



MEDIA CONTACT: Amy Foster Parish, 703-472-5997, aparish@familieslearning.org

National Center for Families Learning supports STEM careers with new grant

Organizations in Arizona, Kentucky, and Texas will receive \$50,000 to help connect adults and secondary students with in-demand STEM jobs.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LOUISVILLE, KY (September 15, 2026) – The National Center for Families Learning (NCFL) is investing in communities that are ready to take a multigenerational approach to workforce development for science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers. NCFL has issued three seed grants of \$50,000 each to support innovative efforts to implement STEM-focused workforce learning and credentialing programs that simultaneously serve students in grades 6-12 and their parents.

Award recipients will support families as they work to attain developmentally-appropriate credentials of value in high-growth industries across their region. [Research demonstrates](#) that earning credentials of value can boost short-term wage gains and help workers reposition their skills in a rapidly changing labor market, leading to new career entry, lateral or upward mobility, and long-term earnings.

“Parents are engaging with STEM careers on two fronts: wondering how they can access these growing job opportunities for themselves and considering how to prepare their children for the workforce of tomorrow,” says NCFL President & CEO Dr. Felicia Cumings Smith. “Through these innovative pilot projects, families can learn and grow together, providing parents and their children with opportunities to build new skills, earn in-demand credentials, and gain workforce training that can lead to well-paying jobs and greater economic mobility within their communities.”

NCFL is pleased to announce the grant recipients in Arizona, Kentucky, and Texas.

In Arizona, **Gilbert Public Schools Career and Technical Education Department** will receive funds to support their *East Valley STEM Family Exploration and Credential Pathways* project, which is designed to build multigenerational career awareness and workforce readiness in high-demand sectors such as IT, cybersecurity, advanced manufacturing, robotics, and semiconductor production. The East Valley is home to a growing number of large-scale technology companies, but many families remain disconnected from emerging job opportunities. The initiative follows three phases: STEM Exploration, STEM

Preparation, and Credential Attainment. In the Credential Attainment phase, participants are exposed to all core content areas with the opportunity to earn up to two industry-recognized certifications, including the Critical Career Skills (CCS) Professional Communication certification. Through employer panels, site visits, and partnerships with local education and workforce institutions such as the Chandler-Gilbert Community College, East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT), and the Gilbert Chamber of Commerce, families gain a clearer understanding of how to find, prepare for, and secure high-demand, high-paying jobs in the region.

In Kentucky, **Jessamine County Adult Education** will receive funds to support their *Building STEM Futures: A Multigenerational Diesel Technology Pathway* project, which connects families to workforce learning and credentials aligned with high-demand careers in transportation, logistics, and advanced manufacturing. In partnership with Jessamine County Schools' Diesel Mechanics Program, participating youth will prepare for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certifications, simultaneously supporting career decision-making, technical training, and credential attainment. Parents and caregivers will participate in adult education and workforce development courses through Jessamine County Adult Education and Jessamine County Career and Technology Center, gaining access to certification and training, digital literacy, employability skills, and financial literacy. Students and parents will pursue skill development side-by-side, strengthening educational attainment and family engagement while building a pipeline of skilled workers for Kentucky's vital transportation sector.

In Texas, the **Institute for School and Community Partnerships (ISCP) at Texas A & M University-San Antonio** will receive funds to support their *STEM Families Forward: A Multigenerational Workforce Pathway Initiative*, a new project designed to increase family economic mobility and strengthen participation in high-demand STEM career pathways in support of their Toyota Driving Possibilities program and in partnership with East Central Independent School District (ECISD) Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. The effort focuses on workforce learning and credentialing for students and their parents in high-demand sectors across the region. Students will prepare for industry-recognized credentials aligned with regional workforce demand, including Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA), Pharmacy Technician, FAA Drone Pilot Certification, and other areas. Parent and caregiver participants will engage in workforce-aligned credential pathways connected to healthcare, manufacturing, logistics, and digital workforce sectors through established partnerships with community colleges, workforce agencies, employers, and community organizations.

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About the National Center for Families Learning (NCFL)

NCFL is a national nonprofit that has worked for more than 35 years to eradicate poverty through education solutions for families. We believe education is a shared, nonpartisan responsibility and that collaboration among families, schools, and community members can lead to powerful learning experiences. NCFL's vision is to establish coordinated and aligned family learning systems in 60 communities, built with and for families, to increase education and economic outcomes and create

thriving communities. For more information on NCFL, visit familieslearning.org. To learn more about our vision or become a Family Learning Community™ partner, visit familieslearning.org/flc.