of all STEM jobs.
6. **Closes racial and ethnic wage gaps:** Racial and ethnic wage gaps are smaller in STEM than in non-STEM occupations. Increasing minority participation in STEM fields is essential to boosting earnings among workers of color and narrowing wage gaps.
7. **Connects rural workers to jobs:** One-fifth of all jobs require STEM skills and knowledge. In rural communities, many traditionally "non-STEM" jobs now require a STEM background, including jobs in health, manufacturing, and agriculture.
8. **Addresses income inequality:** Metropolitan areas with a higher concentration of middle-skill STEM workers tend to perform better on a variety of economic indicators, including having lower levels of income inequality.
9. **Spurs innovation through R&D:** Increasing R&D investment by two to four times the current level would produce the greatest rate of economic growth.
10. **Supports high-growth industries like computer science:** Computer-based occupations are projected to increase by 12.5 percent from 2014 to 2024, resulting in nearly half a million new jobs.