

## PARTNERSHIP BRIEF

## CONNECTING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT &amp; VOLUNTEERISM

**The Challenge**

Post-pandemic employee engagement crashed to a 1.8-to-1 engaged vs. disengaged ratio (from 2.7-to-1 in 2019), an estimated \$7.8 trillion in lost productivity. Simultaneously, employers faced pressure to attract, retain, and develop diverse STEM talent. One underused program strategy could address both: well-designed employee volunteer programs.

**STEMCONNECTOR's Solution**

STEMCONNECTOR and 3M have partnered for more than a dozen years, jointly building, scaling, and refining initiatives at the intersection of corporate strategy and positive STEM education and workforce outcomes. This research project emerged directly from our long-standing relationship. Commissioned by 3M and the STEM Next Opportunity Fund, STEMCONNECTOR designed and led a four-stage national research initiative — producing Connecting Employee Engagement and Volunteerism, a research-backed playbook any employer can use.

**3M's Results**

The report documents how 3M is operating at the leading edge of this practice. In 2022 alone, 3M contributed \$82.1 million in total global giving (\$50 million in cash and \$32.1 million in-kind), logged 30,100 hours of skills-based volunteerism — putting it on pace toward its 2025 goal of 300,000 skills-based hours — and cumulatively delivered 1.04 million STEM and skilled-trades learning experiences against its goal of 5 million by 2025. The report has been distributed across STEMCONNECTOR's network of corporate, postsecondary, nonprofit, government, and K–12 stakeholders and is positioned as a practical playbook companies can use to design or strengthen their own employee volunteer programs.

“This partnership demonstrates and validates how employee volunteerism can simultaneously strengthen workforce culture, improve retention, and expand STEM opportunity at scale — and replicate 3M's results in any industry.”

**Outcomes and Benefits**

Connecting Employee Engagement and Volunteerism turns 3M's sustained investment in STEM equity and access into public benefit. Any employer — Fortune 100 to mid-sized firm — gains a research-backed playbook for using volunteerism to reduce early-tenure turnover, build employer brand, and strengthen STEM pipeline. STEMCONNECTOR brings national convening power and cross-sector research capacity no agency or association can replicate. The project also exemplifies what twelve years of partnership between STEMCONNECTOR and 3M produces: a national convener and a science-led global research and manufacturing company leveraging experience and expertise to meet goals and improve outcomes, with the research, relationships, and reach to make rigorous corporate practice broadly available.

**STEMCONNECTOR Delivered:**

- Designed and led a four-stage national research methodology, including literature review from 200+ sources, expert interviews, cross-sector analysis, publication and distribution with six corporate case studies.
- Recruited and convened five additional Fortune 500 partners — Micron Technology, Microsoft, Verizon, Corteva Agriscience, and Northwestern Mutual — alongside Youth Service America, by leveraging our national convening power that no single company could replicate alone.
- Translated peer-reviewed academic research into actionable workforce tools that included the Seven Practices of Effective Employee Volunteer Programs and a youth-engagement framework anchored in equity, access, and oversight.
- Amplified and distributed findings across STEMCONNECTOR's multi-sector network of corporate, postsecondary, nonprofit, government, and K-12 stakeholders — turning a 3M's investment into a national workforce resource.