

Improving Mentorship in STEM Higher Education Act



THE NEED FOR MENTORSHIP IN STEM

United States leadership in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) depends on significantly growing our workforce in these fields. Colleges and universities across the country seek to set up their STEM students for success, which then bolsters American research, innovation and leadership on the global stage.

To recruit and retain more early-career STEM researchers, we must train students in supportive and constructive environments. While academic advisors have outsized impacts on the professional development and trajectory of their mentees, mentorship is not a skill that is typically taught or prioritized. This is to the detriment of students who have negative experiences with their advisors and get pushed out of the STEM pipeline.

Furthermore, mentorship is essential for building a diverse workforce. In fact, graduate students — especially those from underrepresented backgrounds — cite positive mentoring relationships as the most important factor in completing a STEM degree.



THE SOLUTION

The Improving Mentorship in STEM Higher Education Act invests in mentorship to help early-career researchers thrive in the STEM workforce. Specifically, the bill directs the National Science Foundation (NSF) to:

- Create a demonstration program to support projects that improve mentorship practices and provide resources for graduate researchers, postdoctoral researchers, and faculty, with special consideration for institutions that serve underrepresented populations.
- Assess the effectiveness of the demonstration program on increasing the quality of mentorship in STEM education and report these findings to Congress.
- Require institutions of higher education that receive NSF funding to disseminate information on existing institutional and agency reporting processes for any professional misconduct, including discrimination, harassment, or retaliation.