

STEM Forward

A Work Force Education Program

STUDENT ASSENT

Student Assent for Participation

This form is to help you understand what you're being asked to do for the **STEM Forward** program and the research study connected to it.

Why Am I Being Asked to Do This?

You're being asked to be part of a research study to see if adding hands-on activities to the ACT WorkKeys curriculum can help students improve their test scores. The researchers will compare your scores to students in other parts of the country and in West Virginia.

What Will I Do?

If you agree to participate, here is what you will do:

- The program runs from September 1, 2025, to May 31, 2026.
- You will get a free ACT WorkKeys account to complete coursework online. If you need a laptop, you can talk to the program contact.
- You will attend the Project Lead the Way Engineering course at the ACT in Beckley.
- You will take part in an in-person orientation and a pre-survey.
- You will complete the ACT WorkKeys online course, quizzes, and other activities.
- You can ask the instructor questions at any time.
- You will take the NCRC assessment exam and a final program survey.
- You will go on a tour of WVSU and attend a graduation ceremony.

Are There Any Risks?

There are no major risks. It's normal to feel frustrated sometimes when you're learning new things, and you might be disappointed with some quiz results, but these feelings are temporary. A liability waiver will be required for the field trip. You can skip any questions on surveys or stop participating at any time.

What Are the Main Benefits?

- You'll get **free access** to the ACT WorkKeys curriculum and the opportunity to earn the **ACT National Career Readiness Certification**.
- You'll get hands-on learning, test preparation, and a field trip with a celebration.

Your participation will also help researchers learn more about how to improve career readiness for other students.

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Will Anyone Know I'm Doing This?

Your participation will be kept private. The researchers will use a unique code instead of your name on all notes and documents. This information will be kept in a locked cabinet or on a secure digital file. The only time your information would be shared is if it's required by law, like in cases of abuse or concerns about self-harm.

Testimonials you provide will not be private, but you do not have to give a testimonial if you don't want to.

What About Money?

You MAY receive a stipend for participating DEPENDING on the program type and agreement with the partner organization. Stipends ARE NOT promised as a condition of participation. The stipends can not go above \$275. It can be less than or none at all.

Do I Have to Participate?

No, this is completely your choice. Even if you agree and sign this form, you can stop participating at any time without a penalty or having to explain why. Stopping the study will not change how staff at the program treat you. If you choose to leave, any documents you signed will be stored, and any tests or quizzes taken online will not be deleted.

Assent

I have read this form and understand what I will be doing in the STEM Forward program and the research study. My questions have been answered. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I can stop at any time.

First Name: _____ Last Name _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____