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January 2023

News & Policy

**Nebraska's Expanded Learning Opportunity (ELO) Innovation Invitational:
March 7 – 9th at Innovation Campus in Lincoln**

SAVE THE DATE

NEBRASKA'S
EXPANDED LEARNING
OPPORTUNITIES
**INNOVATION
INVITATIONAL**

Beyond School Bells, in partnership with the Nebraska Department of Education and Nebraska Extension, is hosting an atypical, un-Conference gathering to creatively engage

key stakeholders and practitioners in helping to imagine the future of afterschool and summer - and we need you!

This March 7th – 9th event, the **Nebraska Expanded Learning Opportunity (ELO) Innovation Invitational**, will not be your standard conference – with the information flowing down passively from the podium without chances for participants to reflect and engage with the ideas presented. Instead, we are designing a multi-day format providing participants with scaffolded opportunities to engage in hands-on learning experiences, pitch creative ideas, interact with colleagues to build on the already strong foundation we have in Nebraska for high quality, school-based and community-linked afterschool and summer programs.

While a three-day affair, we don't expect many will be able to stay for the entire period. Rather, we will be carving out blocks of time for participants to engage in subject matter like Afterschool and Summer programming innovations, learning through play and hands-on activities, full-service community schools, mentoring, career exploration, and on a more elevated plain, how afterschool and summer program staff can help youth cultivate purpose and hope.

Registration link coming soon! In the meantime, if you have questions or would like more information, please contact Lauren Clark at lclark@nebraskachildren.org.

**Calling All Nebraska Youth-Serving Professionals and Volunteers:
Take the Power of Us Workforce Survey Today!**



We encourage you to share your reflections on the state of Afterschool programming by participating in the Power of Us survey. Thousands of professionals and volunteers across Nebraska work with young people every day in the many settings where youth play, learn, and grow outside of the school day. On athletic fields, in afterschool programs, in libraries, in faith-based institutions, youth-serving professionals and volunteers are making a difference every day. Through the Power of Us Workforce Survey, Nebraska's youth-serving professionals and volunteers can contribute to a national effort to explore, define, and elevate youth fields workforce and their essential work with youth. If we know more about what drives you in this vital work, we can do more to support the youth fields workforce to thrive.

Take the survey now at <https://powerofussurvey.org/>

Resources & Curriculum

Ready, STEM, Go!

Save the Date for this **STEM Afterschool Conference March 14 & 15**



A national alliance of statewide afterschool networks are partnering to host a two-day virtual no-cost conference, shining a spotlight on resources, strategies, and inspiration to boost out-of-school time STEM programming! Attend on **March 14 and 15** and have the opportunity to:

- **Network** with peers from across the country
- **Engage** with speakers committed to supporting others in designing enriching STEM activities
- **Ignite excitement** to help youth explore STEM!

Registration link coming soon!

Register for Your Nebraska Statewide Arboretum Bloom Box Today!



The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum has funding available to provide gardening and/or tree planting experiences to 21st Century Community Learning Center students across the state. This is a great opportunity to enrich the spring semester along with Arbor Day and Earth Day! Through our Bloom Box @school program, funded by the Extended Learning Opportunity Grant, we can provide a 100 sq ft pollinator garden and/or 1- 10 trees for planting at your school: free of monetary cost to your program.

Your commitment to this program will be to have 1-2 staff members trained in Project Learning Tree curriculum (6 hours), attend a Garden Training webinar (1 hour), and guide your students through 6 habitat related activities (15 student contact hours). Each eligible school can plant a garden and/or trees although we recommend spreading the plantings over

multiple seasons. Schools can receive 1-10 trees, as is appropriate for the space on your campus. If your school isn't eligible for this program, we have scholarships available so don't hesitate to reach out; eligibility can be confirmed with Jan Handa, Jan.Handa@nebraska.gov.

To be part of the Bloom Box @school program this spring, we will need to receive a Commitment to Plant from you by January 31st. We are also happy to take commitments for future planting seasons through spring 2024 at any time.

To learn more about Bloom Box, you can email Sarah Buckley at sarah.buckley@unl.edu or visit plantnebraska.org/school.

Apply Here!

Happy National Mentoring Month from the Million Girls Moonshot (MGM)!



January is [National Mentoring Month](#) - a national celebration of the role models and mentors that have made monumental differences in the lives of so many. Listed as one of Moonshot's four transformative practices, role models and mentors play a significant role in showing young women what is possible for them in STEM.

Free Resources for Mentoring Month:

- [Career Girls](#) - A free 16,000 video comprehensive career exploration tool for girls featuring diverse women STEM role models.
- [FabFems](#) - A collection of resources for role models, educators, and parents to inspire and educate girls about science, computer science, technology, engineering, and mathematics courses and careers.
- [National Mentoring Resource Center](#) - A collection of mentoring resources including handbooks, curricula, manuals, and other resources that practitioners can use to implement and further develop program practices.
- **Educator Guide:** [Educator Guide: STEM Activities for Families | NASA/JPL Edu](#) Easy

to implement engaging activities for families (as a follow up to after school activities.)

Join Scientific Adventures for Girls Training Series on Engaging Girls in Hands-on Engineering



Photo Credit: Scientific Adventures for Girls

Join [Scientific Adventures for Girls](#) (SAfG) in a three-part curriculum training series focused on their no cost, open-sourced curriculum aimed to engage and excite more girls in engineering and design. Participants will leave the series with four engineering design projects and a materials list that they can implement with youth immediately. Participants will also be given access to additional engineering and design projects through SAfG. [REGISTER FOR THE FIRST SESSION HERE.](#)

TMC Highlights

TMC Tips and Tricks for Minds-On Learning





Photo Credit: Calder Elementary | University of Idaho Benewah County 4-H

How can we support experiential learning, that is hands-on, minds-on learning, through the TMC Labs? Here are some tips from staff in programs using the TMC Labs:

- Ask open ended questions or answer a question with a question.
- Listen to gauge where youth are in their learning process
- Have different stages of your activity available so youth don't have to wait on each group to finish
- Provide other related activities in case some get done quickly
- Connect activities to real world problems
- Don't do it for them, ask helpful questions and allow youth time to think through to develop their own solutions



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