



Stretch-the-Million

INDUSTRY PARTNER PROGRAM

Build Your Workforce Pipeline. Become a Stretch-the-Million Partner!

LATC Stretch-the-Million (STM) industry partner program allows companies to invest in South Dakota's future workforce through the Build Dakota Scholarship, which is a full-ride scholarship in return for a 3-year work commitment to SD. It's a shared investment with long-term returns – for students, businesses and our state!

How It Works

The STM Partner (aka the company) pays a portion of the student's full-ride scholarship, which includes: tuition, fees, books, laptop, tools, and other items required to complete the program. Build Dakota pays for the other portion. As a STM Partner, the company commits to the Build Dakota Industry Partner Code of Ethics.

The student commits to:

- ✓ Complete a qualifying program at Lake Area Technical College
- ✓ Maintain academic, attendance and conduct requirements
- ✓ Work full-time for the STM Partner in the approved field for a minimum of 3 years in S.D.

Finding the Right Match

1. Companies may already have a connection in place, whether it's a current employee looking to advance their skills, a high school job shadow with plans to pursue a degree, or job applicant of any age that is interested in your company.
2. LATC can assist with connecting STM Partners and incoming student applicants:

Interview Phase Opens January 1

- 🔗 Sign up your company by March 1st to receive ready-only access to applicant contact information, references, work experience, essay responses, etc.
- 🔗 Your company's designated contact person should be prepared to review student applications on our online scholarship website, schedule interviews, extend offer(s), and provide contract copies to LATC Foundation by May 6th.

Ready, Set, GO! Partnership Fair on January 15

- 🔗 Companies that sign up/renew STM Partnership by **January 8th** are invited to set up a booth at our kickoff event for the student BDS application window (Jan. 1 - March 31).
- 🔗 Raise awareness of your company's participation and capture some face-to-face time with current applicants, plus high school seniors, juniors, counselors and parents.

Get Started

Whether you're new or an experienced Build Dakota industry partner, please feel free to reach out with questions or concerns.

Melissa Waldner, Business Partner Specialist

melissa.waldner@lakeareatech.edu /// 605-882-5284 ext. 263

Important Dates for Cohort 12 | 2026-27 School Year

Oct. 16 - Mar. 1	Companies invited to participate in BDS/STM Partnership Program
Jan. 1 - Mar. 31	Student Scholarship Application & Interview Phase
Jan. 15	Ready, Set, GO! Build Dakota Kickoff Fair @ LATC (<i>sign up by 1/8</i>)
April 15	Companies notify LATC about Scholar Selection(s)
May 6	Contract Copies Due
May	LATC Foundation Presents BDS Certificates to High Schools
June 1-4	BD Scholars attend New Student Orientation
July	Fall Semester Invoices
August	Classes begin; LATC BDS/STM Luncheon
December	Grade reports and spring semester invoices

Tips For STM Partners

Tip #1 **It's never too early to start looking for a student to partner with!**

- ✓ Market your company as a BDS/STM industry partner on social media, company newsletters, public job postings, and posters in your facility.
- ✓ Help current employees advance their skills – people of any age can apply for BDS
- ✓ Offer job shadow and internship opportunities for individuals in your community/region to give them an inside look at job duties and work environment.
- ✓ Host or participate in events/activities at the middle school/high school/youth center that enlighten students, teaching staff, and community members about careers in your company and industry.

Tip #2 **Be quick, yet thorough in the interview phase**

Don't be the last company to reach out to prospective scholars, but also don't rush your process. The success of your partnership depends on a thorough vetting process to determine if that person is a good fit for the role and your company culture.

Tip #3 **Draft your student contract before interviews**

A contract is required between the student and the company which outlines commitments by both parties. It is an important document for your company to collect repayment if your partnership doesn't work out. We provide a sample to assist you in getting started. Feel free to include your legal counsel as you develop your contract or adjust one you already have in place.

Once you find a student you wish to partner with, review your agreement line-by-line with the student and answer any questions they may have. Encourage the student to take time to review their contracts with a trusted adviser, such as parent, spouse, counselor, etc.

Tip #4 **Resources**

- 🔗 Build Dakota Code of Ethics
- 🔗 Sample agreement between company/student
- 🔗 LATC Grad Wage Reporting Results (click on Program Name)
- 🔗 Full list of Build Dakota-eligible degree programs at Lake Area Tech
- 🔗 Build Dakota Toolkits (partners, students, parents and more!)