



Funding Your STEMscapes: A Complete District Guide

From Youth for STEM Equity *Helping you bring innovative, equitable STEM learning to every student.*



What Are STEMscapes?

STEMscapes are immersive, standards-aligned escape room experiences that engage students in problem-solving, inquiry, and real-world STEM applications. Each STEMscape aligns with NGSS, Common Core, and/or state science standards and is tailored for grades 4–10.

Each module includes:

- Hands-on escape room puzzles
- Real-world STEM context (e.g., genetics, environmental sustainability, chemistry)
- Career exploration elements
- Pre/post assessments for impact tracking
- Teacher facilitation guide
- Differentiation strategies for ELLs and IEPs

Why Districts Choose STEMscapes:

- ✓ Turnkey and low-tech
- ✓ Culturally responsive and inclusive

- ✓ Proven engagement with underserved learners
 - ✓ Built for in-class, after-school, or summer learning
 - ✓ Quantifiable impact through pre/post data tools
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Section 1: Federal Funding Sources

1. ESSER I/II/III Funds (COVID Relief)

- **Deadline:** ESSER III must be obligated by September 30, 2024, and liquidated by Jan 28, 2025.
- **Use Case:** Support learning acceleration, student engagement, and enrichment.
 - *Examples:* Summer STEM academies for learning recovery, in-class science enrichment with measurable outcomes, SEL through teamwork and problem-solving.
- **Justification Language:**
 - "STEMscapes provides immersive, student-centered learning experiences that address COVID-related learning loss and support academic recovery in STEM through inquiry, collaboration, and culturally responsive design."

2. Title I, Part A

- **Purpose:** Improve academic outcomes of students in low-income schools.
- **Use Case:** Ideal for out-of-school programs, pull-outs, or in-class reinforcement.
 - *Eligible Uses:* Academic enrichment programs, culturally relevant learning tools, after-school or weekend science workshops.
- **Justification Language:**
 - "This program advances Title I goals by increasing access to high-quality, standards-aligned STEM enrichment that fosters critical thinking, especially for students furthest from opportunity."

3. Carl D. Perkins V (CTE)

- **Purpose:** Improve career and technical education programs.
- **Use Case:**
 - *Eligible Uses:* Career exploration for middle schoolers, STEM career pathway awareness, cross-disciplinary programs (e.g., genetics + health careers).
- **Justification Language:**
 - "STEMscapes enhances CTE programming by engaging students in career-relevant, collaborative STEM modules that develop technical literacy and connect learning to future workforce opportunities."

4. Title IV, Part A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment)

- **Purpose:** Support well-rounded education, safe and healthy students, and technology integration.
- **Use Case:**
 - *Eligible Uses:* Innovative STEM and arts programming, safe, team-based SEL opportunities, low-tech enrichment programs.
- **Justification Language:**
 - "STEMscapes offers a well-rounded education experience that integrates hands-on STEM with SEL, inquiry, and real-world problem-solving in a safe, engaging format."

5. 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)

- **Purpose:** Support after-school and summer learning programs in high-poverty areas.
 - **Use Case:**
 - *Eligible Uses:* After-school STEM programming, family engagement activities, summer bridge or enrichment learning.
 - **Justification Language:**
 - "STEMscapes will provide out-of-school academic enrichment and STEM career awareness in a collaborative, student-led learning format tailored to the interests and needs of underserved youth."
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Section 2: State & Local Opportunities

1. State STEM Innovation Funds

Most state Departments of Education or Governor's Offices offer innovation or STEM grants for districts. Check:

- Your State Department of Education (STEM/Innovation Divisions)
- Regional Education Service Agencies (ESCs, BOCES, etc.)
- Local STEM hubs or STEM Ecosystems
- **Use Case:** Pilot STEMscapes in 2–3 schools with evaluation, then scale.

2. Local Education Foundations

- *Examples:* Education Foundations (e.g., "Springfield Public Schools Foundation"), STEM-focused nonprofits or regional philanthropic arms, Chamber of Commerce workforce development grants.
-  **Tip:** Pair STEMscapes with community engagement to strengthen proposals (e.g., invite families or local STEM professionals to observe sessions).

3. PTA/PTO, Booster Clubs, or Rotary Clubs

Many PTAs are willing to support novel STEM programming, especially if it builds excitement and can be showcased during family nights.

-  **Bonus:** Offer a “STEM Family Night Escape Room” as a grant deliverable.
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Section 3: Sample Grant Proposal Framework

Here’s a basic structure to submit for a grant or Title program:

- **Program Title:**
 - “STEMscapes: Student-Centered, Inquiry-Based STEM Learning”
 - **Abstract:**
 - A 100–150 word summary describing the program, audience served, core objectives, and expected outcomes.
 - **Need Statement:**
 - Highlight current student engagement gaps, lack of hands-on STEM, or equity concerns in your district.
 - **Goals & Objectives:**
 - Increase student engagement in science
 - Improve content mastery through experiential learning
 - Build interest in STEM careers
 - Enhance collaboration, communication, and critical thinking
 - **Activities:**
 - 3–6 STEMscape modules delivered in-class or after-school
 - Pre/post assessments
 - Family STEM Night (optional)
 - Student reflection journals or presentations
 - **Evaluation:**
 - Use built-in assessment tools to measure knowledge gains, engagement, and teamwork.
 - **Budget:**
 - Request per school or classroom (you may include staffing, materials, and optional training sessions).
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Section 4: Resources & Support

We’re here to help every step of the way.

 **Youth for STEM Equity will provide:**

- Custom quotes and W-9 documentation
- Letters of support
- Impact data and sample reports
- Facilitator training or implementation guides
- Editable justification language
- ROI + student outcome templates for grant reports

 **Contact our Funding Support Team at districts@youthstem.org Or visit:**
www.youthstem.org/funding (placeholder)

Section 5: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can we bundle STEMscapes into our summer learning program? **A:** Absolutely. Many districts integrate STEMscapes into 4–6 week summer bridge or STEM academies.

Q: Can we train afterschool or out-of-school staff to run STEMscapes? **A:** Yes. We provide asynchronous training and facilitator guides—no STEM background required.

Q: Can this be scaled across multiple schools? **A:** Yes. We offer tiered pricing and regional training to support scalable rollouts across schools or districts.

Q: Can Title I or ESSER funds be used even if the activity is not during the school day?
A: Yes. Enrichment, afterschool, and intervention programming are all eligible uses for both ESSER and Title I.

Final Checklist: Before You Apply

-  **Define your student need**
 -  **Identify target grades, schools, or programs**
 -  **Choose funding stream (ESSER, Title I, Perkins, etc.)**
 -  **Use sample language from this guide**
 -  **Contact YSE for budget + support docs**
 -  **Submit on time**
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 **Let's Bring STEMscapes to Your Students**

Every student deserves the chance to learn like a scientist, explore like an engineer, and collaborate like a problem-solver. STEMscapes are more than an activity—they're a gateway to confidence, careers, and curiosity. We'll help you fund it.