

# Girls in STEM Annual Report

2025



# 2025 Sponsors



Phyllis and Raymond Simon  
Knox Service, LLC



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# Girls in STEM Mission

01



Girls in STEM aims to address the gender gap in Arkansas's STEM workforce by igniting and fueling a passion for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in young Arkansan girls through accessible dynamic interactions with local women STEM professionals.



# Year Overview

02

**9 Weeks of  
Camps**

**45 Distinct  
Mentor  
Organizations**

**176  
Registrations\***

**103 First-Time  
Participants**

**38 Unique  
Zip Codes\***

**651  
Lunches  
Provided\***

This year saw 9 total camps across 5 different locations including 1 Leadership Institute and 4 Girls in STEM camps in the Museum Center next door to the Museum of Discovery, 1 Girls in STEM camp at University of Central Arkansas, 1 Girls in STEM camp at the University of Arkansas, 1 Community Partner week at Billy Mitchell Boys and Girls Club, and 1 Community Partner week at Life Skills for Youth (LSY).

\* Excludes Community Partner Weeks

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# Leadership Institute

03

## 3 Days of Workshops for ages 15-18

The Leadership Institute focuses on college and career readiness. This year we opened the institute to applications from non-participants.

16 Participants

Participants earned a total of 212 volunteer hours as Girls in STEM Counselors in July

In an effort to extend GiS's impact in the community and build our own volunteer base, this summer we invited applications from the general public.

Workshops included resumes, mock interviews, financial literacy, mental/emotional wellbeing, college admissions & scholarships, and a SoMa Women's Business Owners Panel featuring owners of Esse Purse Museum, Loblolly, and Green Corner Store.

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# Community Partner Weeks

04

## Afternoon mentor sessions brought to existing programs in Little Rock.

In 2023 we discovered there were several less-affluent zip codes in Little Rock/North Little Rock that were underrepresented or missing entirely from our participant pool. This was the second year of Community Partner weeks, maintaining one in Southwest Little Rock at Life Skills for Youth, and growing into a partnership with the Central Arkansas Boys and Girls Club through the Billy Mitchell Club on W Capital Ave.

Both partners this year reached girls unfamiliar with the program outside of our week. We were able to provide impactful sessions that engaged the girls in new career options and ended our week with a field trip to the museum.

Because of tight summer scheduling, one group week included an off day for the Juneteenth holiday.



## Changes from Last Year

- Changed of first day programming to museum staff only to establish the week.
- Switch from Southwest Community Center to Billy Mitchell Boys and Girls Club.
- Fall outreaches to Boys and Girls Clubs bolstered interest.



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# Northwest Arkansas

05

## Girls in STEM camp held at University Arkansas College of Engineering

One week of camp, ages 12-14, using NWA based mentors.

### 13 participants/13 Registrations

Thanks to the Arconic Foundation, we brought our first camp to Northwest Arkansas. We look forward to continuing to foster partnerships in the area this next year.

Outreach efforts were mostly remote including social media advertisements, coordination with school principals, local libraries, and existing community centers like Springdale's Jones Center.

With 100% participation from registrants, and plans to improve local outreach we are hopeful to expand our reach particularly as it relates to Marshallese and Hispanic communities.

We welcomed mentors from the Grady Harvell Civil Engineering Research Center, UofA Physics, I3R Institute, Garver, Kawneer (an Arconic company), Tyson, and the UofA College of Engineering.



# Conway

## Girls in STEM camp held at University of Central Arkansas

One week of camp, ages 12-14, using primarily Conway based mentors.

### 26 participants/27 Registrations

Conway is a longstanding Girls in STEM location outside of Little Rock and it has become a competitive camp to get into. All 20 spots for the camp were filled by registrations.

In past years, Conway's competitive application and registration process highlights the issue of participant drop rate. Many registrants dropped the week of or a few days before camp, which made it nearly impossible to fill their spot from the waitlist.

This year we aimed to over fill the camp by a couple registrations, knowing some would drop. Only 1 did not attend, which left us with a very full and fun week!

This year we welcomed mentors from Arkansas Coding Academy, UCA Chemistry, UCA Physics, Nabholz Construction, Acxiom, and the UCA Maker Space.

One of our mentors even included a former Girls in STEM participant!





# Little Rock ages 12-13

**July 7-11 and July 14-18 at Museum of Discovery**

Camps focused on new and younger girls in the typical age range.

## **Week 1:**

19 participants, all new to the program.

## **Week 2:**

18 participants with 1 returning.

These weeks aimed to serve the younger age group of Girls in STEM as well as invite new participants. While this is the recommended ages, we did allow older girls if they were not available for older camp dates on a case by case basis and conversations with parents.

The goal was to create a foundational experience for new participants, so we tried to keep the weeks similar. Both camps went on field trips to Caterpillar and AGFC; both camps also received mentor sessions from L'Oréal.

Other mentor sessions included Pediatrician Dr. Bishawn Morris, Dr. Brooke Montgomery with UAMS Public Health, American Society of Civil Engineers, First Orion, Central Arkansas Water field trip, and Data Analyst Jamie Spickes.





# Little Rock ages 13-14

**July 21-25 and July 28-August 1 at Museum of Discovery**

Camps focused on returning and older girls in the typical age range.

## **Week 3:**

23 participants with 18  
returning girls

## **Week 4:**

21 participants with 17  
returning girls

These weeks aimed to serve the older age group of participants, as well as focus on building experience for returning girls. Similarly to July weeks 1 and 2, we allowed younger girls on a case by case basis.

Week 3 went on a field trip to the Innovation Hub. Week 4 went on a field trip to Calm and Confidence. Last year these weeks also went on service field trips to gain community volunteer hours. Due to bus coordination this was cut and we focused more on in house science programming.

Mentor sessions included Harding Robotics Breakaway Ladies, American Institute of Architects, UCA Girls Who Code, Venture Tech Group, Data Analyst Nik Noori, Garver, Evonik, UALR Cybersecurity, and the Little Rock Zoo.



# Demographics

09

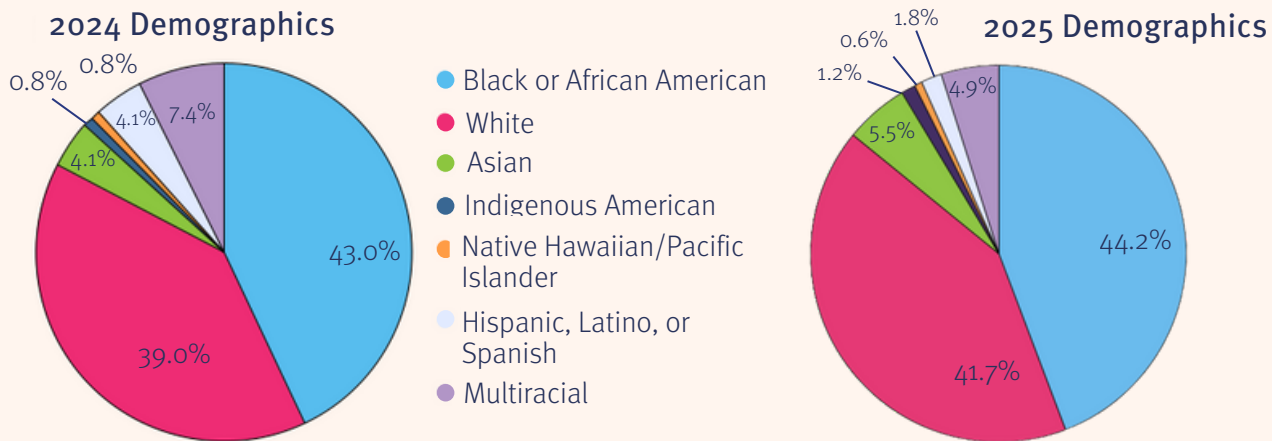


Figure 1.

Last year saw a major shift in the participant identity demographics with growth in the percentage of participants who describe themselves as Black or African American and also growth in participants who describe themselves as Multiracial. A main reason for this growth is the introduction of community partner weeks where all participants described themselves as a racial minority. The program this year maintained a similar makeup.

This year's demographic information also included options for highest level of parental education achieved by either of the participant's parents. This data was collected in the registration form, to acquire the largest amount of information in the most accurate way. Aka asking the parent. This eliminated last year's issue of the "unsure category" that appeared when we asked the question to participants.

**"What is the highest level of education attained by either of your parents?"**

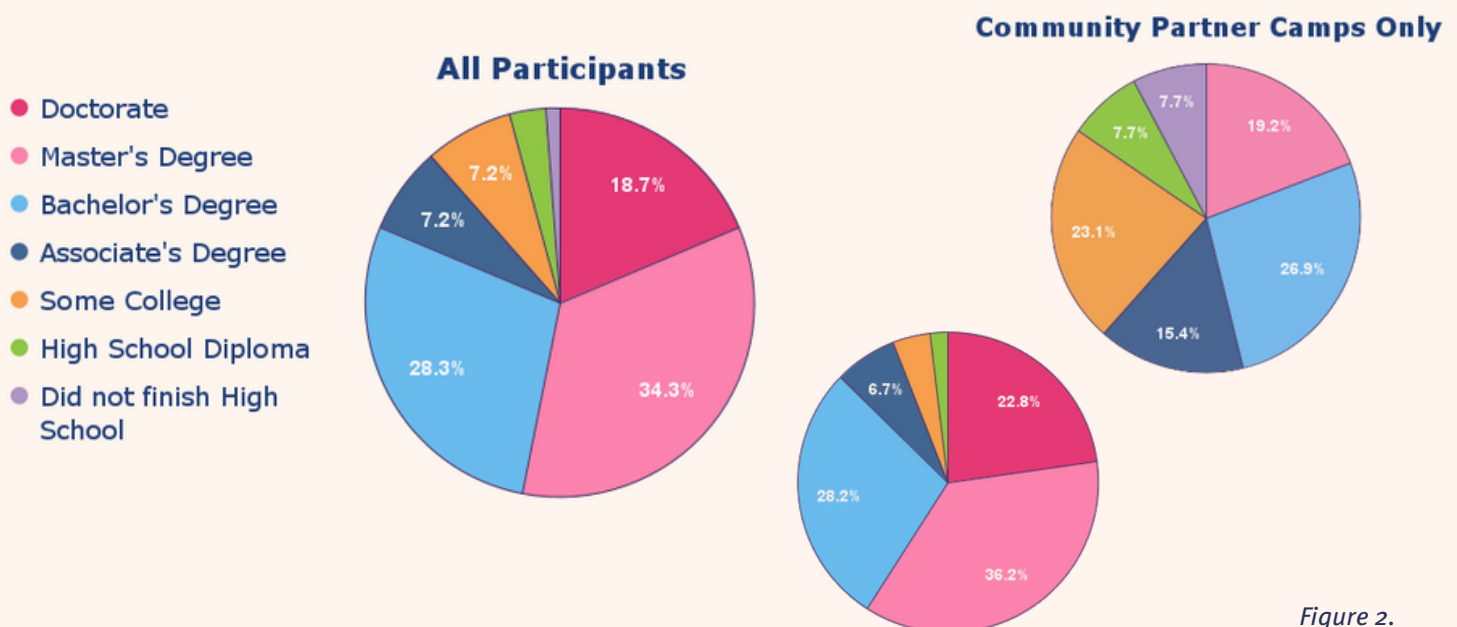
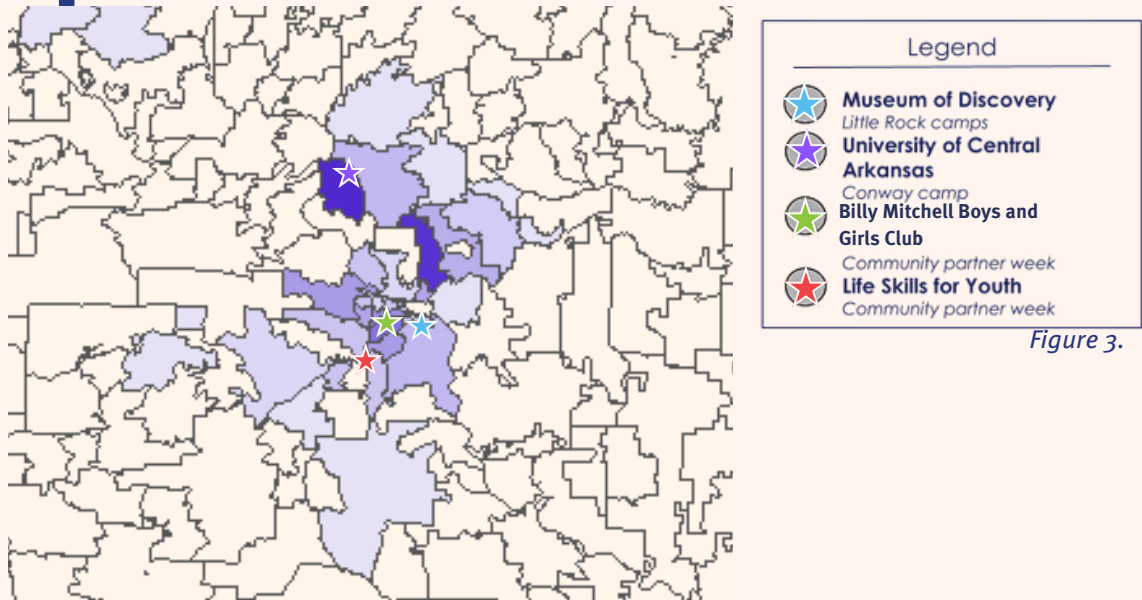


Figure 2.

# Zip Codes\*



**Figure 3** is a map of participants’ zip codes in Central Arkansas in relation to camp locations. The darker saturation indicates a larger number of participants from that area, while lighter color areas indicate very few participants. Background color areas had no participants. This year we saw more participation from zip codes south of Little Rock.

Last year Girls in STEM started targeting 5 zip codes for outreach and community engagement, in the hopes of bringing in a larger amount of participants from these areas. These zip codes were chosen based off of racial diversity from U.S. Census data and high poverty rates. **Table 1** shows the # of participants from these zip codes from 2023, 2024, and 2025. Half of the participants shown were from Community Partner weeks, while some were new to the Leadership Institute. Our lack of participants from the 72114 zip, shows us where we need to refocus local outreach effort even though we are now seeing continual growth in other areas.

Target zip codes	# participants 2023	# participants 2024	# participants 2025
72114	1	0	0
72118	0	1	2
72204	4	6	12
72209	2	4	8
72206	1	1	5
Total Participants	8	12	27

Table 1.

\* Excludes some data from Billy Mitchell

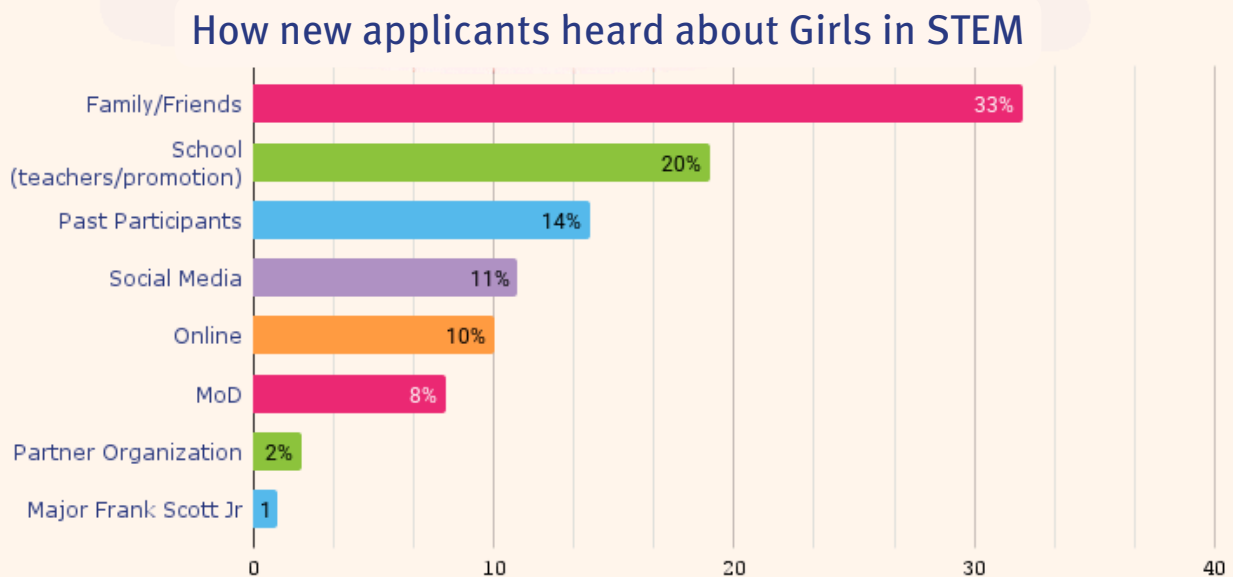


# Recruitment, Applications, and Registrations

This year we had 168 participants/185 registrants.

Of those 62.8% were new participants, with 37.2% returning participants.

Last year we had a participation rate from registration of 85.71%. This year, it rose to 90.81%. We are unsure what exactly caused the change, but suspect our seasonal staff contacting parents more frequently likely played a role in the increase.



*Figure 4.*

**Figure 4** shows how new applicants heard about Girls in STEM. Family, social media, school, and past participants (includes those who's siblings or friends were past participants). Many answers for the family & friends category don't confirm where the family member found out about Girls in STEM, just that they passed on the program information to the applicant. This year we saw a much larger impact from schools, particularly word of mouth from teachers.

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# Participant Impact

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Through the use of anonymous surveys taken by participants at the beginning and end of their camp week, we can see the impact the program has on them in real time through their perspective.

It's so cool learning about things that I see everyday, I have gained new interests in STEM careers.

Strengthened my love for science. I had a lot of fun.

It has showed me how diverse STEM really is.

We also allow the girls to tell us what they learned about themselves, their capabilities in STEM, or how the program impacted them. Here are a few highlights of the summer:

It's shown me that you can do any job as long as you put the work and the effort in succeeding in it.

Everyone was so supportive and kind! I'd like to attend next year!

The program has helped me with being shy, speaking up, and meeting new people and personalities!

These comments from participants remind us of the mission of Girls in STEM. While we strive to make Arkansas's STEM workforce more equitable and gender-diverse, the immediate impact value of the program continues to embolden young girls that they are capable of whatever they choose to do.

Even comments focused on social aspects of camp show impact beyond just teaching the STEM basics. We are preparing these young people to be conscious actors in the world while instilling them with the confidence to follow any career path, and they'll remember us along the way.

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# Future of Girls in STEM

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We will continue to bring education to girls and participants across the Natural State.

## New Funding Sources

We were awarded a grant from Union Pacific for Girls in STEM. We are happy to continue this long term partnership.

We are receiving additional support from Venture Tech Group, a new mentor organization and international tech consultant firm that voted for Girls in STEM to be their yearly philanthropic organization. We hope to continue partnership for another year after the company votes this fall.



## Spring and Summer of 2026

Currently 9 camps are planned for 2026 including:

- 1 Leadership Institute in Little Rock
- 2 Community Partner weeks in Little Rock
- 4 traditional Girls in STEM camps in Little Rock
- 1 Girls in STEM camp in Conway at UCA
- 1 Girls in STEM camp in Fayetteville at UofA

## Volunteer Base

Opening up the Leadership Institute to new participants allowed us to have a more robust summer volunteer base. We hope to continue to use these volunteers for wider museum efforts, and successfully did so with the Girls in STEM section at Tinkerfest 2025. Mentor organizations joined us as well!

