



RALPH C. WILSON, JR.  
FOUNDATION

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

*17 afterschool and summer science, technology, engineering and math programs for youth in grades 6-12 have been chosen to participate in the cohort*

**Buffalo, NY/Detroit, MI** (August 29, 2018) – The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation has announced its cohort for *STEM 2035*, a \$5.5-million initiative through which grant funding and technical assistance will be provided to existing afterschool and summer STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) programs in Western New York and Southeast Michigan.

Community Connections of NY (CCNY), a nonprofit management services organization, is overseeing the *STEM 2035* initiative for the Foundation. A funding announcement was distributed earlier this year and after receiving more than 100 applications from across the Foundation's two regions of focus, CCNY has awarded grants to the following organizations, each for up to \$250,000 over a three-year span:

- **Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation** (Detroit, MI)
- **Downtown Boxing Gym** (Detroit, MI)
- **EcoWorks** (Detroit, MI)
- **Leslie Science & Nature Center** (Ann Arbor, MI)
- **Michigan Science Center** (Detroit, MI)
- **The Baldwin Center** (Pontiac, MI)
- **Buffalo Maritime Center** (Buffalo, NY)
- **Buffalo Museum of Science, Tift Nature Preserve** (Buffalo, NY)
- **Challenger Learning Center of Lockport** (Lockport, NY)
- **Cornell Cooperative Extension of Wyoming County** (Warsaw, NY)
- **Do It, Dream It WNY Manufacturers Association of the Southern Tier** (Jamestown, NY)
- **Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum** (North Tonawanda, NY)
- **Mission Ignite** (Buffalo, NY)
- **Portville Central School** (Portville, NY)
- **Wellsville Central School District** (Wellsville, NY)
- **Westminster Economic Development Initiative** (Buffalo, NY)
- **YMCA of Greater Rochester** (Rochester, NY)

Grantees were selected based on a variety of factors, including their focus on middle and high school girls and underrepresented groups in the STEM field and innovative approaches to program expansion or new programming.

“During the next 16-plus years of our Foundation’s spend down, we are looking to these organizations to not only equip young leaders for the STEM industry today, but to create pathways that will allow for success beyond our exit,” said Amber Slichta, vice president of programs, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation. “There are obvious gaps that prevent underrepresented groups from pursuing STEM in their education, careers and training. Through this initiative, we hope to fill these gaps and better prepare the next generation’s workforce.”

The *STEM 2035* Cohort kick-off meeting is scheduled for October 3 and 4 in Detroit, MI. In addition to receiving funding for their programs, grantees will also be a 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.

The [PEAR Institute at Harvard](#), a subject matter expert in afterschool STEM programs, will provide technical assistance, program assessments and support for grantees in the *STEM 2035* cohort.

Additional project partners include [Equal Measure](#), which will serve as the cohort evaluator and provide insights into how the peer learning community contributes to quality improvement, knowledge exchange, and better outcomes for youth.

“Young people have a bright future in science, technology, engineering, and math fields, but we have to rigorously support them to engage, gain knowledge and develop skills,” said Gil Noam, founder and director of The PEAR Institute at Harvard. “Too many students lose interest right at the time when they should get excited and committed. The afterschool field has shown great potential to contribute to STEM learning in creative and hands-on ways. The Ralph Wilson Foundation’s STEM 2035 initiative is highly significant in providing very sizable grants, know-how and evidence and a cohort approach to training.”

To learn more about STEM 2035, 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).*

**About Community Connections of NY:**

*CCNY, Inc. is a nonprofit management services organization that partners with community-based organizations, behavioral health agencies, and government agencies to provide training, evaluation, quality improvement, and innovative tools to improve the lives of people in the communities our clients serve. <http://www.comconnectionsny.org/>*

**About PEAR Institute at Harvard:**

*The PEAR Institute: Partnerships in Education and Resilience was created to promote innovation in education. Based on a recognition that high-quality programming can build youth social-emotional resiliency and contribute to academic success, [Dr. Gil G. Noam](#) founded the institute in 1999 as a collaboration between the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard Medical and the Harvard teaching center, McLean Hospital I. The PEAR Institute takes a developmental approach to the study of new models of social and emotional learning and STEM education in schools and afterschool settings. For more information visit the [www.pearinstitute.org](http://www.pearinstitute.org).*

**About Equal Measure:**

*Headquartered in Philadelphia, PA, Equal Measure works with major private and community foundations, national and regional nonprofits and government organizations to elevate insights that help shape powerful investments and fuel sustainable social change. Equal Measure has extensive expertise in supporting philanthropic services, particularly in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion. As a result, it brings deep knowledge in evaluation methods, and in philanthropic program management, grantmaking, planning and convening learning communities. For further information about Equal Measure, please visit [www.equalmeasure.org](http://www.equalmeasure.org).*

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