



# From Classroom to Careers



## Your State's Blueprint for Competitive STEM Talent

### Elevating STEM Recognition

#### The Challenge

FIRST® has long been the only sport where every kid can go pro. K-12 students are building job-ready skills today, but states are not consistently validating those achievements as part of their economic strategy.

#### The Call to Action

Governors can immediately elevate STEM talent and signal workforce priorities by formally recognizing FIRST as a premier pipeline to high-demand careers:

- **Recognize Excellence:** Host your state's FIRST teams and champions at the Governor's Mansion or State Legislature to celebrate student achievement.
- **Designate FIRST as a Model Partnership:** Publicly highlight FIRST as a leading public-private partnership that prepares students for 21st-century careers.
- **Showcase Workforce Readiness:** Proclaim and host a **FIRST Day at the Capitol** to spotlight students, employers, and educators building your future workforce.



"Joining FIRST gave me exposure to what I could be when I grew up. My robotics coaches truly were the catalysts for me to say, 'I think I can try anything.' Through FIRST, I learned it was okay to be ambitious and to state my ambitions."

— ERIN MITCHELL, FIRST ALUMNI AND COMMERCIAL AVIONICS AT RTX

### Scaling the 21st-Century Workforce

#### The Challenge

America's innovation and manufacturing economy cannot wait until college to develop STEM talent. Too many students are locked out of high-impact learning without scalable systems for recognition, alignment, and funding pathways.

#### The Call to Action

Governors can lead a systemic solution **now** by aligning education, workforce, and economic development around proven models:

- **Align to State Industry Needs:** Direct state agencies to formally integrate FIRST into workforce and economic development strategies to identify and grow the K-12 technical talent your industries need.
- **Designate FIRST as a CTSO:** Recognize FIRST as a **Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO)**, enabling schools to integrate it into CTE programs, reduce administrative barriers, and access Perkins funding.
- **Activate Existing Federal Funds:** Deploy already-available **Title IV, Part A (ESSA)** Student Support and Academic Enrichment funds — explicitly allowed for STEM nonprofit competitions — to launch and scale FIRST teams statewide.

**FIRST is More Than Robots.® Learn more at [www.firstinspires.org/workforce-ready](http://www.firstinspires.org/workforce-ready)**

FIRST®, the FIRST® logo, and More Than Robots® are trademarks of For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST). © 2026 FIRST All rights reserved.