



# NEW MEXICO WOMEN IN STEM SUMMIT 2025 REPORT

*BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE STEM FUTURE FOR NEW MEXICO*

## Introduction

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On April 26, 2025, the New Mexico Out-of-School Time Network (NMOST), in partnership with the NM STEM Gender Equity Coalition, hosted the second annual New Mexico Women in STEM Summit at Hotel Andaluz in Albuquerque. The Summit convened 87 participants—students, parents, educators, professionals, and community leaders—to celebrate young women in STEM, share experiences, and build strategies to expand equity and opportunity across the state.

The event also honored 12 recipients of the [Advancing Young Women in STEM Scholarship Awards](#). Since 2018, NMOST has awarded 81 scholarships totaling \$65,500, with support from corporate, foundation, and individual donors.

## Why it Matters

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**35%**

Women make up **48%** of the U.S. workforce but hold only **35%** of STEM jobs.



# Summit Highlights

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## Inspiring Youth Voices

A youth panel of high school and graduate students shared personal stories of discovery, persistence, and hope. They spoke candidly about being one of the few women in STEM classes, the importance of affinity groups, and the value of role models.

When asked to describe what it feels like to be a woman in STEM, their responses were powerful: **“empowering,” “confident,” “strong,”** and **“freeing.”** One student explained, **“You can throw what people think out the window and prove the ones who are not supportive wrong.”**

The audience asked about their advice to male allies to which the panelist said to **“listen more genuinely to women in the room”** and to **“check in with women in their classes, courses workspaces to ask them explicitly to share their thoughts and opinions.”**

They also emphasized the importance of visibility: **“I want to be the role model I didn’t have—to show younger girls that someone like them can succeed in STEM.”**

## Women Professionals Panel

A panel of women in diverse STEM careers — a computer science chair, a national lab scientist, an Intel engineer, and a nonprofit leader — shared their journeys, often “by chance,” into STEM fields. They spoke openly about balancing career and family, navigating double standards, and the importance of mentorship.

One panelist reminded the young women in the room to use their internal compass and learning to self-advocate and speak up, - **“You have to be the squeaky wheel sometimes.”** Another shared, **“There’s never a perfect time to start a family or take the next step in your career — you just move forward with a strong internal compass.”**

Panelist emphasized the need to have a whole team of mentors and for young women in STEM to take advantage of office hours, professional associations, conferences and networking events. They also emphasized the need to break stereotypes and embracing the feminine, to show up as their “full-self” which will lead to a diversity of perspectives and innovation.

Their stories highlighted both progress and ongoing challenges. They agreed that persistence, community, and supportive policies are essential for women to thrive in STEM.

## Keynote and Policy Perspectives

Karen Peterson, Founder and CEO of the National Girls Collaborative Project, delivered keynote remarks, presenting the 2025 State of Girls and Women in STEM Report. While women make up 48% of the U.S. workforce, they hold only 35% of STEM jobs. Yet progress is clear: women’s representation in STEM has grown 31% in the last



decade, and degrees earned by Black, Latina, and Native American women in computing have more than doubled since 2017.

Peterson underscored why gatherings like the Summit matter: *“Girls and women need to see themselves reflected in STEM—and they need the mentors, networks, and opportunities to persist.”*

### Interactive Activities

In the “Build an Ideal Mentor” activity, participants outlined the traits of great mentors. Alongside expected qualities like kindness and patience, participants added *“think outside the box,” “growth mindset,”* and *“vulnerability.”* According to posters presented, the ideal mentor will *“walk the journey with you,” “advocate for you,”* share resources, and introduce mentees to networks and opportunities.



Later, affinity-based strategy sessions invited youth, parents, educators, professionals, and champions to reflect on their needs and resources. The young women stressed that they need encouragement and real-world opportunities, with one adding, **“Strong, confident women in STEM help me keep going.”** Parents spoke about wanting more information on barriers facing students pursuing STEM, training on how to advocate for their children, and consistent resources across schools, while educators emphasized flexible funding and access to training to help build confidence in delivering STEM curriculums. Professionals recalled mentors who shaped their careers and committed to “paying it forward.” They highlighted the need to reach new audiences and the need to create a central repository with events, resources and data.



## Emerging Themes

Four themes surfaced across panels and activities:



### MENTORSHIP

Students want mentors who listen, uplift, and share networks. Professionals stressed mentorship requires “lived wisdom” and a commitment to investing in the next generation.



### REPRESENTATION

“Representation matters!” was echoed throughout the day. Both students and professionals emphasized the need to see women, especially women of color, thriving in STEM.



### EXPOSURE & ACCESS

Youth want hands-on experiences tied to real-world impact: “We want to save the world — and STEM can help us do that.” Access remains limited in rural communities, where resources and transportation are barriers.



### COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION

Parents, educators, and professionals agreed: “We need a central hub for STEM.” A shared network of resources, events, and contacts would strengthen the ecosystem and avoid duplication of efforts.



# Vision for the Future

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When asked to imagine an ideal STEM ecosystem, participants described a connected network with consistent mentorship, clear communication, strong education-to-industry pathways, and supports such as transportation and childcare. Youth urged adults to move from conversation to action: **“We need more events like today—not just words.”**

## Next Steps

**Building on the Summit’s momentum, NMOST and the New Mexico Girls Collaborative will:**

- Continue supporting young women through scholarships and recognition
- Share the Promising Practices Guidelines for Engaging Girls in STEM statewide
- Explore ways to build a network and culture of mentorship for young women in STEM
- Work with emerging STEM networks to create networking events for young women in STEM
- Contribute to a STEM hub for data, resources and events
- Develop training for parents to foster equitable STEM experiences and opportunities for all New Mexico students
- Offer workshops and training for teachers to boost confidence and access to STEM education across the state
- Partner with the STEM Innovation Network and other statewide collaboratives to develop an action plan rooted in the ideas surfaced at the Summit

## Conclusion

The 2025 New Mexico Women in STEM Summit showcased the strength, passion, and resilience of young women, alongside the commitment of educators, families, and professionals to create change. Significant new partnerships were developed this year with 77 attendees participating in the Summit for the first time. The input from the Summit will help inform the New Mexico Girls Collaborative and will be shared with the New Mexico STEM Innovation Network to support the collaborative efforts to develop a STEM ecosystem that meets the needs of all students in our state. By lifting voices, sharing stories, and sparking collaboration, New Mexico is laying the foundation for a stronger and more inclusive STEM future. As one young participant put it, “Seeing women like me in STEM makes me believe I belong here too.”

***Together, we can ensure every girl in New Mexico sees herself in STEM—and thrives.***

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