



## Chief Executive Officer Seattle, Washington

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Washington leads the nation in careers that demand competency and credentials in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). Known as a hub of innovation and technology, Washington state is ripe to foster a robust ecosystem that develops a diverse and career ready workforce to meet this demand. Closing the gap in post-secondary attainment and STEM will create opportunities for living-wage careers that lead to greater economic security for Washingtonians.

**Washington STEM** is a statewide education nonprofit leveraging STEM for social change by removing barriers to credential attainment and creating pathways to long-term economic security for systemically underserved students. Founded on principles of equity, collaboration, and sustainability, Washington STEM creates solutions and partnerships that bring STEM education to Washington students, especially those historically underrepresented in STEM fields like students of color, girls and young women, students living in poverty, and students living in rural areas.

With a bold and ambitious goal to ensure students are career and future ready, **Washington STEM seeks nominations and applications for a new CEO** to work closely with board and staff as the organization implements its next strategic plan in support of a shared 2030 vision for Washington state. The new CEO will refine Washington STEM's vision and direction for greater impact, championing the next strategic plan with the relationship building savvy and policy expertise to move toward systems change that ensures STEM and career readiness pipelines for the jobs of tomorrow. S/he/they will leverage a talented team, committed board, and strong networks with a clear articulation of how to move change for students farthest from STEM access and achievement to ensure the systems and resources support them to achieve their dreams.

The new CEO will be a passionate advocate for STEM as one of the most effective pathways to family-wage careers and long-term economic security and value both community input and data to drive equitable outcomes. S/he/they will be a skilled relationship builder across sectors, geographies, and community, rallying key partners and funders around a common mission to make STEM education and pathways equitable and more accessible, creating opportunities for generational shifts and empowerment. S/he/they will build collaborative networks and diverse funding streams that support statewide initiatives to advance STEM. S/he/they will be fundamentally committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and to the ongoing work required to understand and undo institutional racism, structural oppression, and the limited economic mobility that exists in rural and BIPOC communities.

### ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

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In 2011, leaders across business, education, government, and nonprofit sectors launched Washington STEM to build equitable access to high-quality STEM education and career pathways for underserved students statewide. Washington state ranks highest in the nation in STEM jobs and opportunities. By 2030, more than 70% of high demand jobs will require postsecondary degrees with 68% requiring STEM credentials or STEM

literacy. In order to help ensure that students furthest from educational and economic justice have access to these high-demand jobs, Washington STEM shares a vision of 70% of Washington youth on track to earn a postsecondary credential by 2030, and has set ambitious goals in Early Learning, K-12 STEM, and Career Pathways to close pervasive systems gaps that will support that vision.

Washington STEM organizes its work through partnership, direct support, and advocacy (P-D-A):

- **Partnership:** 10 STEM Networks, Puget Sound partners, and other regional advocates across the state collaborate to identify, scale, and spread solutions. Each network represents a diverse region, but all networks strive to provide access to a high-quality STEM education and STEM career pathways for all their students.
- **Direct Support:** Targeted community investments, open-source access to data and measurement tools, and technical partnership.
- **Advocacy:** Champion transformative solutions through educating decision and policy makers at the state level focused on equity and systems change.

## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

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Washington STEM's focus areas include resources and networks to make the biggest impact on student lives. Focus areas in improving education systems include Early Learning, K-12 STEM education, and career pathways.

### Early Learning

Washington STEM's approach to early learning has been rooted in research and the organization's values since the inception of this program area. Given that 90% of brain development occurs before kindergarten, and that early mathematics learning is especially important because it is predictive of later learning outcomes, Washington STEM saw an opportunity to make a unique contribution by elevating and supporting early mathematics learning as part of its core mission. Furthermore, with evidence that many children from priority populations did not have equitable access to early math opportunities, Washington STEM set out to remove barriers experienced by children of color, children from low-income homes, and children in rural communities. In its 2019-2021 business plan, Washington STEM set the goal of reaching 18,000 families and educators, and scores more children, with fun, engaging and culturally responsive early math resources and programming, while convening early learning partners to create shared practices, resources, and goals for early math across the state.

At the conclusion of the three-year business plan in 2021, Washington STEM, working collaboratively with its partners, exceeded that goal of reaching 18,000 families and educators with high quality early math experiences. Washington STEM also worked with early learning partners and lead organizations, including the Department of Children, Youth, and Families, Washington Communities for Children, and Thrive by Five, to produce seminal reports on the state of early math and early childhood education to drive local and state action and advocacy. This helped inform policy with data regarding access to high-quality childcare, contributing to the successful passing of major legislation such as the 2021 Fair Start for Kids Act.

Washington STEM now looks boldly to a future that builds on these successes, situates the organization within its areas of expertise, and clarifies where it can best support others expertise in the early learning landscape. The vision moving forward is that every young child develops a positive math identity, participates in high-quality early STEM learning, and has access to the best early learning environments possible.

## K-12 STEM

A strong K-12 STEM experience is a critical component to ensuring young Washingtonians are informed and thriving global citizens prepared for multiple viable career pathways of their choice. With renewed focus, Washington STEM is planning to expand K-12 work going forward. Core to this work is the Leadership and Assistance for Science Education Reform (LASER) program, a partnership with ten regional alliances that offers leadership and technical assistance. LASER's vision is that all K-12 students deepen their understanding of scientific ideas over time, engaging in practices that scientists and engineers actually use, so that students are informed and thriving global citizens and succeed in STEM careers if they choose those pathways. LASER partners with school districts, Educational Service Districts, and STEM Networks across Washington to provide a variety of supports to meet a community's needs. Washington STEM and LASER have partnered to create a strategic approach to improving science education, building the internal capacity and skill to better center equity in science and STEM education, and building coherence between different programs and initiatives across the state. In addition to LASER, Washington STEM anticipates significant opportunities to contribute to K-12 teacher workforce development and dual credit.

## Career Pathways

A robust cross-sector career pathways system is key to preparing students for the most in-demand, high-paying careers in Washington state. Students in strong career pathways are better positioned to access careers that provide the economic security needed to contribute to the vitality of their families, communities, and local economies.

STEM careers are abundant in every region of Washington, but, historically, students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, rural students, and girls have faced systemic barriers preventing them from gaining access to these careers. That is why Washington STEM centers equity in its approach to Career Pathways and designs solutions to close gaps for historically underserved communities. The 10 STEM Networks across the state are the organization's strongest ally and asset in making progress in the Career Pathways Program.

There are many pathways to a career (e.g., apprenticeship, 2-year degree, 4-year degree, military service, etc.) and many opportunities are particular to certain regions and less available in others. In order to build an equitable system, Washington STEM strives to ensure that career learning opportunities are communicated clearly, easily navigated, and inspiring to students, and meet employer needs. A major component of the Career Pathways portfolio is the partnership with Career Connect Washington.

## **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FACING THE CEO**

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### **Leadership & Vision**

The next CEO will bring a strong vision for the impact STEM education can have on the trajectory of students' lives and for leveraging community, corporate, educational leaders, and policymakers to advance systems change. S/he/they will have the opportunity to actualize and operationalize a newly developed 3-year strategic plan, strengthening synergy across program, data, partnerships, and policy initiatives, and embrace the organization's ambitious goals. The CEO will articulate a clear path forward toward ambitious achievement, leveraging the organization's first decade of work and charting a clear plan for the next arc in alignment with the strategic plan. S/he/they will clearly articulate how institutional racism, structural oppression, and the limited economic mobility that exists in rural communities impact access and achievement in STEM and will ensure equity is woven into the fabric of the organization's work both internally and externally.

### **Organizational Management**

In partnership with the senior leadership team, the CEO will lead and collaborate with a talented staff of 22 and oversee an operating budget of \$6.5 million. S/he/they will be a thoughtful leader that upholds a culture that values equity, transparency, accountability, and clear communication across the organization. S/he/they will bring a sophisticated approach to managing people through accountability, mentorship, and direct feedback. The CEO will leverage a strong business acumen to drive strategy and execution, maintaining Washington STEM's momentum and ensuring alignment of staff and board around growth targets and goals. The CEO will embrace the strengths, commitment, and passion of the high performing team and build collaboration and synergy toward a shared vision.

### **Fundraising & External Relations**

The CEO will passionately represent the organization's bold vision and be a strong advocate for STEM and the students and communities of Washington. S/he/they will be a fearless fundraiser, building the brand recognition and pathways for partnership and investment by representing the organization externally across education, corporate, public, philanthropic, and social sectors. The CEO will proactively seek new funding opportunities and identify new revenue streams. With a passionate and authentic voice, s/he/they will be a strong advocate in state and national conversations regarding STEM education, equity, and career pathways.

### **Network Partnerships & Policy**

In support of Washington STEM's networks and partners, the CEO will identify and build relationships with stakeholders. S/he/they will foster frequent and consistent dialogue with relevant constituents to develop strong cross-sector partnerships through trust, respect, and engaging with transparency and equity focused outcomes. S/he/they will embody and actualize an organization-wide commitment to working with and learning from networks and partners, while co-developing strategies and sustainable funding models that lead toward strong investment and impact in STEM, and that reflect community needs and advance equity. The CEO will work across networks and partners to advance a clear policy agenda in the legislature and educational system that supports strong STEM outcomes and the organization's 2030 goals.

### **Board Relations & Governance**

In collaboration with the board chair, the CEO will facilitate board alignment on key decisions and strategic direction. S/he/they will partner with the board to create opportunities for engagement, leveraging their diverse personal and professional backgrounds, experiences, and relationships to ensure continued growth of Washington STEM. The CEO will support effective board governance, ensuring continued leadership and representation by building a representative stream of new board members that leverages cross-sector and statewide relationships.

## **QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATE**

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While no one candidate will embody all the qualifications enumerated below, the ideal candidate will possess many of the following professional and personal abilities, attributes, and experiences:

### **Connection to the Mission**

- Deep commitment to Washington STEM's vision of economic mobility and opportunity through STEM education for students furthest from educational justice.
- Personal and professional commitment to and proven experience advancing racial equity, diversity, inclusion, and sustained awareness of the impact of privilege and power dynamics on educational outcomes.

- Familiarity with the issues faced by students of color, young women and girls, low-income students, and students living in rural communities through personal or professional experience.

#### **Organizational & Operational Leadership**

- Demonstrated organizational, financial, and operational management expertise of a similar sized organization.
- Experience effectively building and growing relationships with aligned funders, companies, and government. Proven fundraiser who is creative, compelling, and understands how to move relationships to commitment.
- Experience supporting an organization's policy and advocacy efforts, and establishing meaningful collaborations with relevant partners, agencies, and coalitions. Understanding of the education and workforce policy landscape, especially in Washington state, and the intersection of business and government in shaping policy and pathways.
- Skilled management of a complex enterprise or network partnerships through sustained growth and scale in the public, social, or private sector.
- Facility in strategic planning and the ability to chart the path toward bold and ambitious goals with clear measurable steps.

#### **Values & Management Style**

- Powerful communicator one on one, in small group settings, and with large audiences; clear internal communicator who values transparency and clarity.
- Collaborative leadership style and commitment to building internal leadership; internal management style that fosters mentorship, accountability, respect, mutual learning, and cross-team collaboration.
- Transparent decision-maker who invites feedback and solicits information to make timely, data driven decisions.
- Demonstrated success developing and nurturing cross-sector alliances and unifying, managing, and influencing diverse stakeholders toward collective impact.
- Previous experience effectively engaging a high-profile board of directors, coalition, or steering committee.

#### **The Basics**

- Familiarity with Washington state and its diverse geographies, communities, sovereign nations, and economies.
- Deep understanding of the structures and functions of P-16 education systems in Washington state; experience working in or partnering with the education system as a teacher, administrator, policymaker, or educational partner preferred.
- Personal and professional commitment to education as a vehicle to economic mobility; deep understanding of the systemic challenges faced particularly by BIPOC students, low-income families, and rural communities in accessing and achieving STEM education and the combined lived, educational, and professional credentials to effectively lead Washington STEM.

## TO APPLY

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More information about **Washington STEM** may be found at: [washingtonstem.org](http://washingtonstem.org)

This search is being led by [Carolyn Ho](#), [Catherine Seneviratne](#), and [Christine Domingo](#) of [NPAG](#). Due to the pace of this search, candidates are strongly encouraged to apply as soon as possible. Candidates may submit their cover letter, outlining their interest and qualifications, along with their resume via NPAG's [website](#).

The salary range for this position has been set at \$220,000-255,000 and includes a comprehensive benefits package. Washington STEM is currently working remotely due to the pandemic and plans to return to the office in 2022 with flexibility. The CEO will be expected to work collaboratively with the team in their Seattle office once the COVID situation improves.

***Washington STEM is an Equal Opportunity Employer who cares deeply about its staff and prohibits discrimination and harassment of any kind. Employment decisions at Washington STEM are based on organizational needs, job requirements, and individual qualifications without regard to race, color, national origin, gender identity, age, transgender status, religion or belief, family or parental status, or any other status protected by the law.***