



Business and
Professional
Women's
Foundation

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BPW FOUNDATION JOINS STEM MENTORING INITIATIVE “MILLION WOMEN MENTORS”
*Partnership Seeks to Engage More Than One Million Girls & Young Women
in STEM Education and Careers*

WASHINGTON – Today, [Business and Professional Women's \(BPW\) Foundation](#) announced its partnership with the [“Million Women Mentors” \(MWM\) initiative](#). Launched in January during National Mentoring Month, the initiative will support the engagement of one million science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) mentors – male and female – to increase the interest and confidence of girls and young women to pursue and succeed in STEM degrees and careers.

Supporting women in non-traditional fields has long been part of BPW Foundation's mission. Since 1969, BPW's career advancement scholarships have provided financial assistance to financially disadvantaged women 25 years of age or older seeking to further their education, advance their careers or re-enter the workforce. BPW Foundation solicits prospective scholarship candidates from its state and local Legacy members. Most of last year's scholarship recipients are pursuing degrees in STEM or related fields.

BPW Foundation's goal is to share information about Million Women Mentors among its legacy chapters across the country, to engage STEM mentors and to encourage young girls and women interested in STEM fields to pursue their goals with the help of a mentor.

“With our legacy of ‘working women helping women work®’ BPW Foundation is proud to partner with Million Women Mentors to support women across their STEM career spectrum, from young careerists to mid and upper-level professionals, to those transitioning out of the military,” said BPW Foundation CEO Deborah Frett.

BPW Foundation also seeks to leverage this partnership to promote access to STEM career opportunities among women veterans, military spouses and women who have lost a loved one serving in the Armed Forces. “Many women veterans leave the military with a wealth of technical training and experience, but they don't know how to translate those skills into meaningful careers,” said [Leslie Wilkins](#), member of the BPW Foundation Board of Trustees and Founder and Director, MEDB's Women in Technology Project. “Having access to STEM professionals through Million Women Mentors will help these skilled women, who unselfishly served our country, leverage their skills and tap into careers in STEM. Million Women Mentor's work can also support the talented pool of unemployed and underemployed military spouses and surviving family members and bridge the gap (often due to multiple moves or the loss of a loved one) to a successful career in STEM.”

In the past 10 years, growth in STEM jobs has been three times greater than that of non-STEM jobs. Today 80% of the fastest growing occupations in the United States depend on mastery of mathematics and knowledge and skills in hard sciences. While women comprise 48% of the U.S. workforce, just 24% are in STEM fields, a statistic that has held constant for nearly the last decade. While 75% of all college

students are women and students of color, they represent only 45% of STEM degrees earned each year. Too many of these young women begin in STEM but leave those degree paths despite their good academic standing, often citing uncomfortable classroom experiences and disconcerting climate. Even when women earn a STEM degree, they are less likely than their male counterparts to work in a STEM field even though STEM jobs pay more and have a lower wage gap: 92 cents on a dollar versus 75 cents in other fields.

“Clearly the need for women in STEM is there,” said Frett. “By tapping into current pools of talent among our women veteran and military spouse community, and contributing to tomorrow’s STEM professionals among our young careerists, BPW Foundation continues its vision to partner to create successful workplaces for women, their families and employers.”

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About BPW Foundation

With a legacy dating back to 1919, BPW Foundation was the first foundation dedicated to conducting research and providing information on working women. The mission of BPW Foundation is to promote systematic change in the workplace by strengthening the capacity of organizations and businesses to create environments that are inclusive and value the skills and contributions of working women, empowering them to achieve their full potential. BPW’s *Joining Forces Mentoring Plus®* program is dedicated to helping women veterans, military/veteran spouses and caregivers of wounded warriors connect with working women mentors and subject matter experts (SMEs) to receive support, guidance, career development, and to ultimately obtain meaningful employment. To learn more visit www.BPWFoundation.org or www.JoiningForcesMentoringPlus.org.

About Million Women Mentors

Million Women Mentors is a collective effort of more than 40 non-profit, media, education and government industry partners and nine corporate sponsors. To become involved or to learn more please visit www.MillionWomenMentors.org.