



RALPH C. WILSON, JR.  
FOUNDATION

### **Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation Announces STEM 2035**

*Beginning today, the Foundation is requesting applications to support afterschool and summer science, technology, engineering and math programs for youth in grades 6-12*

**Buffalo, NY/Detroit, MI** (March 19, 2018) – The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation (RCWJRF) today announced *STEM 2035*, an initiative through which the Foundation will grant funding and technical assistance to existing afterschool and summer STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) programs in Western New York and Southeast Michigan. The Foundation will award up to 20 total grants, each for up to \$250,000 over a three-year span.

“The types of projects that kids encounter in afterschool STEM programs help build teamwork, problem solving, and communication skills, which are the kinds of skills that our fast-changing modern society needs,” said Amber Slichta, vice president of programs, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation. “To prepare the next generation of workforce, we not only need to close the gaps in STEM knowledge, but we also need to close the gaps that keep under-represented youth from pursuing their interests in STEM subjects.”

Through *STEM 2035*, the Foundation is looking to accomplish the following:

- **Increase** the number of girls and minority youth participating in STEM programs and pursuing STEM in post-secondary education, training and careers.
- **Accelerate** learning and collaboration among afterschool STEM providers in Western New York and Southeast Michigan to improve STEM outcomes for youth in those regions.
- **Support** innovative ideas that better connect, inspire and prepare 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders for STEM in post-secondary education, training and careers.
- **Improve** and sustain program quality by integrating best practices to better support youth’s STEM learning experiences.

The initiative is seeking programs that are ready and willing to try something new or make substantial improvements that spark interest, build confidence and create pathways in STEM.

“During the next 16-plus years of our Foundation’s spend down, we’ll witness some of the most rapid advances in science, technology, engineering and mathematics in history. We need to ensure that our future leaders are equipped to meet the modern challenges through 2035 and beyond,” Slichta added.

In addition to receiving funding for their programs, grantees will become part of the *STEM 2035* peer learning community. Through this group, they will receive training and technical assistance, try new evaluation tools and quality improvement strategies, collaborate and learn together.

To help administer the RFP and oversee project management details, the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation has partnered with [CCNY, Inc.](#) Additional project partners include the [PEAR Institute at Harvard](#), a subject matter expert in afterschool STEM programs, which will provide technical assistance, program assessments and support for grantees in the cohort; and [Equal Measure](#), which has been brought on as the cohort evaluator.

Beginning today, March 19, through April 13, eligible organizations are encouraged to apply. Applications are due to CCNY, Inc. by 5 p.m. EST on April 13. Finalists will be notified in May to submit full proposals and selected grantees will be notified in July 2018. To learn more about *STEM 2035* and the application process and eligibility, visit [comconnectionsny.com/STEM](http://comconnectionsny.com/STEM).

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**About the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation:**

*The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation is a grantmaking organization dedicated primarily to sustained investment in the quality of life of the people of Southeast Michigan and Western New York. The two areas reflect Ralph C. Wilson, Jr.'s devotion to his hometown of Detroit and greater Buffalo, home of his Buffalo Bills franchise. Prior to his passing in 2014, Mr. Wilson requested that a significant share of his estate be used to continue a life-long generosity of spirit by funding the Foundation that bears his name. The Foundation has a grantmaking capacity of \$1.2 billion over a 20-year period, which expires January 8, 2035. This structure is consistent with Mr. Wilson's desire for the Foundation's impact to be immediate, substantial, measurable and overseen by those who knew him best. For more information visit [www.rcwjrf.org](http://www.rcwjrf.org).*

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