



Idaho STEM Ecosystem Mid-Year Report

July 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024

OVERALL DIRECTION

1. Please describe how the EcosySTEM has built awareness of and ensured access to STEM education opportunities and STEM careers.

Idaho Business for Education (IBE)

The EcosySTEM team once again joined the IBE team on visits to seven sites during the Fall IBE Members Meeting Road Trips, engaging with over 60 partner organizations and 86 individuals. The Hub Coordinators and Director presented information about the EcosySTEM and our programs, fostering collaboration and inviting participation from industry members. Additionally, Erica Compton presented on EcosySTEM activities and initiatives during 6 IBE Board Meetings and Executive Committee Board Meetings.

Statewide and Regional Meeting and Events

The EcosySTEM team actively participated in various working groups, leadership committees, and regional/statewide meetings to promote STEM education and workforce development. Key meetings and events include community-led and EcosySTEM-led and are as follows:

- *Community-led:* ISU STEMx Planning Meetings, Women Innovators Program Committee Meetings, Idaho Out of School Network (ION) and Think-Make-Create (TMC) Lab Meetings and webinars, Broadband Action Team, Indigenous STEM Community of Practice Meeting, National STEMx Monthly meetings, STEM Forged meetings and webinars, STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice (SLECoP) Meetings including LEAD STEM, LC2, and Wild West Ecosphere, Beyond 100K Meetings, Idaho Immunization Coalition Meetings, CTE Regional Directors Meetings, Idaho CSTA Meeting, ISTA Board Meeting, Children's Museum of Idaho Board Meetings, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Meetings, Children's Museum of Idaho STEM planning meetings, and multiple other meetings with individual partners and local STEM Nights.
- *EcosySTEM/Hub-led:* Each Hub continued to host their monthly steering committee and working group meetings, the EcosySTEM kicked off our statewide advisory committee and

bi-monthly meetings, IDX webinars and coaching calls, and IESA program meetings and partner calls.

Conferences

The EcosySTEM team attended, presented, sponsored, and exhibited at numerous conferences statewide and nationally.

- *Attended:* Virtual Agriculture Conference, SciC14: the 14th Science is Cool Virtual Unconference, Idaho CTE Connect Conference, Montana STEM Summer Institute, AI Tools for Education Research pt 2- CSTA, Idaho Nonprofit Center Annual Conference, REDI Workforce Symposium, Boise Comic Arts Festival: Librarians and Educators Day of Learning, Science Fair Director Institute, Hivebrite Conference, ION Power Up Summit, Beyond 100K Conference, STEMIE Fest: Inclusion in Early Education, SLECoP Annual Convening, ISBA Welcoming Reception and Keynote.
- *Presented:* Idaho Association of School Administrators (IASA) Conference, Full STEAM Ahead Conference, Hivebrite Conference.
- *Exhibited:* Full STEAM Ahead Conference, ION Power Up Summit, Hispanic Youth Leadership Conference (all regions), National 4H Conference, ISBA Conference.
- *Sponsored:* Full STEAM Ahead Conference (co-sponsorship with STEM AC), Hispanic Youth Leadership Conference (all regions), ISU STEMx, Conference on Refugee Settlement.

Community Platform

The Community Platform has become a thriving hub of activity, serving as an active space where partners across Idaho engage with each other and STEM-related content in unique and meaningful ways. Since its launch in October 2023, the platform has grown steadily, and as of December 31, 2024, it includes 1,014 users, 812 of whom are activated. Engagement continues to be robust, with roughly 200 live feed posts created and 58 new resources added to the Resource Library in the past six months.

To encourage further activity and deeper engagement, the EcosySTEM launched an engagement challenge in December, which will continue throughout the winter. This initiative has been well-received, motivating users to participate more actively by sharing updates, commenting on posts, and contributing resources. The challenge has fostered a deeper sense of community and collaboration among platform members, and we anticipate continued positive engagement trends over the next six months.



Communications

The EcosySTEM continues to leverage multiple communication channels to build awareness of STEM resources, education, and workforce development. Our efforts include a monthly statewide newsletter with 3,497 subscribers, a monthly STEM INNOC newsletter with 231 subscribers, a monthly SWISH newsletter with 312 subscribers, and a quarterly ISEE STEM newsletter with 84 subscribers. Additionally, the EcosySTEM has partnered with multiple agencies to submit items to other newsletters including IBE, Women Innovators, Idaho Department of Education, Idaho Commission for Libraries, Idaho Science Teaching Association, and STEMconnector to name a few. The EcosySTEM and each regional hub also engage with our partners on social media networks Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

2. Please describe how the EcosySTEM has aligned STEM education with Idaho workforce needs of today and tomorrow.

The EcosySTEM team remains dedicated to aligning STEM education with Idaho's current and future workforce needs through intentional partnership engagement, professional development opportunities, and innovative workshops designed to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving technological landscape. Over the past six months, these efforts have expanded to include new communities, strengthened existing partnerships, and introduced cutting-edge resources to educators and students statewide.

Partnership Engagement

Since July 2024, the EcosySTEM team has collectively dedicated over 220 hours to meetings with industry, education, and community partners to understand the needs, identify gaps, and collaborate on solutions. This focused engagement has further expanded our network and our ability to support communities in rural areas of Idaho.

Professional Development

One of the six core values of the EcosySTEM is learning, in which we uphold the power of learning to transform lives, that learning is a lifelong process, and that all people deserve meaningful opportunities to learn. As part of this value, we invest in the continuous learning of our partners and our EcosySTEM staff. The Educator Preparation and Support Working Group has continued and strengthened its efforts to address the professional development landscape and have developed a new focus and goal for the group: tackling AI in education. The working group has devised a plan to support educators with utilizing and learning about AI and have planned to host at least one webinar in early 2025. SWISH Hub Coordinator, ReBekha Lulu, has assisted in the development of the Idaho Mining Association Unit curriculum, collaborating with STEM AC.



EcosySTEM staff once again participated in and promoted STEM AC's Hour of Code. Lastly, the EcosySTEM hosted our first ever Idaho Exhibition of Ideas Coaching Webinar series, which is explained more in the programming section of this report.

AI Lesson Planning Platform Workshops

To address emerging workforce needs in artificial intelligence and technology integration, the EcosySTEM has partnered with STEM Forged, an Idaho-based company, to launch their AI Lesson Planning Platform Workshops. This initiative has replaced the outdated STEM Discovery Workshops for Educators. In the last six months STEM Forged has hosted 6 workshops with 90 registrations and 30 active participants.

In addition to the synchronous workshops, STEM Forged has been working on creating an asynchronous version, based on participant feedback that we hope to launch in early 2025. The EcosySTEM has also partnered with University of Idaho's Continuing Adult Professional Development Keep Learning department and has launched a PD course for educators to receive 1 credit for attending and completing the workshops.

3. Please list the metrics you are using to measure success.

The EcosySTEM utilizes a comprehensive set of metrics to measure the success and impact of our programs, initiatives, and engagement efforts. These metrics are designed to assess program effectiveness, partner engagement, and overall progress toward aligning STEM education with Idaho's workforce needs. Additionally, the EcosySTEM has been working with PEAR, Inc., to facilitate an extensive evaluation program of the EcosySTEM's work since July 2023. PEAR, Inc., will be initiating partner and non-partner surveys and focus group conversations in the spring of 2025 with a final report presented in fall 2025.

Each program hosted has unique metrics but overall, the measures of success include number of registrations versus number of participants, completion rates of program milestones, growth in the number of active partnerships and collaborations, number of events hosted or attended by EcosySTEM Staff, anecdotal feedback from program participants about perceived value, personal and professional growth obtained, and quality of program aspects. The EcosySTEM has recently purchased an analytics module for our Community Platform that will allow us to visualize and capture engagement data across the platform including direct and indirect communications, resource usage, post and comment tracking, and more.



PROGRAMMATIC UPDATES

4. Please explain coordination of the EcosySTEM hubs and how they have supported STEM AC and statewide efforts.

Over the past six months, the coordination of the EcosySTEM Hubs has continued to support and advance the STEM AC’s mission by deepening engagement with existing communities and partners while expanding outreach to new organizations and areas across Idaho. The growth and development of these efforts reflect our commitment to fostering robust partnerships and delivering impactful STEM education and workforce development initiatives.

The four Hub Coordinators have continued to actively engage in their respective regions, providing hands-on support, building connections, and addressing the unique needs of their communities. Across all hubs, Coordinators have focused on maintaining strong relationships with existing partners while cultivating new connections that bring fresh opportunities for STEM engagement. A key focus has been extensive outreach related to the Idaho Science and Engineering Fairs (IDSEF), which the EcosySTEM began coordinating this year. This transition required significant effort to support and prepare educators for the changes to the 2025 fairs. EcosySTEM staff have worked diligently to address and resolve hurdles, including challenges stemming from perceptions of past fairs and the adjustments to the new structure and updated regulations. These efforts have focused on ensuring a smooth transition while building trust and enthusiasm among educators.

Strategic planning remains a cornerstone of our efforts. The EcosySTEM has made progress, with the support of our statewide Advisory Committee, on implementing our updated mission, vision, core values, and statewide priorities. Hub Coordinators and their respective regional steering committees have established regional-level strategic objectives, supporting the broader statewide plan.

The EcosySTEM’s dynamic coordination efforts directly align with the STEM AC’s mission by providing statewide support for STEM education and workforce development. By expanding our reach and deepening our commitment to existing communities, we ensure that our initiatives are impactful and sustainable, fostering opportunities for educators, students, communities, and employers alike. These efforts highlight the EcosySTEM’s role as a proactive and integral partner in advancing STEM opportunities across Idaho.



5. Has the EcosySTEM maintained its active membership in the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice?

Yes

6. Please describe all the activities regarding the EcosySTEM's membership in STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice national network.

The Idaho EcosySTEM has maintained our active involvement in the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice (SLECoP) national network. Through the following activities, the EcosySTEM has strengthened its connections within SLECoP, contributing to, and benefiting from, collective efforts to advance STEM education and workforce development across the country.

Annual Convening

In October, all six full-time EcosySTEM staff attended the SLECoP Annual Convening in Chicago, Illinois, along with two of our key statewide partners: STEM AC's Executive Director, Dee Mooney, and Idaho Out-of-School Network's Senior Program Manager, Anna Almerico. This year's theme, "Access in Action," focused on creating actionable solutions to bridge opportunity gaps and make STEM accessible for all. The convening brought together passionate changemakers in STEM to tackle challenges, build community, and catalyze change.

Idaho had a strong presence at the convening, leveraging the opportunity to network with other STEM Learning Ecosystems (SLE), ideate potential collaborations, and strengthen existing partnerships. Our team participated in breakout sessions, discussions, and strategy sessions designed to turn ideas into impactful actions. Topics included strategies for increasing equity and access in STEM, building sustainable ecosystems, and utilizing the power of AI to foster and build community partnerships and drive action forward. These sessions have inspired our team and partners to refine our approach to equity-focused STEM initiatives in Idaho. The convening also allowed us to gain insights from other ecosystems, explore best practices, and establish new connections that will help shape the future of Idaho EcosySTEM's programs and initiatives.

LEAD STEM Fellowship Program

The EcosySTEM team continues to participate in the SLECoP Lead STEM Fellowship program, an 18-month initiative designed to empower current and aspiring leaders of SLEs. Through this program, the Idaho EcosySTEM team has engaged with 34 international SLEs each month, fostering a collaborative environment for learning and growing.



Each EcosySTEM team member will be completing a capstone project as part of the Fellowship and will be presenting the project and our findings at the 10th anniversary SLECoP Convening in Washington, DC in October 2025.

Leadership Coordinating Council (LC2)

Erica continues her tenure on the LC2, a representative group of 17 SLE leaders. The LC2 works alongside TIES to advocate for, communicate with, sustain, and expand the SLECoP. Erica's involvement in this council has positioned Idaho EcosySTEM at the forefront of national conversations and strategic planning within the STEM community.

7. Please describe the activities for Idaho Exhibition of Ideas (IDX), in preparation for the 2025 IDX Showcase.

The EcosySTEM team has spent the last several months preparing for the 2025 IDX Student Showcase. The challenge this year revolves around the theme of Agricultural Science. This theme encourages students to explore the world of agricultural science and its implications, both on a local level and in the context of broader global environmental concerns. To guide participants in their research and project development, the EcosySTEM team has identified three distinct subtopic areas, however, teams also have the option to choose their own agricultural science-related topic. The three subtopics are:

- Food science, security, and access
- Sustainable agricultural practices
- Technology in agriculture

Based on feedback and data from past attendees of the IDX Student Showcase, the EcosySTEM will be hosting four showcases throughout Idaho.

- North Idaho's Student Showcase will be hosted on March 7 in Rathdrum, Idaho.
- Southwest Idaho's Student Showcase will be hosted on March 1 in Boise, Idaho.
- Southcentral Idaho's Student Showcase will be hosted on March 14 in Twin Falls, Idaho.
- East Idaho's Student Showcase will be hosted on February 28 in Pocatello, Idaho.

The EcosySTEM team has also prepared the following updates, as a response to participant and judge feedback, to the program:

- New 3D printed trophy design
- Addition of Judges' Award
- Replacement of required documentation website with documentation slide deck



- Addition of fourth showcase in Region 4
- Additional language and support for Assistant IDX Coaches to engage with schools who do not have a fully trained IDX Coach. All IDX teams are required to have a fully trained IDX Coach who, by definition, has attended an IDX strand during i-STEM Institute. Due to educator turnover and limited availability of the IDX strand, many organizations do not have a fully trained coach and were unable to participate. Permitting Assistant IDX coaches has allowed us to engage with new schools and students.
- Preparation and presentation of 3 IDX Webinars for Coaches. These webinars were designed to support and prepare IDX coaches for the 2025 Student Showcase.

Registration is currently open for the 2025 Student Showcase and closes January 15, 2025.

8. Please describe the activities for Idaho Science and Engineering Fairs (IDSEF), in preparation for the 2025 IDSEF competition season.

The EcosySTEM, in coordination with the STEM AC, has made significant strides to ensure the success of the IDSEF competition season and enhance participation and engagement across the state. In September 2024, Statewide Program Coordinator and Regional Fair Director, Trisha Mick, attended the Science Fair Director Institute (SFDI) conference in Kansas City, Missouri. This experience greatly enhanced Trisha’s knowledge of science fairs, provided strategies for educators and fair support, and fostered connections with a national network of fair directors. In October a part-time contractor was hired to support the planning logistics for the three regional fairs, allowing for a focused and organized approach to event preparation.

Communication has been a cornerstone of the EcosySTEM’s efforts. The EcosySTEM launched an IDSEF-specific newsletter to keep educators, engaged partners, and sponsors informed about important dates, registration links, and available resources. This newsletter includes a comprehensive resource section which has showcased guides for writing abstracts and research papers, completing ISEF forms, and accessing research-related resources. To further amplify our communication efforts, we have also incorporated a recurring section in the monthly EcosySTEM statewide newsletter, which is distributed to a broad audience and provides updates on IDSEF and opportunities for involvement, significantly boosting the visibility and promotion of the competition.

The EcosySTEM Community Platform has been leveraged to enhance resource sharing and collaboration. Regional forums within the platform engage educators and Hub Coordinators to exchange best practices, discuss challenges, and share support materials.



Direct communication through outreach activities complements these efforts. Each Hub Coordinator and Fair Director have devoted substantial time to direct interactions with educators, offering guidance on participation, promoting the program, and addressing individual needs and concerns. STEM INNC Hub Coordinator, Erin Lanigan, spent a week visiting former NISEF educator participants to better understand their decisions to not participate this year, and has developed stronger relationships with them to better support and prepare educators for next year. Additional promotional support has come from partners, including the STEM AC staff, EcosySTEM Director, and IBE CEO and President, Paula Kellerer.

To incentivize participation, the EcosySTEM introduced a \$500 stipend for any Idaho educator who brings at least one qualifying project to their regional fair. This effort has been bolstered in Eastern Idaho, where the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) is providing a matching stipend of \$1,000 for teachers participating in the Eastern Idaho Science and Engineering Fair (EISEF). Further financial support is available through the IDSEF Project Support Stipend, which offers public school educators \$100 per project for up to 10 projects, with an updated and streamlined application process. As of December 31, 2024, 5 educators had applied for stipend support. The EcosySTEM and STEM AC jointly established an extensive 12-member statewide Scientific Review Committee (SRC) to ensure fair evaluation of student projects.

Registration for the 2025 IDSEF competitions has closed, with the final materials deadline remaining open until four weeks before each fair. The dates and venues are as follows:

- Northern Idaho Science and Engineering Fair (NISEF): March 3, 2025 at North Idaho College in Coeur d'Alene*
- *Based on participant data, we will be moving this fair to Lewiston or Moscow area but will be hosting the Fair on the same date.
- Western Idaho Science and Engineering Fair (WISEF): March 15, 2025 at Boise State University in Boise
- Eastern Idaho Science and Engineering Fair (EISEF): February 27, 2025 at Melaleuca Headquarters in Idaho Falls

Planning and coordination efforts will continue, with an emphasis on securing additional awards and event sponsors to elevate the impact and experience of the fairs.



9. Please describe activity and intended outcomes related to the transition of the Idaho EcosySTEM Student Ambassador program.

The Idaho EcosySTEM Student Ambassador (IESA) program has been strategically revised to increase accessibility, enhance engagement, and provide robust opportunities for students to develop themselves as STEM education advocates and leaders. This transition represents a significant evolution from the Chief Science Officer program, offering a more flexible, inclusive, and impactful framework to empower students across Idaho. The IESA program is structured around three core components:

- *STEM Project:* Each Student Ambassador is required to complete a meaningful STEM project that positively impacts their classroom, school, or community. These projects encourage critical thinking, creativity, and problem solving while providing real-world applications of STEM knowledge. Students can each receive up to \$75 in financial support for their projects through a simplified and accessible grant application process, gaining valuable experience in grant writing and project management.
- *Leadership Interview:* Ambassadors conduct interviews with local leaders, educators, or industry professionals to learn about effective leadership styles, the goals of education, and the future of STEM fields. These interviews foster networking opportunities and provide insights that help students grow as confident leaders.
- *Industry Tours:* To expand their understanding of STEM career opportunities, students participate in industry tours. These tours, supported with the help of the Advisors and Hub Coordinators, give students a behind-the-scenes look at STEM workplaces and careers in their communities and beyond.

Additionally, the IESA Program incorporates several other components to enhance student engagement and development:

- *Regional and Statewide Events:* Selected Student Ambassadors will have the opportunity to participate in regional hub events and statewide gatherings, offering platforms to connect with peers, share their projects, and further develop their leadership and communication skills.
- *Monthly Connect Series:* Virtual sessions provide a space for Student Ambassadors to connect with their peers, share updates on their projects and leadership interviews, and engage with STEM and industry professionals in short career spotlights.
- *Community Platform Group:* A dedicated space within the EcosySTEM Community Platform allows Student Ambassadors to collaborate, share resources, and build a supportive network with other students and program advisors.



A key improvement in the revised IESA program is its flexibility in onboarding schools and organizations throughout the year, rather than limiting participation to the fall. This year-round entry point increases opportunities for schools to join the program, particularly through the ongoing outreach efforts of Hub Coordinators. This new structure is expected to drive participation, and we anticipate the engagement of 160 students from diverse backgrounds in the first year of the program.

These enhancements position the IESA program as a transformative initiative that inspires students, empowers educators, and contributes to Idaho's broader workforce development goals.

10. Please summarize the final reports from Round 1 of the EcosySTEM's grant program and list the changes and improvements that were implemented to the grant process.

The EcosySTEM has received final reports from FY24 Round 1 and Round 2 grant projects. These projects showcased significant achievements and valuable insights across STEM education in Idaho.

Final grant reports from rounds 1 and 2 will be included in the addendum items packet. Key takeaways from grant recipients include:

- *Broadening STEM Access:* ASM Materials Camp hosted 29 teachers, providing professional development that equipped participants to reach over 750 students statewide. Participants highlighted the camp's hands-on, integrative approach as transformative for both their teaching and student engagement. The University of Idaho's Engineering Design Expo successfully connected 250 students from 17 schools across Idaho with industry leaders and real-world STEM applications. The event fostered awareness of engineering opportunities and supported underrepresented students through targeted outreach and travel stipends.
- *Community Impact and Innovation:* Invent Idaho and regional STEM fairs created platforms for young inventors to showcase innovations, receiving statewide recognition at the national showcase. These initiatives inspired students, particularly those in rural and underserved areas, to pursue STEM fields. Programs like Dream and Do on the Palouse engaged diverse audiences through interactive activities, highlighting the importance of partnerships in overcoming logistical challenges. Many projects spoke about the strategic partnerships with industry and educational organizations and how those partnerships were strengthened and utilized to amplify program reach and effectiveness.



- *Sustainability and Best Practices:* Many projects emphasized sustainability by reusing materials and leveraging local partnerships to enhance program impact. For instance, reusable STEM kits and collaborative curriculum adjustments ensured lasting benefits. Feedback mechanisms and targeted professional development workshops addressed specific educator and student needs, building stronger ties between STEM education and real-world applications. Programs across the board adjusted objectives to maximize impact despite resource limitations, demonstrating resilience and innovative problem-solving.

At the start of FY25, the EcosySTEM implemented several enhancements to the grant program to better serve applicants and maximize awards and impact.

- *Application Transparency:* A comprehensive overview document was developed, detailing grant process, application questions, review rubrics, and follow-up reporting requirements. This document has dramatically increased the clarity of the grant process, resulting in a significant rise in grant requests and a reduction in questions regarding eligibility, submissions, and timelines.
- *Regional Grant Allocations:* The EcosySTEM continued providing regional grant opportunities, ranging from \$500-\$5,000 each. Each Hub Coordinator has separate funding pots, splitting ISEE STEM’s hub into two areas for Region 4 and Regions 5 & 6. Each Hub also has its own grant review committee, enabling Hub Coordinators to support applicants more effectively by providing guidance during the grant application process without conflicts of interest.
- *STEM Competition Travel Grant Adjustments:* To address the overwhelming demand for STEM Competition Travel grants, the award amounts were adjusted, allowing more projects to benefit from available funds. We have also adjusted the timeline for these grants as feedback from the first fiscal year indicated rigorous application cut-off dates were unattainable for many of the competitions.

Comparisons from FY24 and FY25 grants

So far, the EcosySTEM has facilitated 2 rounds of grant funding in FY25. Below is a table of comparison for the two fiscal years. In addition to the numbers below, the EcosySTEM funneled 11 grant projects to the STEM AC for funding via the ESSER Out of School and Summer Programming rounds.



	Number of Projects Requested	Number of Projects Awarded	Amount Requested	Amount Awarded
FY24: 4 Rounds	91	70	\$436,260.64	\$333,909.75
FY25: 2 Rounds	78	59	\$303,606.53	\$141,213.22

Direct and Indirect Impact from FY24 Round 1 and 2 Grants

	Student		Educator		Community	
	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
Round 1	7,735	6,038	285	225	1,770	2,250
Round 2	3,717	14,489	202	271	1,016	8,235

11. Question

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STEM EDUCATION PROMOTION

12. STEM AC Programs and Resources (i.e. i-STEM Libraries, i-STEM, Externship, etc.)

The EcosySTEM team continues to consistently promote and support STEM AC programs and resources through outreach events, conferences, and partner meetings, ensuring educators, students, and community members are informed and engaged. Our efforts remain focused on expanding awareness and access to these valuable opportunities, with an intentional emphasis on reaching new communities and strengthening partnerships with existing ones. Across all regions, Hub Coordinators and EcosySTEM staff have showcased STEM AC programs and resources during conference exhibits and events. Below are some specific ways each Regional Hub has promoted, use, and support of STEM AC resources:

- *STEM INNOC*: Regional Hub Coordinator, Erin Lanigan, has consistently promoted STEM AC resources during meetings with key regional partners, including the North Idaho College Workforce Training Center, Women in Mining, HECLA Mining, and the State Department of Education’s Regional Director.
- *SWISH*: Regional Hub Coordinator, ReBekha Lulu, has maintained a strong presence in promoting STEM AC resources through the monthly SWISH newsletter, which includes a dedicated STEM AC Opportunities section. She has also strengthened partnerships with



Boise State University's OnRamp program and the Discovery Center of Idaho recommending the i-STEM Libraries and Institutes, among other resources.

- *ISEE STEM*: Hub Coordinator, Sonya Haines, has presented STEM AC resources during the monthly Magic Valley Superintendent and Principal meetings. Additionally, she has presented externship opportunities and value during the Snake River Society for Human Resource Management and the Manufacturing Alliance Burley with the Idaho Department of Labor. Hub Coordinator, Ashley Schaffner, has played a pivotal role in supporting College of Eastern Idaho and Idaho State University with their i-STEM Libraries as both organizations are currently working through internal transitions. She has met with both hosting sites regularly to discuss best practices for educator engagement and resource distribution. Lauren Duris, Idaho's Learning Blade Representative, currently sits on the ISEE STEM Steering Committee, and as a result has developed a strong relationship with Ashley and has been able to recruit multiple new schools in Regions 5 & 6 to utilize Learning Blade more, including White Pine STEM Academy, Aberdeen Middle School, Marsh Valley School District, and Bear Lake Middle School. Ashley is currently working with Katie Bosch-Wilson on a collaborative Book Study program, utilizing the book *No Fear Coding*. The book and supplemental coding kits were provided to participants at no cost with the support from STEM AC.

13. ION's Think Make Create Trailers

The EcosySTEM continues to actively promote and integrate ION's Think Make Create (TMC) Labs into outreach events, partner engagements, and community activities. This ongoing effort not only facilitates educators' access to TMC Labs but also fosters collaborations between community partners and TMC Lab hosts, ensuring these resources are utilized effectively to reach new audiences. Communication about TMC Labs and other ION resources is amplified through the Community Platform, EcosySTEM and Regional Hub newsletters, and monthly partner meetings.

Regional Engagement

Hub Coordinators regularly attend TMC's monthly Shop Talk meetings to stay updated on Lab utilization and share best practices. Many Hub Coordinators were also able to attend the Regional TMC in-person training events, further supporting and connecting resources and partners together. They all collaborate with ION staff to recruit participants for regional TMC training sessions and identify future partners and host organizations for trailers. These efforts ensure that TMC Labs continue to expand their reach and impact, particularly in underserved areas. Hub Coordinators work with local TMC Lab hosts to provide opportunities to showcase the labs during events and meetings, including the regional STEM Day at the Fair events. ION staff worked



with Erin to find a new home for the North Idaho lab after its original host site was unable to continue the program.

Integration into EcosySTEM Initiatives

TMC Labs continue to play a significant role in EcosySTEM-sponsored events and meetings. Statewide Program Coordinator, Trisha Mick, has been working with TMC Labs leadership team, Amy Post and Claire Sponseller, to update STEM lesson plans and transition the Live Binder activities to the Community Platform. This transition will allow for a broader reach for partners outside of TMC Lab hosts to access valuable STEM resources.

EcosySTEM Director, Erica Compton, continues to serve on the TMC Labs Leadership Committee and Trisha Mick serves on the ION Steering Committee, ensuring strong communication and alignment with ION and other key partners.

14. What other programs is the EcosySTEM promoting or providing?

Utilizing a variety of communication channels, including the Community Platform, social media, monthly and quarterly newsletters, meetings, presentations, conference exhibits, and outreach events, the EcosySTEM team consistently promotes quality partner materials and programs. Beyond the previously mentioned initiatives, the team actively promotes a diverse array of materials including, but not limited to: Youth Apprenticeship Program, Idaho Connect, National STEM Challenge, National STEM Festival's Office Hours with STEM Professional videos and webinars, DiscoverE's Chat with Changemakers, W.IN Events SheTech and TechGirlz, FIRST Robotics, Hispanic Youth Leadership Summit, Invent Idaho, Inspiring Science Teacher Podcast, Million Girls Moonshot Flight Crew Opportunities, Project Learning Tree, PCS Edventures, LEGO Education, Club for the Future by Blue Origin, Be Athenian Programs, Science Olympiad, DiscoverE Engineering, Civil Air Patrol, BSU Programs and events, ISU STEMx and STEM Up, UofI STEM Expo, DataBot, ICTM Regional Math Meet Ups, Idaho Science Coaches, SDE's Science Pathway Project, INL Program and events, Idaho Rangeland Commission, Farm Bureau Ag in the Classroom, Palouse Pathways, Pitsco, Birds of Prey Northwest, Selkirk Outdoor Leadership and Education, Camp Wittman Outdoor Center, McCall Outdoor Science School, Boot Up, National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine newsletter with various STEM resources and webinars, Future Cities, Build the Moon Challenge, Northwest Earth and Space Science Pathway (NESSP) National Student Challenge, ISS Downlink Expedition 72: NASA In Flight Education Downlink, Workforce Development's Safety Fest, INL Sin Limites hiring workshop, Magic Valley Builders Association Construction Expo, Professional Women in Building Magic Valley, and more.



GENERAL QUESTIONS

15. Please describe best practices the EcosySTEM has identified outside of the state and how they are being incorporated into program delivery, and include practices, promotion, and results.

The EcosySTEM continues to demonstrate its commitment to incorporating best practices from outside the state into our program delivery, promotion, and strategic planning efforts. By engaging in national networks, attending conferences, and building relationships with other STEM Learning Ecosystems (SLEs), the Idaho EcosySTEM ensures that Idaho remains at the forefront of STEM education and workforce development.

In October 2024, the EcosySTEM team, alongside statewide partners Anna Almerico from Idaho Out of School Network and Dee Mooney from STEM AC, attended the SLECoP Annual Convening in Chicago. The theme, “Access in Action,” emphasized creating actionable solutions to bridge opportunity gaps in STEM. During this convening, the team connected with SLEs across the nation, sharing ideas and identifying practices that could be adapted for Idaho. For example, Trisha has recently met with a few youth-entrepreneurial programs such as VentureLab, Technovation, and Youth Engineering Solutions (YES), and has been collaborating on how we can engage these programs to expand IDX and/or IESA programs.

Erica’s continued work on SLECoP’s Leadership Coordinating Council (LC2) has further positioned Idaho as a leader in national conversations. The LC2 is currently helping shape strategic planning for SLEs nationwide, focusing on the five pillars of healthy and thriving ecosystems: equity, access, sustainability, community engagement, and innovation. These insights are directly influencing Idaho’s strategic planning process.

The EcosySTEM recently joined two national initiatives- STEM Opportunity Alliance and Beyond 100K- to deepen collaboration and engagement with national trends. Erica and Trisha have been actively attending meetings and conferences hosted by these groups to learn how Idaho can adopt and adapt emerging best practices in our work and better support our partners and educators in doing the same. Insights and resources from these conferences and meetings have been funneled into the EcosySTEM Community Platform, providing partners with access to cutting-edge research, articles, and whitepapers in a single location.



16. Please describe any collaborations with neighboring states, and what those states are doing in the area of STEM education.

The EcosySTEM has continued supporting the Montana STEM Ecosystem's development, with Erica and Trisha providing insights into Idaho's data collection, Community Platform, strategic planning, and hub structure. Erin Lanigan further strengthened this collaboration by attending Montana's STEM Summer Institute, sharing resources and best practices successfully implemented in Idaho.

While the EcosySTEM has maintained regular connections with neighboring states through meetings such as the Wild West Ecosphere, no new initiatives have been conducted in the past six months.

17. Please describe feedback and/or questions received when asked about the STEM AC and EcosySTEM relationship.

Over the past six months, the EcosySTEM staff have continued outreach efforts into new communities and organizations across Idaho, providing opportunities to better clarify the relationship between the STEM AC, the EcosySTEM, and our Regional Hubs. As we expand our presence and deepen our partnerships, there is a noticeable shift in understanding among our partners regarding how these entities collaborate to advance STEM education and workforce development in the state.

A significant observation has been the reduction in questions requiring an explanation of the differences between STEM AC and the EcosySTEM. Many partners now have a clearer understanding of the complementary roles played by both organizations, particularly as they see the EcosySTEM actively engaging at a regional level while the STEM AC remains a critical statewide resource and sponsor.

Minor feedback and concerns have persisted, echoing those that surfaced prior to July 2024. The primary concern among partners centers on the future of STEM AC, given that the EcosySTEM has taken on most of the programming and regional grant funding. These conversations have provided valuable opportunities for the EcosySTEM team to emphasize the essential and ongoing role of the STEM AC as a strong and necessary organization in Idaho's STEM education and workforce continuum. Thanks to the deep relationships the EcosySTEM team has built, we have been able to address these concerns effectively, presenting a unified vision that underscores the collaborative strength and shared goals of both organizations.



18. Please describe sustainability plans that the EcosySTEM has implemented so far this fiscal year.

The EcosySTEM has applied for several grants, although we have been unsuccessful in being awarded many of them. Currently, the EcosySTEM is pursuing a substantial grant from Idaho Commission for Libraries for the Digital Access for All Idahoans program to provide devices and digital literacy support to 21st Century Community Learning Centers and individuals in rural, refugee, and tribal communities across Idaho. Additionally, we are seeking a large grant from INL to support the expansion of the IESA program.

When seeking sponsorships and grants, our focus is often on supporting the expansion, growth, and innovative adaptations of programs beyond the capabilities of existing funding. While STEM AC's sponsorship funding allows us to host programs as they are currently designed, it does not cover the holistic growth of these initiatives, adaptation to changing technological needs, inclusion of non-public education populations, or deeper engagement with partners in new and unique ways. Securing additional funding enables us to create a greater impact in communities across Idaho by broadening access, incorporating cutting-edge technology, and expanding opportunities for collaboration.

Our collaborations with organizations like STEM Opportunity Alliance, Beyond 100K, and TIES have provided access to national networks and resources, enabling the EcosySTEM to adopt innovative practices and remain at the forefront of STEM ecosystem development. These partnerships also open doors to potential national funding opportunities. Erica has met with multiple statewide and national partners to explore sponsorships, including seeking a substantial sponsorship with INL to ensure sustained growth and impact.

REPRESENTATION AND SHARING

19. Describe any distribution of materials related to STEM AC programs and the estimated reach.

The EcosySTEM team consistently advocates for and distributes STEM AC materials and programs at outreach events, conferences, and partner meetings, facilitating educators' and community members' access to pertinent resources. During these events and meetings, Hub Coordinators encourage partners to participate in i-STEM Institutes and have recently directly reached out individuals to host strands during the 2025 summer. Each regional hub newsletter and statewide newsletter regularly incorporates updates and promotions for STEM AC programs. Regular



promotion of STEM AC and its programs are key features on the Community Platform and other social media channels.

BUDGET

20. How much has the EcosySTEM expended to date?

As of December 31, 2024, the EcosySTEM has expended \$589,184.

21. How much does the EcosySTEM anticipate expending through June 30, 2025?

As of June 30, 2025, the EcosySTEM expects to expend ~\$1,400,000.

22. What funding has been secured outside of the STEM AC Sponsorships to support the EcosySTEM?

Grants

- *Bews Foundation Grant:* The EcosySTEM was awarded \$5,000 to support the Western Idaho Science and Engineering Fair (WISEF).
- *WDC Industry Sector Grant:* Currently in the second year of a three-year grant totaling \$515,350, the EcosySTEM has received \$100,017 in reimbursements to date.
- *Pending Grants:* The EcosySTEM has applied for two large grants- one through the Idaho Commission for Libraries, approximately \$150,000 (Digital Access for All Idahoans program) and another from INL, approximately \$30,000 (Innovation in STEM program). Decisions on these applications are expected before the end of the fiscal year.

Sponsorships and Donations

- *INL Community Platform Sponsorship:* The EcosySTEM has secured \$15,000 from INL to support the Community Platform, which has grown significantly in value and utility since its launch. This funding addresses increased costs associated with maintaining and expanding the platform but does not support the entire cost.
- *Individual Donations:* The EcosySTEM has also received \$515 in individual sponsorships and donations.



23. How much cost savings is the EcosySTEM expecting, and how will those funds be used?

The EcosySTEM expects to expend all of the \$983,000 awarded by STEMAC by the end of fiscal year 2025. This equates to \$0.00 in cost savings.

DATA

Please send via an email an excel file with the following information:

- Total funding awarded through grants, a list of awards made, amounts of awards, matches of awards, the intended outcomes for each grant, metrics that will be collected from each grant including: demographics, numbers served (students and educator directly and indirectly), and newly discovered best practices.
- EcosySTEM Membership numbers by group (PreK-12, higher education, out of school education, industry, nonprofits, state and local government agencies, parents, and the legislature), and by region (based on Idaho's six regions).
- IDX team participation information by showcase location and age level
- STEM Student Ambassador program data including student growth, outreach, and activities or events
- Number of interactions with students and educators (list separately) outlined by programmatic area
- Results from surveys of programs and members including quantitative and qualitative data
- A list per HUB on: Events and/or activities

[FY25 Mid-Year Report Data.xlsx](#)

24. Please give use the appropriate information to highlight a success story from the EcosySTEM's work (no graphics- or design work- just content).

STEM INNC: CTE Trick or Treat Event, Region 1

The Parker Technical Education Center's Career and Technical Education Trick-or-Treat event in Rathdrum blended Halloween fun with hands-on STEM education, welcoming over 500 participants for an engaging and family-friendly experience. Hosted indoors at North Idaho College's Parker Center, attendees of all ages explored the many CTE programs through interactive lab stations, collecting candy, prizes, and program insights along the way.



Families enjoyed games and hands-on STEM activities like building balloon-powered cars and paper circuits, and guided tours of the center offered a closer look at the career pathways available.

“It’s a really great family atmosphere,” shared NIC Marketing and Events Coordinator Elli Michael. “Kids have fun walking through the halls while collecting candy and playing games, and parents can get some really good info about the programs we have.”

SWISH: Collaboration with Integra, Region 3

Through the regional EcosySTEM Hubs, industry partners have access to engagement opportunities across Idaho. One such opportunity was STEM Day at the Western Idaho Fair, led by the SWISH and industry partners including Integra Resources, Micron, Idaho Fish & Game, Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission, and the American Welding Society. Held on August 16, 2024, this event offered students a unique opportunity to explore STEM fields and careers through free hands-on activities. The event not only highlighted the importance of the mining industry but also showcased the value of industry engagement with regional EcosySTEM Hubs in fostering future talent.

Mining-themed activities, organized by Integra Resources, the Idaho Mining Association, and Women in Mining, were a highlight of STEM Day at the Fair. From cooking mining and bead sifting to a mined materials scavenger hunt, these activities made the mining industry accessible and exciting to thousands of community members.

The success of STEM Day at the Fair demonstrates the power of partnerships. SWISH’s collaboration with Integra Resources highlights how industry can work with educational initiatives to inspire and develop future STEM professionals. The benefits of industry engagement with organizations like SWISH go beyond education. The mining industry can help shape STEM education to align with workforce needs, addressing the skills gap, while fostering a deeper understanding of mining among students and the community.

“I really believe in this coalition concept- industry coming to the table in spaces like SWISH where that community is ready-made, rather than constantly trying to reinvent the wheel on our own,” says Emily Hendrickson, Integra Resources manager of external affairs.

ISSE STEM: Professional Women in Building Magic Valley, Region 4

On September 18, 2024, Professional Women in Building Magic Valley (PWBMV) hosted a transformative community event titled ‘Building an Empowered Woman from the Inside Out’,



designed to empower 65 women across various ages through hands-on skill development. The event featured a collaborative bed-building workshop with Sleep in Heavenly Peace (SHP), where 20 community volunteers worked together in assembly lines to construct beds for children. Participants engaged in comprehensive breakout sessions focused on essential fix-it skills and tool knowledge, with PWBMV providing scholarships for 10 high school female students to attend.

The event not only provided practical learning opportunities but also generated proceeds that were donated to SHP and created scholarship funds for women's professional development. These scholarships, determined by PWBMV board members, will support women in obtaining certifications, hands-on training, tools, and professional apparel.

PWBMV collaborated with an impressive array of local and regional partners, including Magic Valley Builders Association, Les Schwab Tire Centers, Dynamic Plumbing, Idaho Central Credit Union, and many other prominent organizations, collectively working to build stronger STEM communities and empower women through skill-based learning.

“I loved having the opportunity to attend this event in September put on by Sonya Haines and her amazing band of professional women. What a treat it was to meet so many incredible women in our community that not only collaborated for a great cause, but uplifted, and encouraged each other through the process. That day we had the opportunity to work alongside the volunteers of the Non-profit Sleep in Heavenly Peace- “No Kid Sleeps on the Floor in Our Town,” in building beds for kids in need. With work, focus, and laughter in between, this band of woman were able to build 11 beds for kids in need. We were also able to learn from other industry leaders on fixing electrical, plumbing, drywall, and tire changes. I am profoundly grateful for this experience and the woman I got to meet that day. Empowering woman is allowing woman to take the power into their own hands, and proving we are capable of anything.” Testimonial by Twin Falls County Fair Director, Lydia Buffington

ISEE STEM: Aberdeen Elementary School Coding Camp, Region 5

During Harvest Break from September 23-26, 2024, Aberdeen Elementary held its first ever Coding Camp for students in 1st and 2nd grade. This exciting event provided a hands-on introduction to the world of coding and computer science, sparking curiosity and creativity in young learners. District STEM Director, Erin Johnson stated, “It was fun to give the kids a chance to see that coding is not just typing on a keyboard. It requires problem solving and planning ahead.”



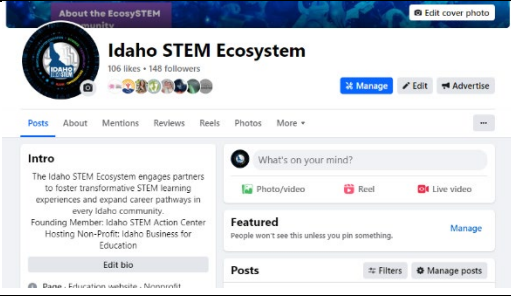
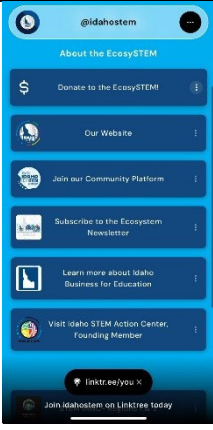

On the first day, students were introduced to the basics of coding in a fun and engaging way by “coding” a sandcastle, and then each other. As the week progressed, participants were able to engage more deeply in coding through the use of block-based programming and Scratch Jr. The camp culminated in an exciting final challenge: students programmed Ozobot robots to tell a story blending coding with creativity. One parent shared, “My daughter was so excited to get up early on a vacation day. She wouldn’t stop talking about it!”

MATERIALS

25. Please describe and send samples via email how and where the STEM Action Center was referred to in the Idaho EcosySTEM’s materials, events, and online presence.

<p>A. EcosySTEM’s Website: www.idahostem.org , added as a footer to all pages</p>	 <p>BENEFITS for your organization by joining the Idaho STEM Ecosystem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network and connect with partners involved in STEM education from regional to state Develop IDAHO STEM initiatives to create a prosperous Mainland economy Be recognized as a leader in STEM in Idaho <p>IDAHO BUSINESS for EDUCATION</p> <p>IDAHO STEM ECOSYSTEM</p> <p>IDAHO STEM ACTION CENTER</p>
<p>B. EcosySTEM Newsletters: added as a footer to statewide and regional newsletters.</p>	 <p>Join us on the Community platform! Connect with partners, learn new strategies, share your passions, and grow Idaho's future!</p> <p>IDAHO STEM ACTION CENTER</p> <p>Copyright (C) 2024 Idaho STEM Ecosystem. All rights reserved. You are receiving this email because you opted in via our website.</p> <p>Our mailing address is: Idaho STEM Ecosystem 877 W Main St Ste 700 Boise, ID 83702-5887 USA</p> <p>Want to change how you receive these emails? You can update your preferences or unsubscribe</p>
<p>C. Community Platform: community.idahostem.org , welcome page</p>	 <p>Contact EcosySTEM Program Coordinator about programs, training, and funding opportunities. Trisha Micks</p> <p>Erik Latham Rebecca Lulu Sara Haines Regions 5, & 6 Arlene Schaffner</p> <p>IDAHO STEM ACTION CENTER</p>



<p>D. Social Media: Included on bios on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. STEM AC accounts are tagged where available.</p>	
<p>E. Linktree: STEM AC tagged and linked, Linktree added to all social media and newsletter communications.</p>	
<p>F. Tablecloths: Added to tablecloths and regional tablecloths follow same format.</p>	
<p>G. Additional Marketing: Banners, printed materials, and flyers created by the Ecosystem.</p>	