

Full STEAM Ahead with MTI's Distance Learning Programs

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A critical infrastructure of our nation is in crisis. Around the country, transportation agencies are facing a serious shortage of skilled workers. There are simply not enough rail operators, bus drivers, CDL-certified drivers, managers, and other essential workers to keep up with the daily movement of people and goods. An aging workforce, recruitment and retention challenges, and other issues leave the future of the industry in peril. To keep American transportation operating efficiently, safely, and equitably, agencies must inspire younger generations to seek positions as industry professionals.

To ensure the efficient movement of people and products, we must prepare a new cohort of transportation professionals who are ready to lead a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable transportation industry. To help achieve this, the [Mineta Transportation Institute](#) (MTI) sponsors a suite of workforce development opportunities, many of which have been adapted to embrace distance learning for the time being.

What is MTI?

The Mineta Transportation Institute at [San Jose State University \(SJSU\)](#) is a leading university transportation center in the heart of Silicon Valley. At MTI, our mission is to increase mobility for all by improving the safety, efficiency, accessibility, and convenience of our nations' transportation system. Through research, education, workforce development and technology transfer, we help create a connected world.

What is a Workforce Development (WFD) Program?

A workforce development program is a "people-first" approach to business and economic development. These programs help people develop skills for success and, in doing so, help create and sustain a talented workforce. MTI's WFD programs shape the workforce of the future by inspiring youth to pursue in-demand careers in the transportation industry.

What are MTI's virtual WFD programs?

Our virtual Workforce Development programs include:

1. The [Garret Morgan Sustainable Transportation Competition](#), where middle school students compete to identify a transportation issue and create a sustainable solution to that problem, before presenting their project to a diverse panel of judges from across the nation. This program, sponsored by the U.S. The Department of Transportation and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), has been adapted to encourage innovative collaboration and to support distance-learning.



2. The [MTI Elementary Poster Contest](#), where elementary-aged students demonstrate their knowledge of a transportation-related theme (*I Stop, You Stop, We All Stop for Train Tracks* for the 2020 competition) by designing a captivating and creative poster. With winners taking home a cash prize and major bragging rights, this contest embraces the best of #STEAM-based distance learning.
3. The [MTI Photo Contest](#) is open to current high school and college students, who can win up to \$600 in prizes for capturing a transportation image emphasizing diversity. Highlighting the inclusivity of the transportation industry, this competition aims to showcase the skills of young photographers and artists while demonstrating the importance of transit for connecting people to communities, opportunities, and more.

What about in-person WFD programs?

We also look forward to reopening our in-person programs, including the return of our popular (and FREE) [Mineta Summer Transportation Institute Programs](#) for middle- and high-school students, in which high-school students can earn college credit while learning about STEAM-related career paths. Participants are also exposed to real world experiences at forward-thinking businesses such as Google—where students interact with their global mapping system—and the Valley Transportation Authority’s transition to electric busses, through hands-on activities and group field trips.

Transportation evolves and adapts, and actions taken now create positive change in the future—nowhere is this more apparent than in the education of the next generation. MTI sponsors these engaging programs to shape the state of transportation for tomorrow, to make a more efficient and equitable future.

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