

**Testimony to the New York State Senate Finance and
Assembly Ways and Means Committees Higher Education Hearing**

February 14, 2025
Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York

For nearly four decades, STEP and CSTEP Programs have distinguished themselves as New York State's only network of pipeline programs within its Opportunity Program portfolio specifically designed to prepare secondary, undergraduate, and professional school students for STEM, health, and licensed professions. STEP and CSTEP's multiplier effect has helped New York State meet the need for a highly skilled workforce while generating high-income tax earners who reinvest in their communities. STEP and CSTEP work for NYS!


Despite its record as effective and efficient programs, the Executive Budget, again, reduces funding for STEP and CSTEP. This year's Executive Budget proposes cuts totaling \$1.6 million - 4.37% for each program. APACS requests a restoration of these cuts plus a 20% increase in funding for each program - a total of \$7.6 million - to bring the total allocation from \$38.3 million to \$46 million.

The 2026 fiscal year marks a new five-year contract cycle for STEP and CSTEP - 2025-2030. Any cuts sustained this fiscal year will eliminate projects for the next five years. Moreover, without a restoration of the Governor's cuts and at least a 20% increase, the network will sustain a significant loss of projects throughout the state that will impact the public and independent sectors across all grade levels - secondary, undergraduate, and professional schools. The ripple effects of eliminating projects will interrupt the legacy and destabilize the infrastructure at Institutions of Higher Education that have institutionalized STEP and CSTEP programs as pipeline programs that prepare students across the state for the most rigorous fields. This interruption will also further negatively impact New York's future workforce needs.

A calibration to the funding formula increased the per-student headcount and allowed projects to apply for more money. While the opportunity to write for more money was desperately needed, the network of programs now faces an imminent threat to its stability and legacy. Simply stated, the current allocation will not sustain the network of 118 CSTEP and STEP projects in two-year and four-year CUNY, SUNY, and Independent colleges and universities.

Restoration of the Governor's cuts and a funding increase are needed to avoid the elimination of projects that will devastate the ability of the STEP and CSTEP network to produce students to meet the growing demand for STEM, healthcare, and licensed professionals. A restoration and additional funding of 20% will allow the network to:

- Increase Enrollment throughout the state and expand critical programming, such as internships, mentorships, and research opportunities as students prepare for their chosen professions.

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- Retain & Graduate students as they complete coursework and attain mastery level to enter targeted fields. New York State needs more STEP and CSTEP programs!

The critical, high-impact practices our programs employ in providing direct support – academic advising and professional development – along with a community that facilitates a sense of belonging on campuses and within the majors they are pursuing are what our Institutions of Higher Education rely on to serve students in their respective neighboring communities and on their campuses. Research has proven that communities like the ones STEP and CSTEP create on college and university campuses inspire students to persevere, thus impacting retention and graduation rates in highly rigorous programs of study.

As effective and efficient programs whose graduates contribute to critical STEM, health, and licensed professions across New York State, we owe it to the next generation to restore and increase funding for STEP and CSTEP.

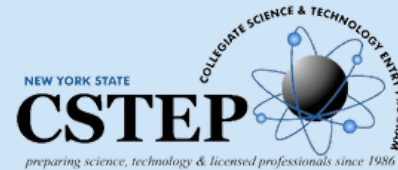
Respectfully submitted,

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APACS

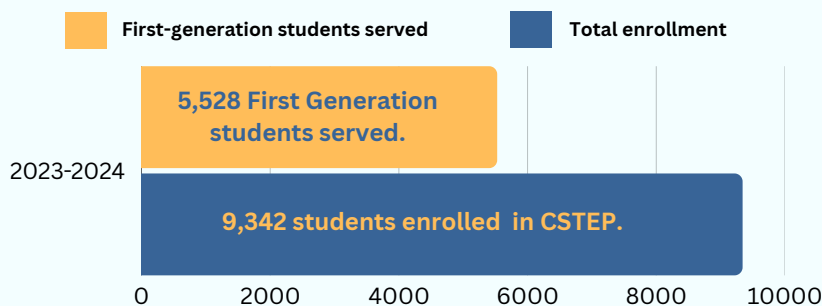
Association for Program Administrators of CSTEP and STEP, Inc.



2025 CSTEP Fact Sheet

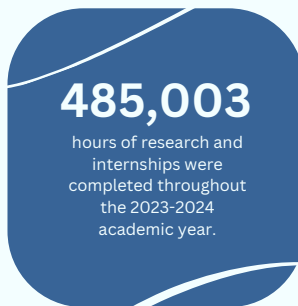
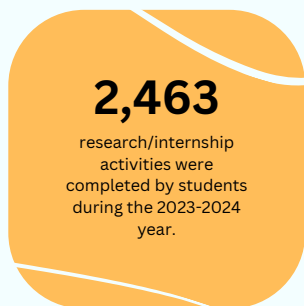
Program Mission

To increase the representation of historically underrepresented and economically disadvantaged students in STEM, health, and licensed fields in New York State.



CSTEP's Impact

For thirty-seven years, CSTEP has provided academic and career advisement, internships and research opportunities, career activities and services and support for standardized test preparation.



Importance of CSTEP for the NYS economy

Program alumni are more than likely to stay and work in New York State in high paying STEM, health, and licensed fields that contribute to the NYS tax base. STEM, health, and licensed professionals are vital in meeting the needs of the 21st century economy and job market in our state and nation.

CSTEP's National Recognition

CSTEP and STEP are nationally recognized programs that have made New York State a leader in preparing talented students for careers in STEM and licensed fields.



2003 recipient of the National Science Foundation Presidential Award of Excellence for Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring.

Highlights

The current funding for CSTEP is \$16.5 million.

Sixty two (62) projects currently serve students throughout New York State.

Projects are housed in **Independent, SUNY, CUNY, and two-year Community Colleges.**

There were **9,342 students** enrolled in CSTEP projects in 2023-2024.

Our Reach

Since 1987, CSTEP projects have helped graduate **approximately 182,107 students** following its creation by the NYS Legislature.

Alumni

Historically, over 70% of CSTEP graduates pursue professional degree programs of study in STEM and targeted fields.

Between 1987 to 2024, CSTEP has graduated **over 39,952 students.**

In the 2023-2024 year, STEP and CSTEP served more than 25,500 students.

Among our graduates are Rhodes and Fulbright scholars and recipients of many other prestigious awards.

NYSED compiled data sourced from STEP and CSTEP annual reports

For more information contact: Renaldo D. Alba, Ed.D. , President, APACS Inc.

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APACS

Association for Program
Administrators of
CSTEP and STEP, Inc.



2025 STEP Fact Sheet

Program Mission

To increase the number of historically underrepresented and economically disadvantaged students (grades 7th-12th) prepared to enter college, and improve their participation rate in STEM, health, and licensed fields in the New York State.

16,167

students were enrolled in STEP projects throughout New York State in 2023-2024.

STEP's Impact

For thirty-eight years, STEP has provided academic enrichment in science and mathematics content areas. Projects consist of academic year and summer components including:

- Core subject instruction/Regents preparation
- Supervised internship & research training
- High School and College admissions advisement
- Standardized test preparation
- Career awareness/development activities

1,632

Research and internship activities were completed by students during the 2023-2024 year.

79,638

hours of research and internship activities were completed during the 2023-2024 year.

Importance of STEP for the NYS economy

Program alumni are more than likely to stay and work in New York State in high paying STEM, health, and licensed fields that contribute to the NYS tax base. STEM, health, and licensed professionals are vital in meeting the needs of the 21st century economy and job market in our state and nation.



2003 recipient of the National Science Foundation Presidential Award of Excellence for Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring.

Highlights

The current funding for STEP is \$21.8 million.

Fifty six (56) projects currently serve students throughout New York State.

Projects are housed in **Independent, SUNY, CUNY, and two-year Community Colleges.**

There were **16,167 students** enrolled in STEP projects in 2023-2024.

Our Reach

Since 1986, STEP projects have helped graduate **approximately 280,893 students** following its creation by the NYS Legislature.

Alumni

Historically, approximately 80% of STEP graduates pursue professional degree programs of study in STEM and STEP targeted fields.

STEP has graduated approximately **39,893 students** from 1986 to 2024.

In the 2023-2024 year, STEP and CSTEP served more than 25,500 students.

NYSED compiled data sourced from STEP and CSTEP annual reports

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