APRIL
2026

National Girls Collaborative Project

NGCP

MISSOURI GIRLS COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

Missouri Girls Collaborative Project Launch – Missouri is now home to a new initiative connecting girls across the state with mentors in STEM careers. The program will feature workshops, coding challenges, and innovation showcases, aiming to close gender gaps in tech and engineering fields.

Quick Insights:

Our Mission

To CONNECT, CREATE, and COLLABORATE to transform the STEM experience for all youth and advance gender equity in the field.

Overview

The National Girls Collaborative Project (NGCP) is a network of organizations committed to informing and encouraging girls to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

Founded in 2002 and partially funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), the NGCP uses a "NETWORK of NETWORKS" model to bring together thousands of organizations across the United States. The goal is to reduce duplication of effort, share resources and best practices, and maximize the impact of programs dedicated to girls in STEM. The NGCP facilitates collaboration among more than 42,500 organizations, which collectively reach over 20 million girls and 10 million boys.

NGCP'S THREE PRIORITY GOALS

1. Build and sustain a network of advocates to provide equitable and inclusive STEM opportunities.
2. Catalyze equity in STEM from research to practice by providing actionable knowledge that transforms the STEM experience.
3. Increase our collective impact by strengthening organizational effectiveness and enhancing our fiscal sustainability.

How to Get Involved?

Whether you're a student, parent, Professional educator, or STEM professional, there are plenty of ways to join the movement. Sign up for local workshops, mentor young innovators, nominate a STEM STL HERo, or share your story with our community. Together, we can expand opportunities, inspire future leaders, and build a stronger STEM network across Missouri.

STEM Connect

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At the VEX Robotics World Championship this April, the energy around empowering young women in STEM was unmistakable. During the Girl Powered Girl Talks, sponsored by the Robot Education & Competition Foundation, students had the opportunity to connect, reflect, and be inspired. One especially meaningful moment featured Sarah Jones from Nidec Corporation, who spoke candidly about her journey in STEM. Her message about the importance of finding "your people"—a community that supports, understands, and uplifts you—deeply resonated with the young women in attendance. For many, especially those who may feel underrepresented in STEM spaces, her words were both affirming and empowering.

Moments like these remind us that success in STEM isn't just about skills and knowledge—it's also about connection, belonging, and lifting each other up along the way.

MO Girls STEM Snapshot of the Month

We need You!

Nominate a STEM HERoes at Medusasrobotics@gmail.com

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5 Directions, 1 Mission

As excitement builds around the next phase of the Artemis Program, the mission continues to represent more than a return to the Moon—it's a bold step toward the future of exploration. Central to this effort are the leaders helping bring these missions to life, including Christina Koch, whose work highlights the critical role of innovation, precision, and collaboration in spaceflight.

Koch's leadership and expertise serve as a powerful example of what's possible in aerospace careers, especially for young women looking to see themselves in these roles. Her contributions to Artemis reflect not only technical excellence, but also the importance of diverse perspectives in solving the complex challenges of space exploration.

As Artemis prepares to send humans back to the Moon and beyond, leaders like Koch remind us that the future of space will be shaped by those willing to dream big—and work together to make it happen.

Missouri Connection: From the Show-Me State to the Moon

Missouri has its own place in the journey to the Moon through the work of Boeing, which plays a key role in the Artemis Program. With a strong presence in St. Louis, Boeing contributes to the Space Launch System (SLS)—the powerful rocket designed to carry astronauts deeper into space than ever before.

This connection means that right here in Missouri, engineers, designers, and innovators are helping shape the future of space exploration. For students across the state, it's a powerful reminder: the path to the Moon doesn't just start at NASA—it can start right here at home.

BOEING

April is National Volunteer Month

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." — Helen Keller

MOgirlsLEAD: Women in Aviation

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5 Directions, 1 Mission

Across Missouri, women have been part of aviation's story from its earliest breakthroughs to today's cutting-edge aerospace industry. Their contributions span flight schools, military service, engineering labs, and even space exploration-often shaping the field in ways that are powerful, though not always widely recognized.

One of the most iconic figures connected to the region is Amelia Earhart, who spent formative years in the Kansas City area and became a global symbol of courage and possibility in aviation. Her legacy continues to inspire generations of pilots who see the sky not as a limit, but as an invitation.

That legacy took on new urgency during World War II, when *women stepped into critical aviation* roles through the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP). Leaders such as Jacqueline Cochran and Nancy Harkness Love helped organize and lead the program, which trained women to ferry military aircraft, test planes, and support essential wartime operations. Many of these missions were connected to aviation routes and training networks that passed through the Midwest, including Missouri airfields such as St. Louis Lambert International Airport. While individual WASP pilots came from across the country, their collective work ensured that women were an indispensable part of military aviation history.

Today, that legacy continues in both visible and behind-the-scenes ways across Missouri's aerospace landscape. One of the most notable modern examples is Linda Godwin, a Cape Girardeau native who became a NASA astronaut and completed multiple space shuttle missions. Her journey reflects how Missouri talent has extended from local classrooms to missions beyond Earth's atmosphere.

Across the state, women are also driving aviation forward in less publicly recognized but equally essential roles. At aerospace companies such as Boeing in St. Louis, women engineers, technicians, and flight test professionals contribute to the design and production of advanced military and commercial aircraft used around the world. In the Missouri Air National Guard and related aviation units, women serve as pilots, maintenance officers, and mission leaders, ensuring readiness and operational excellence. *Meanwhile, in flight schools across cities like St. Louis, Columbia, and Springfield, women flight instructors are training the next generation of pilots, steadily increasing representation in the cockpit.*

Together, these stories form a continuum-from early pioneers who proved women could belong in aviation, to wartime trailblazers who expanded that role under pressure, to today's professionals shaping the future of flight and aerospace innovation.

Across Missouri, women in aviation are not only part of history-they are actively writing its next chapter.

#MOgirlsLEAD #WomenInAviation #GirlsInSTEM #LeadTheFuture

April is volunteer Month!

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5 Directions, 1 Mission

MISSOURI Aviation / Flight / Drone / Aerospace / Space STEM Summer Camps (K–12) including cost level tags (FREE / LOW COST / PAID).

Comprehensive Aerospace Camps

Missouri S&T Aerospace Camps (Rolla):
The state's premier program for grades 4–12. Topics include flight simulation, rocket launches, and UAV engineering. Options include residential or day camps (Cost: $450–$1,200).

Missouri 4-H Aerospace & STEM Camps:
Statewide county-based programs for grades K–12 focusing on aerodynamics and robotics. Offers low-cost entries into rocket flight principles (Cost: $0–$200).

Duchesne Aviation Camp (St. Louis Metro):
Targeted at middle schoolers (grades 6–8), focusing on pilot concepts, navigation, and aircraft systems (Cost: $200–$500) .
Flight Experience & Regional Outreach

Young Eagles (EAA Chapters - Statewide):
Provides youth (ages 8–17) their first actual flight experience in a small aircraft with certified pilots. This is an essential entry point for aspiring pilots (Cost: FREE).

Gateway Youth Aeronautical Foundation (STL Region):
Hands-on hangar visits, flight simulations, and aviation career exposure for K–12 students (Cost: FREE to Low Cost) .

Columbia / Mid-Missouri Aviation Exposure:
Regional STEM outreach events and mini-camps focused on aviation careers and aircraft exposure (Cost: FREE to Low Cost) .

Drones, Robotics & Tech Missouri Drone / UAV & Robotics Programs:
Short-form workshops and "bootcamps" covering FAA basics, drone flight, and coding. Often integrated with robotics (Cost: FREE to $300).

Challenger Learning Center St. Louis

Challenger Learning Centers are immersive, hands-on science education facilities created to honor the crew of the Space Shuttle Challenger by continuing their educational mission. Founded by the families of the fallen astronauts in 1986, these centers operate as a global network, providing simulation-based STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) programs to students, primarily in grades K-12.

North | South | East (St. Louis) | West (Kansas City) | Central (Rolla)

5 Directions, 1 Mission

MOnorth, MOsouth, MOeast, MOwest, MOcentral

Did You Know? – Women in Aviation

Women are increasingly entering the field of aviation, yet they still represent only about 10% of pilots in the United States. While the skies have opened up far more in recent decades, aviation remains a field where women are underrepresented—especially in commercial piloting and leadership roles within aerospace.

Missouri has an important early pioneer who helped change what was possible in flight. Phoebe Omlie, born in St. Louis, was one of the first women in the country to earn a transport pilot's license and also became the first woman to receive an aircraft mechanic's license. In the 1920s and 1930s, she gained national recognition as a stunt pilot and later served in aviation leadership roles during World War II, advising on aviation training and civilian pilot programs. Her work helped expand opportunities for women in both technical and piloting roles at a time when very few doors were open to them.

Today, women continue to build on that legacy across Missouri—in flight training programs, aerospace engineering, air traffic control, and military aviation—carrying forward a tradition of innovation, courage, and technical skill in the field of flight.

For School Partnerships and Pre-College Programs, check out:

- Saint Louis University, Parks College of Engineering, Aviation and Technology
- University of Central Missouri Aviation Program (Warrensburg)
- Missouri University of Science and Technology, Aerospace Engineering
- University of Missouri System – Aerospace and STEM outreach initiatives

Kansas City Aviation Academy (aviation-focused career pathways in the region)

NASA - National Aeronautics and Space Administration ' "Your Name in Landsat" tool, your name is created using real satellite images of Earth-rivers, mountains, and landscapes that naturally form each letter!

Resource Spotlight:

Women in Aviation INTERNATIONAL

MOgirls READ STEM

K–3rd Grade
I Am Amelia Earhart – Brad Meltzer

4th–6th Grade
Amelia Lost: The Life and Disappearance of Amelia Earhart – Candace Fleming

Teens (Middle / High School)
Fly Girls: How Five Daring Women Defied All Odds and Made Aviation History – Keith O'Brien

Adults
West with the Night – Beryl Markham

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Summer 2026 STEM Professional Development (Low/No Cost)

Missouri+NationalOpportunitiesforEducators&STEMLeaders

All Things Flight

Missouri educators:
Top National Resources (NASA & FAA)

- **NASA Educator Professional Development (EPD): Free virtual and in-person workshops for K-12 educators focusing on the Artemis mission, spaceflight, and aeronautics. Includes classroom-ready curriculum and simulations.**
- **NASA Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) Toolkit: Free self-paced PD focusing on the future of flight, including drones and electric aircraft.**
- **FAA STEM AVSED Program: Free resources and webinars aligning classroom learning with aviation career pathways such as piloting, drone operation, and air traffic control.**

Top Missouri-Based Resources

- **Top Drone Academy Educator Conference: A Missouri DESE partner program for middle and high school CTE/STEM teachers. Provides hands-on drone flight training and FAA certification guidance.**
- **Missouri S&T STEM Outreach (Rolla, MO): Low-cost to free summer institutes and workshops for K-12 educators covering aerospace engineering, robotics, and flight science.**
- **Missouri 4-H STEM & Aerospace Training: Statewide workshops and extension programs providing classroom kits and activity guides for rockets, drones, and engineering design.**

Quick Summary for Classroom Implementation

- **Best for Lesson Plans: NASA EPD (simulations and mission-based STEM).**
- **Best for Hands-On Kits: Missouri 4-H STEM (engineering challenges and project support).**
- **Best for Workforce Prep: FAA AVSED (career pathway alignment).**

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Check it OUT!