

Morehead State University's SpaceTrek Program Opens Registration for 2026, Celebrates Significant Growth

Applications open, SpaceTrek expansion across Appalachia driven by \$3.98M ARC ARISE grant aims to serve 2,966 students through aerospace programs by 2027

MOREHEAD, KY, UNITED STATES, January 13, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Morehead State University](#) (MSU) announced today that the application window is now open for the 2026 [SpaceTrek](#): Space Systems Engineering Program for Young Women in Appalachia, taking place June 7–20, 2026, at the world-class Space Science Center in Morehead, Kentucky. This immersive, two-week engineering and aerospace experience continues MSU's longstanding leadership in building the next generation of women in space and aerospace fields.

The 2026 application period opened September 15, 2025, and will close March 15, 2026. SpaceTrek accepts 24 young women each year through a competitive application process that includes two essays and a letter of recommendation. Algebra I is required to be a competitive applicant. The program fee is \$1,000, and scholarships are available to ensure broad access for qualified students throughout the Appalachian region.

The SpaceTrek summer program is a core component of the broader SpaceTrek initiative supported by a \$3.98 million [Appalachian Regional Commission \(ARC\) ARISE grant](#) awarded to



Director of the Center for STEM+eXcellence at Morehead State University



The image is the SpaceTrek Program logo with the tagline, "Space Systems Program for Young Women in Appalachia."



The ARC ARISE grant has truly accelerated what SpaceTrek can accomplish across Appalachia. This is not just program expansion; this is regional economic and workforce development in action.”

Jen Carter, Dir. of the Center for STEM+eXcellence at MSU

the Center for STEM+eXcellence at MSU. This investment has fueled the rapid expansion of SpaceTrek and SpacePrep programs across Appalachia, with a goal of serving 2,966 students over the three-year grant term.

Jen Carter, Director of the Center for STEM+eXcellence at Morehead State University, emphasized the transformational scope of this investment.

“The ARC ARISE grant has truly accelerated what SpaceTrek can accomplish across Appalachia. We’ve seen remarkable growth in just over a year, and this funding allows us to bring world-class aerospace learning opportunities to

thousands of young women who may have never imagined themselves in this field,” Carter said. “This is not just program expansion; this is regional economic and workforce development in action.”

Grant Highlights

- Grant term: October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2027 (36 months).
- The initiative is currently in month 15 of 36.
- Student programming began January 1, 2025.
- Current total impact: 1,043 students served out of the 2,966 student goal.

Regional Expansion Across Appalachia

The ARC ARISE-funded initiative, SpaceTrek: Building the Aerospace Workforce Pipeline in Appalachia, has expanded the program’s reach to:

West Virginia

- Delivered 10 SpacePrep Immersions, a modified aerospace workshop for middle and high school students statewide by the West Virginia Public Education Collaborative in 2025
- A condensed version of the full SpaceTrek Program held at West Virginia University (WVU) in July 2025.
- 24 additional SpacePrep Immersions across the next two academic years

Challenger Learning Center (Hazard, Kentucky)

- Hosts SpacePrep aerospace workshops for young women in Appalachia.
- Delivered 2 SpacePrep programs to date.
- Scheduled to conduct 10 additional SpacePrep workshops over the next two academic years.

Morehead State University

- 9 SpacePrep Workshops in 2025.
- Scheduled to deliver 24 more over the next two academic years.
- Hosts the flagship SpaceTrek program and SpacePrep workshops on campus.

Across all sites, SpaceTrek and SpacePrep leverage high school, undergraduate, and graduate students as part of a career-connected workforce model, integrating Craft Academy scholars and convergent media and space systems engineering students at MSU, as well as WVU and other West Virginia-based colleges and universities, undergraduate and graduate leaders.

Twelve Years of SpaceTrek Success at MSU

Founded in 2012, SpaceTrek has become a national model for inspiring young women to pursue aerospace careers. Its success is strongly tied to MSU's unique academic footprint in space systems engineering.

MSU academic excellence highlights:

- MSU offers a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in space systems engineering.
- A new Doctor of Engineering (DE) program, featuring a specialized track in space systems engineering, launches January 2026.
- The Space Science Center is an internationally recognized R&D hub focused on small satellite design, development, testing, ground station technologies (as opposed to integration), and mission operations.

Since 2015, 35–40% of undergraduates in MSU's space systems engineering program have been women, three to four times the national average (8–12%) for similar programs.

Carter highlighted SpaceTrek's crucial role in this achievement.

"Our sustained 35–40% female enrollment in space systems engineering is no coincidence. It is the direct result of SpaceTrek. For more than a decade, this program has shown young women that they belong in aerospace, and they thrive here. SpaceTrek isn't just inspiring students; it's reshaping the gender landscape of the aerospace talent pipeline."

Driving the Future Aerospace Workforce

With its footprint now firmly established in Kentucky and West Virginia, and upcoming programming scheduled to reach thousands more young women and students, the SpaceTrek initiative remains on track to grow the aerospace talent pipeline for the Appalachian region and the nation.

Application Details

- Application window: September 15, 2025 – March 15, 2026
- Program dates: June 7–20, 2026
- Location: Space Science Center, Morehead State University
- Eligibility: Young women with Algebra I completed
- Admission: Competitive essays + educator/community recommendation
- Cohort size: 24 students
- Program fee: \$1,000
- Financial aid: Scholarships available

John Dahlia
TMC Technologies
+1 304-276-3161

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[YouTube](#)

[TikTok](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/882915158>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.