

**Self-
eSTEM**

The new face and
culture of STEM
innovation.

2025 “CLOSE THE GAP” CHALLENGE TOOLKIT

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Their Future Can't Wait - Close the Gap

The Nonprofit Landscape: Navigating Uncertainty & Rapid Change

52% of federally funded nonprofits are financially unstable (NonprofitPro, 2025). Larger organizations are now competing directly with smaller ones for scarce resources. New funding restrictions mean fewer dollars reach the communities that need them most. **Entire pipelines of support have been canceled.**

Meanwhile, the rapid acceleration of AI and other systemic shifts are creating new financial pressures across the sector.

Defying the Odds & Continuing the Impact

50% of nonprofits fail within their first few years. Another 30% don't make it to their tenth anniversary. And yet, Self-eSTEM, with founders who have historically received **less than 0.5%** of available funding and **less than 0.0006%** in the last decade, is still here.

For over a decade, we've defied the odds by keeping our core programs free. While others cut staff, reduce opportunities, or close their doors, we remain committed to empowering the next generation of Innovators.

The headlines may say funding is down. But our impact is up. And with your help, it will stay that way.

Time to Organize & Support - We Can Do This Together

Donors who give with urgency, staff who show up with purpose, and institutions that invest in technology accelerate impact (Bonterra, 2025). **Matching gifts** alone can increase donation value by **240%**.

At Self-eSTEM, we believe moments of crisis can be converted into readiness. Now is the time to show up. **YOU are the catalyst. YOU are the conduit for change.**

Together, we can ensure Self-eSTEM not only survives, but thrives. If we don't pivot, we risk perishing. But if we act now, we protect opportunities for every young person who deserves access to STEM.

The Great Pivot: Accept the Challenge

I pivoted from the tech industry to dedicate myself to Self-eSTEM full-time. Our organization is pivoting to ensure workforce development and STEM skills training align with the Future of Work.

Now, it's your turn. It's time to make the pivot with us — to **Close the Gap**.

Join our challenge. Invest in a future where every Innovator has the tools to lead.

— Adamaka Ajaelo, Founding Executive Director, Self-eSTEM

Close the Gap Challenge Overview

Partnering with Self-eSTEM to Empower the Next Generation of STEM Leaders

What It Is

Self-eSTEM is launching the **Close the Gap Challenge**, a peer-to-peer fundraiser to sustain free STEM programs for youth and young adults from **systemically untapped**¹ communities.

For more than 10 years, Self-eSTEM has provided **STEM education, mentorship, and leadership development** at no cost to families. Now, we need your help to keep these services free for our Innovators.

Why This Matters for All of Us

While the mission of Self-eSTEM centers girls and women, **the impact belongs to everyone:**

- **Innovation needs diversity of thought:** A stronger, more innovative STEM pipeline benefits entire industries, advancing breakthroughs that touch all our lives.
- **Participation shapes society:** When youth thrive in STEM, it strengthens our competitiveness and communities, expanding opportunities for the next generation.
- **Equity & access drives progress:** When we invest in STEM, we fuel innovation that benefits entire families and communities.

Nonprofits are under strain as 1 in 3 U.S. nonprofits are at risk of closing due to funding challenges (Independent Sector, 2022). **Your role is critical** as parents, partners and supporters of equity, you've seen the impact firsthand of Self-eSTEM and STEM programming for youth.

How to Join

1. **Launch** a Peer-to-Peer fundraiser (or select "**Become A Champion**") by **December 2, 2025 (Giving Tuesday 2025)**.
2. **Select** your donation goal (ex: 50 people giving \$200 each = \$10,000).
3. **Share** with your network (use our toolkit below).
4. **Request** a company match to double your impact (Self-eSTEM is on Benevity ID: 472316798).

 *Every dollar sustains free STEM learning, mentorship and pathways to the Future of Work.*

Recognition

- Your group's logo on Self-eSTEM event materials.
- Recognition on our website + social channels.

Ready to Act? Join the Challenge!

Visit [Self-eSTEM's page](https://selfestem.org) to start your challenge. **Questions?** Email info@selfestem.org.

*Donations to Self-eSTEM are **TAX-DEDUCTIBLE**, so you'll also receive a receipt for your records.*

¹ Households eligible for free/reduced lunch and/or from Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Multi-racial and Indigenous backgrounds.

Messaging Toolkit

LinkedIn Post

I am proud to join the **Close the Gap Challenge** with [@Self-eSTEM](#)! For over 10 years, they've provided free STEM programs to youth and young adults from untapped communities. Now it's our turn to give back.

Why It Matters:

-  Innovation needs diversity of thought
-  Participation shapes society
-  Equity & access drives progress
-  Nonprofits are under strain
-  Your role is critical

Join me: **[insert your donation link]**

Together, we can fuel innovation and equity.

#CloseTheGap #InvestInInnovation #STEMLeadership #SelfeSTEM

Instagram

We're closing the STEM gap! 

Join me in supporting [@SelfeSTEM](#) 's **Close the Gap Challenge**. Every dollar sustains FREE programs for youth and young adults from untapped communities in STEM.

Why It Matters:

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Be a Champion. Donate today: **[insert your donation link]**

#CloseTheGap #InvestInInnovation #STEMLeadership #SelfeSTEM

Facebook Post

We're closing the STEM gap! 

Join me in supporting [@SelfestemOrg](#) 's **Close the Gap Challenge**. Every dollar sustains FREE programs for youth and young adults from untapped communities in STEM.

Why It Matters:

-  Innovation needs diversity of thought
-  Participation shapes society



- 📌 Equity & access drives progress
- 📌 Nonprofits are under strain
- 📌 Your role is critical

Be a Champion. Donate today: **[insert your donation link]**

#CloseTheGap #InvestInInnovation #STEMLeadership #SelfeSTEM

Email Template

Subject: Join Me in Closing the STEM Gap with Self-eSTEM!

Hi **[Name]**,

I'm supporting Self-eSTEM's **Close the Gap Challenge** to keep STEM programs free for youth who need them most.

Self-eSTEM has been empowering youth and young adults from overlooked communities in STEM for over a decade. Their programs transform lives, and they're free thanks to community support.

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I'd love for you to join me. Donate here: **[insert your donation link]**.

If your company matches donations through Benevity (ID: 472316798), you can double your impact!

Thanks for helping close the gap,
[Your Name]

Text Message

Hey **[Name]**! I'm supporting Self-eSTEM's **Close the Gap Challenge** to keep STEM programs free for girls and women from untapped and overlooked communities. Join me with a donation here: **[insert your donation link]**. Even \$25 makes a difference!

Messaging Flyer(s)

I Joined The Challenge - Announcement Flyer(s)

Click images to download.



Close the Gap Challenge

I'm a Champion for Self-eSTEM - Join Me!

The **Close the Gap Challenge** is a peer-to-peer fundraiser powering free STEM programs for future **Innovators**.

Why It Matters	How to Join
- Ensures cost is never a barrier to anyone's future - Fuels transformation that changes industries	- Donate to my fundraiser through Dec 31 - Share with your network - Double your gift with a company match.

More Information visit www.selfestem.org

ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE!



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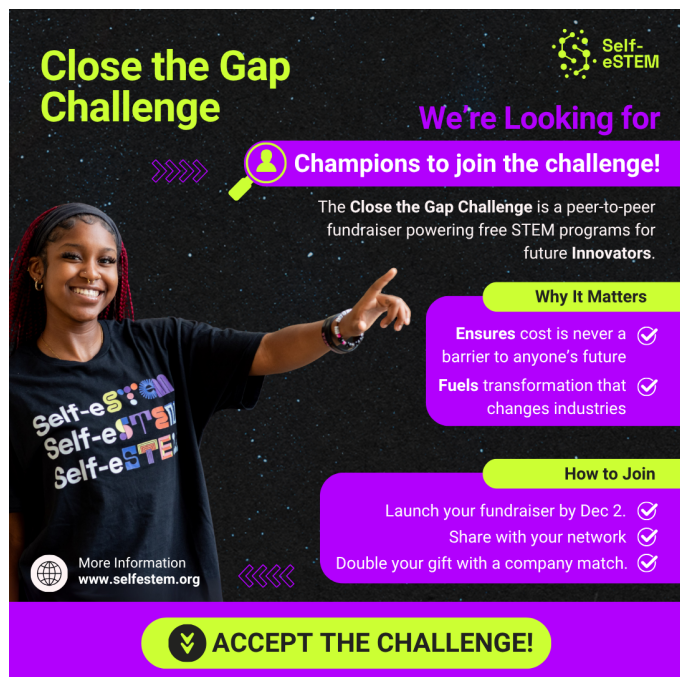
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ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE!

Become A Champion - Announcement Flyer(s)

Click images to download.



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We're Looking for

Champions to join the challenge!

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Why It Matters

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How to Join

- Launch your fundraiser by Dec 2.
- Share with your network
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