Guide to Connecting With an Afterschool Program

1. Find an afterschool STEM program.
   These resources will help you find opportunities to connect with programs in your community:

   **National Lab Network**: An initiative to build communities of support for STEM learning by matching educators with STEM professionals. Check the website to see if anyone in your area is looking for help.

   **Connect a Million Minds**: An initiative from Time Warner Cable to connect children and youth to afterschool STEM opportunities. Search the "Connectory" for activities and resources in your community.

   **National Girls Collaborative Project Directory**: This directory lists organizations and programs that focus on motivating girls to pursue careers in STEM.

   **Afterschool Ambassadors**:Personally selected by the Afterschool Alliance, these Ambassadors represent some of the most effective afterschool programs and advocacy organizations in the country. They are a great resource if you are looking to connect with a leader in the afterschool community.

   **State Afterschool Networks**: 40 states have their own afterschool networks that share ideas and resources to advance afterschool in their state. Check to see if your state has a network and talk to them about their STEM programming needs and priorities.

   **Afterschool in My Community**: Resources from the Afterschool Alliance.
2. **Determine a realistic level of commitment.**

Before getting involved with a program, consider your own availability and determine what time commitment and level of responsibility you would be willing to take on.

Brainstorm ways in which you could contribute to a program. What can you offer? For example: mentoring, tutoring, helping staff develop curriculum and lesson plans, leading a demonstration or experiment for kids, speaking about your career, hosting a tour of your workplace, donating extra supplies or materials, or maybe fulfilling a specific need expressed by the program.

3. **Determine if you’ll need funding.**

Do you need funding to cover your time or can you volunteer your time? If you have a particular project in mind, do the materials needed cost money? Do you need funding to cover the cost of the materials?

4. **Getting in touch with a program.**

Once you’ve identified a potential program to work with and determined what you’re able to offer them, now it’s time to reach out to the program staff. Be prepared with specific questions to ask the staff and be able to answer their questions about your experience, background and what you’re willing to bring to the program. Equal engagement and commitment by all parties involved are the foundation of long term, meaningful partnerships. Use the questions below to guide your conversation:

1) Is there an established volunteer program?
2) What paperwork and background checks are necessary prior to volunteering?
3) Has the afterschool program offered STEM programs before? If so, what have they done and how did it go? Did they partner with anyone to offer that program? (Inquire about the partnership and how it was structured to get a better idea of expectations) If not - what is the interest level in offering STEM?
4) What is the staff’s level of experience with science?
5) What level of commitment is required (weekly, monthly, school year, etc.)?
6) What are the expectations? Is the program expecting that you come in and run the program yourself or partner with staff? Or that you train staff to teach the curriculum?

5. **Once you’ve determined how you can help, start planning how to maximize impact through your interactions with the kids.**

a. This guide from [Techbridge](http://www.techbridgegirls.org/RoleModels.aspx) offers role models tools and resources for effective activities:

b. Check out these resources collected by the [National Girls Collaborative Project](http://www.fabfems.org/resources) for role models.