**How to Start a STEM Program in Your Unit**

1. Any adult can help “counsel” the youth on the NOVA level awards once that person is approved by the local unit committee and completes the adult BSA application — leader code 58 and submit the forms with Youth Protection certificate to your district’s STEM Coordinator.  UPDATE: No more Nova Counselor Form. Go to “[STEM Nova FAQ”](http://www.ncacbsa.org/activitiesevents/stem/stem-faq/) Webpage and “[STEM PowerPoint Overview.](http://www.ncacbsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/2017-stem-program-launch.pptx)”  The overview presentation is dated, but it is still a great resource tool. Same webpage for the Supernova Mentor process.
2. Make sure you get a NOVA award book (Cub Scout, Boy Scout, and Venturer books) with current requirements for your unit counselor, mentor, coordinator, or per youth — contact your [local Scout store](http://www.ncacbsa.org/about-ncac/scout-store/).
3. Review the Award worksheets.  The worksheets are available on the website “[Guides and Tracking.](https://www.ncacbsa.org/activitiesevents/stem/stem-faq/workbooks/)”
4. Recruit an adult to be the unit’s STEM Coordinator.  STEM professional background is optional.  Some units have a team to coordinate STEM activities. Some units will use an Assistant Scoutmaster, Assistant Cubmaster, Pack Trainer, Unit Committee Member, Den Leader, Nova Counselor, Supernova Mentor or a parent (with current Youth Protection training) as the unit’s STEM Coordinator. See this article “[Why every unit needs a STEM Coordinator](http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2014/09/23/stem-coordinator/)?”
5. Get familiar about the NOVA program resources on at the [council’s STEM Page](http://www.ncacbsa.org/activitiesevents/stem/)  and at [scouting.org/stem](http://scouting.org/stem).
6. Recruit adults with a STEM background to be Supernova Mentors. They will need to apply through the district’s STEM Coordinator or district advancement chairman.  Forms are turned in to the district’s STEM Coordinator.  See item #6. Talk with other Supernova mentors. Supernova mentors nearby can be found through the district’s STEM Coordinator or the Council’s STEM Coordinator.
7. Find online training for STEM counselors, mentors, and for general information at <http://www.scouting.org/training/adult.aspx> .
8. Our council offers STEM training through STEM University, POW-WOW, and University of Scouting.
9. Turn in awards timely at the Scout store — Internet Advancement Report form. Nova Awards can be entered on the Internet Advancement Report Form as other awards. For Supernova Awards, be sure to get the paperwork to your district’s STEM Coordinator.
10. Attend roundtables to learn about STEM resources.
11. Become a fan of the [Bryan on Scouting Blog STEM](http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/category/stem/), [BSA STEM Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/pages/NOVA-Award-BSA/172074796171840) and [Council Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/NCACBSA), and the [#myNCAC @NCACBSA](https://twitter.com/NCACBSA) and  [@STEMVan](https://twitter.com/STEMVan) on Twitter!
12. Check out the cool events taking place around the council.  Subscribe to the Scouter Digest, Capital Comments, and e-Newsletters or view them online at the [NCAC Communications Center](http://www.ncacbsa.org/?page=CommunicationsCenter). There is a [NCAC Activities/Event Page](http://www.ncacbsa.org/activitiesevents/).
13. Network with other units.
14. Catch with your district’s STEM Coordinator to find out more about resources.   Here are some resources that I have used in the past:
    * + - 1. If you live in Maryland, you should attend the Montgomery County Parks and Recreation’s annual Educators' Open House, usually scheduled in October each year at [Brookside Gardens Visitor Center](http://www.montgomeryparks.org/brookside/). Regional science and environmental education providers will present the latest in science, technology, and environmental programs. Attendees will have a chance to talk with presenters and review resources from a wide range of area experts.
          2. Another resource is the [US Science and Engineering Festival Webpage](http://www.usasciencefestival.org/), Join their listserv to get information about local STEM events. Plan to attend the 2018 festival. You can get a directory of the vendors as well as contacts of local organizations. The Council STEM Program is an active participant.
          3. Visit the [State of Maryland Website](http://visitmaryland.org/Pages/MarylandHome.aspx) and Search on STEM.
          4. Visit the [Montgomery County Public School Science, Technology and Engineering Webpage](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/science/).
          5. Visit [Fairfax Family Fun](http://www.fairfaxfamilyfun.com/) Website, search on STEM.
          6. Contact local schools, government agencies, and universities. Check out the [Smithsonian](http://www.si.edu/). Visit [US Patuxent Wildlife Research Center](http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/) & [NASA Goddard Space Visitor Center](http://www.nasa.gov/centers/goddard/visitor/home/index.html) – to name a few places. All federal agencies have webpages. There are lots of places in the Washington DC Metro Area as well as Baltimore, MD. They have free public events for the whole family throughout the year. University of Maryland has [Maryland Days](http://www.marylandday.umd.edu/) and George Washington University has [SHARE Fairs](http://gwtoday.gwu.edu/share-fair-engages-community-stem-education) - FREE events for the public to experience innovative, fun, hands-on, interactive STEM education methods and activities.
          7. Visit  [Kids Activities in Washington DC and Maryland Blog](http://www.justdoitkidactivities.com/)
          8. Visit [STEM Connector.org](http://www.stemconnector.org/) – One Stop Shop for STEM Information
          9. Visit your local library and talk with the technical director. There are resources for all ages. Not all libraries offer telescopes, microscopes, Legos and mini I-pads for children to check out. [Olney Library](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/library/branches/olney.html) is among the first libraries in the Montgomery County Public Library system to provide “[Go! Kits”](http://olneylibrarymcpl.blogspot.com/2014/06/go-kits-at-olney.html) for their youngest patrons. You need to be adult with a Montgomery County Public Library card.
          10. Visit the [American Chemistry Society (ACS) Chemistry Education Resources](http://www.acs.org/content/acs/en/education/resources.html) and connect with their [Office of K-8 Education](http://www.acs.org/k8education). The best way to reach them is at the contact page. There are volunteers in their Chemistry Ambassadors and Science Coaches Programs nearby who can help you out.
          11. Take a look [SteveSpanglerScience.com](http://www.stevespanglerscience.com/), [Science Buddies](http://www.sciencebuddies.org/), [Supercharged Science](http://www.superchargedscience.com/), and [Wonder how to do Science Experiments](http://science.wonderhowto.com/) to get some ideas for science experiments.
          12. Please do not overlook your local [Scout store](http://www.ncacbsa.org/about-ncac/scout-store/). They carry STEM kits too.