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# AZFirst Invests \$90,000 in FIRST® STEM Program

## Grants Offered to Rookie FIRST Robotics Competition Teams in Arizona

CHANDLER, Ariz., July 11, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- AZFirst, an Arizona 501(c)3 organization supporting [FIRST](#) (*For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology*) activities announces a five-year, \$90,000 investment to create 15 high-school *FIRST* Robotics Competition teams in Arizona. *FIRST* connects students, educators, the community and the expanding technology industry in a collaborative effort to teach students science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) principles through project-based robot-building that culminates in a challenging, fast-paced, robotics competition. In addition, all high-school students who participate on a *FIRST* team are eligible to apply for more than \$25 million in scholarship opportunities.



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The funding for the AZFirst Arizona Rookie Grants are made up of \$30,000 from AZFirst, \$30,000 from the Steve Sanghi Family Foundation, and \$30,000 from a yet to be named sponsor organization or industry partner. AZFirst is seeking an additional \$30,000 from organizations interested in supporting STEM initiatives. Steve Sanghi, CEO and Chairman of the Board of Microchip Technology Inc., has been a long-time supporter of *FIRST* programs in Arizona. He is a past member of the Board of Directors of *FIRST* and currently serves as a Senior Advisor. Microchip Technology Inc. is the [Organizing Sponsor](#) for the *FIRST* Robotics Competition Regional events in Arizona.

"Our goal is to double the number of high school teams in Arizona and reach over 100 teams," said Steve Sanghi. "The AZFirst Rookie Grants is a bold initiative to start 15 new teams over the course of five years and teach them to be sustainable. It's not just about building robots. The teams learn so many work force development skills such as project management, team building, fundraising, presentation skills, critical thinking and working on a deadline."

The grant will provide a total of \$6,000 per team over a period of three years (\$3,000 the first year, \$2,000 the second year, and \$1,000 the third year). Applications for the grant will be

accepted starting August 1, 2016, through October 31, 2016, for year one of the grant, which will be for the 2017 *FIRST* season. In each of the three years, five rookie teams will be selected, for a total of 15 new teams over the course of the grant. The funds will be applied to the team's registration fee to attend one *FIRST* Robotics Competition Arizona Regional event per year during the term of the grant.

"Teams will be asked to provide a business plan and attend a workshop. Our goal is to teach the teams to be viable so they are trained and equipped to continue beyond the grant period," said Carol Popovich, Microchip's STEM outreach representative, principal investigator for the AZFirst and the Arizona Rookie Grant and Arizona *FIRST* regional director. "The initial funding is designed to supplement sponsorship dollars that the teams raise themselves, encouraging them to build relationships with industry sponsors and mentors. The AZFirst Arizona Rookie Grants represents a tremendous opportunity to offer STEM robotics to more teams in Arizona."

For more information about the AZFirst Arizona Rookie Grants, contact Carol Popovich at (480) 792-7938 or [carol.popovich@microchip.com](mailto:carol.popovich@microchip.com).

## Resources

High-res image available through Flickr or editorial contact (feel free to publish):

- *FIRST* Robotics Competition (FRC) Logo:  
[www.flickr.com/photos/microchiptechnology/5036101421/sizes/l](http://www.flickr.com/photos/microchiptechnology/5036101421/sizes/l)

## About *FIRST*®

Accomplished inventor [Dean Kamen](#) founded *FIRST*® (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) in 1989 to inspire an appreciation of science and technology in young people. Based in Manchester, N.H., *FIRST* designs accessible, innovative programs to build self-confidence, knowledge, and life skills while motivating young people to pursue opportunities in science, technology, and engineering. With support from over 200 of the Fortune 500 companies and more than \$25 million in college scholarships, the not-for-profit organization hosts the *FIRST*® [Robotics Competition](#) for students in Grades 9-12; *FIRST*® [Tech Challenge](#) for Grades 7-12; *FIRST*® [LEGO® League](#) for Grades 4-8; and *FIRST*® [LEGO® League Jr.](#) for Grades K-3. *Gracious Professionalism*® is a way of doing things that encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community. To learn more about *FIRST*, go to [www.firstinspires.org](http://www.firstinspires.org).

## About Microchip Technology

Microchip Technology Inc. (NASDAQ: MCHP) is a leading provider of microcontroller, mixed-signal, analog and Flash-IP solutions, providing low-risk product development, lower total system cost and faster time to market for thousands of diverse customer applications worldwide. Headquartered in Chandler, Arizona, Microchip offers outstanding technical support along with dependable delivery and quality. For more information, visit the Microchip website at [www.microchip.com](http://www.microchip.com).

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