



About Us

The program's mission is to enlighten and increase the awareness of high school students to career opportunities in architecture, construction and engineering and related areas of the design and construction industry through mentoring; and to provide scholarship opportunities for students in an inclusive manner reflective of the diverse school population.

ACE is a unique partnership among industry professionals — architects, interior designers, engineers, construction managers, college and university representatives, and other professionals from related corporations and professional organizations -who work together to attract young people to their professions. Industry professionals volunteer to become mentors to high school students in order to introduce them to the professions and encourage them to pursue studies and careers in these fields. In return, the industry gets a much-needed boost of new talent.

Students are introduced to the various design professions and the role that each performs in planning, designing and constructing a project. Students also gain first-hand insight into the design industry by touring project offices and visiting active construction sites. And students worked closely with their mentors to solve challenging "real world" projects.

How ACE Works

Teams are composed of 10-25 students and their industry mentors. Each team is set up to emulate an actual design team, with students guided through a mock design project by their architect, engineer, and construction management mentors. Several companies will be assigned to each team, each providing one or two mentors. Mentors guide the students as they work towards a final project, introducing them to the careers, industry vocabulary, and various roles companies play in the construction industry.

The ACE Mentor Program runs from January to early May. The teams meet for approximately 15 sessions, for about two hours after school. In addition to these team sessions, there are also activities such as office visits and field trips to construction sites.

Each team meets on a specific day of the week, with varying meeting locations where possible. The meetings are held either in schools or at the offices of the firms to give the students as authentic an experience as possible.

Transportation to and from the meetings is generally the responsibility of the students. Should transportation become an issue, meetings take place at the local high school that sponsors the students.

At the end of the year, all of the teams gather for a final presentation night. Here students present their designs to other teams, their families, teachers, mentors and the affiliate administrators so all can share in the students' accomplishments. Scholarships are awarded to qualifying seniors at our annual fundraiser in May.

The students' involvement in the program does not end here though. Many remain active alumni through the scholarships they receive, relationships they develop with their mentors, and future employment opportunities they exercise — such as internships and post-college jobs.

AEC Firms commitment to ACE?

The main commitment a company makes is empowering its staff to give time to the ACE Mentor Program. Teams meet in an after-school setting during the school year. A total of 14 - 16 two-hour sessions are held at either the school or the offices of the mentors. Additional time may be necessary to organize for a mentoring session. In addition to mentors, the program also needs additional volunteers, who assist in coordination of the program, events, and fundraising.

What happens during the season?

There are several types of activities that may take place during the season.

- Mentoring sessions with students where they are introduced to a segment of the industry and complete activities
- Field trips



- Special speaker presentations
- Project development - each team must conceptualize, design, and create a project
- Final presentations - students present their projects to each other, parents, teachers, and industry leaders
- Scholarship fundraisers
- Networking events for volunteers

What are the benefits to the mentor company?

Besides feeding the pipeline with the next generation of construction industry workforce, your company will benefit from its involvement with ACE.

The program:

- Enhances your company image, within the industry and also the community
- Provides networking opportunities, for both mentors and principals
- Connects your firm to talented and motivated part-time help and to potential future employees
- Enhances young professional's presentation and communication skills
- Creates an opportunity to "give back" to your community and to your industry

ACE in 2020

Spring of 2020 will be the 17th year of the ACE Mentor Program in Colorado. This year, the program will serve students from 20 different schools all over the state. Participating meeting locations (listed alphabetically) are as follows:

- Bear Creek High School
- Boulder High School
- CU Denver – College of Architecture + Planning
- East High School
- Denver School of Science and Technology
- Fossil Ridge High School
- Gateway High School (All Aurora Public Schools)
- Green Mountain High School
- Manitou Springs High School
- North High School
- Smoky Hill High School

Many of the students participating in this program might never have considered attending college or trade school. The opportunity to gain scholarship funds through ACE makes higher education a real option for many of these students. Each graduating senior is given the opportunity to apply for an ACE Mentor Program scholarship and the board of directors elects the scholarship winners. In the first ten years, the ACE Mentor Program in Colorado has awarded over \$500,000 in scholarships between 150 students.

How can my company become involved in the ACE Mentor Program?

Please contact Carol Lathrop at denverco@acementor.org or you can visit the ACE Mentor Program Website at www.acementor.org for additional information about the program.