



We're All In:

Celebrating Women in STEM at the USPTO



UNITED STATES
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Michelle K. Lee

**UNDER SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
FOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND
DIRECTOR OF THE U.S. PATENT AND
TRADEMARK OFFICE**

*"Our nation's economy cannot grow to
its full potential unless we ensure that no
innovator or entrepreneur is left behind."*



In today's innovation-based economy, no organization can afford to overlook the unique talent and ingenuity that women bring to the workplace. Our nation's economy cannot grow to its full potential unless we ensure that no innovator or entrepreneur is left behind.

Growth in jobs, especially higher paying jobs, will come from STEM related fields. Yet 57 percent of all girls surveyed say they have not even considered a career in STEM. Post-college women hold less than 25 percent of STEM jobs, despite the fact that they fill close to half of all jobs in the U.S. economy.

Together, we are working to remove barriers and expand opportunities for women to enroll in STEM degree programs in our nation's colleges and universities, secure careers in STEM in our nation's corporations, and stay in those STEM careers for the benefit of our economy and society.

The USPTO has created an environment where talent can thrive and where ability leads to advancement regardless of gender. That's why we have launched an initiative to encourage girls and women to enter and remain in STEM fields, to grow as STEM leaders, and to highlight the important role women play in our innovation economy.

We're calling it "All in STEM" because we need all hands on deck in these critical fields. We need an all-inclusive environment for all innovators. This is a top priority for me, especially as the first female director of this agency.

To kick off our campaign, we're celebrating women in STEM at the USPTO. Please take a moment to meet some of our top talent. These are real women making a real impact at this agency. Their stories are inspiring, uplifting, and motivating. And they underscore how, at the USPTO, we are "all in."



We're All In at the USPTO

- In 2015, the U.S. Senate confirmed Michelle K. Lee as Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, the first woman to hold this position in the USPTO's 200+ year history.
- We are reaching the next generation of women in STEM via Camp Invention for first through fifth grade kids, the Girls Scouts' IP patch, Collegiate Inventors Competition, and more.
- 35 percent of the USPTO workforce and 31 percent of the agency's executive leadership team is female.
- Female STEM employees make up 27 percent of the total USPTO STEM workforce.
- Women employees have rated our telework and health and wellness programs above the 94 percent satisfaction level.
- When women come to the USPTO, they stay. They are recognized, rewarded, and challenged to be their best.



Left: A young girl participating in Camp Invention shows off her work to USPTO Chief of Staff Andrew Byrnes and Director Michelle K. Lee. Right: At the 2015 National Inventors Hall of Fame induction ceremony, host Mo Rocca talks with inductee Kristina Johnson, collegiate inventor Elizabeth Beattie, and young scientist Landri Drude.



Sarah Harris

GENERAL COUNSEL

"I fundamentally believe that a diverse workforce is key to the success of any organization."

Success Mantra: “Remember to ‘GIVE!’”

- Gratitude: Don’t take things for granted and always give appreciation for any help you receive.
- Initiative: Find ways to obtain the experience that you need to get you where you want to go.
- Volunteer: Not only does it provide a great pathway to happiness, but it will also likely help your career by broadening your people network and enhancing your experience. Be a mentor.
- Execute: When you take initiative to do something, make sure that you have the time to do it well.

“I fundamentally believe that a diverse workforce is key to the success of any organization. America needs to continue to innovate in the STEM fields to maintain its competitive advantage in the global marketplace. Increasing the number of women in STEM will increase the diversity in the workforce, thereby enhancing the opportunities for innovation and job creation.”

The USPTO leads its peers in achieving workforce diversity across both the public and private sectors. Fun fact:

The USPTO has a higher rate of women leaders than those of several tech industry titans in Silicon Valley. That kind of achievement speaks volumes, and it doesn’t go unnoticed.

“The agency breaks down barriers to advancement by providing an environment for everyone to thrive regardless of gender, race or affiliation,” says Harris, a Texas-raised transplant who left electrical engineering to pursue a legal career. After working at both law firms and corporations, she landed a job as the chief intellectual property counsel at AOL in the Washington, D.C. area.

Joining the USPTO was the next natural career move, working at the nation’s IP powerhouse and serving as the principal legal advisor to Michelle K. Lee, the Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the USPTO.

What does she enjoy most about working here?

“No question... the employees,” she says. “I have never met a more impressive group of hardworking, extremely talented people in my entire career.”

Wynn Coggins

**DEPUTY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE
OFFICER**

"In college, civil engineering seemed to be a good fit. But I didn't want to be a note taker, I wanted to be the one in the hard hat and boots sighting the level."



Success Mantra: “Actively seek leadership positions, have a positive outlook and be resilient!”

As a freshman at Clemson who had just switched majors from political science to civil engineering, Wynn knew her life in STEM would not be dictated by anyone else.

“I remember being one of only two women in my surveying class, and our professor thought we would be excellent note takers,” recalls Wynn. “I didn’t want to be a note taker; I wanted to be the one in the hard hat and boots sighting the level!”

After graduation, she began her engineering career at a firm doing planning and zoning, but it just wasn’t a good fit. When approached with an opportunity to apply for a patent examiner job at the USPTO, she jumped at the chance.

Nearly 25 years later Wynn can honestly say that working at the USPTO is not only a good fit, it’s the right fit.

“There is an energy that is just palpable the moment you walk in the door,” she says. “I’ve always felt challenged here. And if I’ve gotten close to feeling like it’s time to try something else, that ‘something else’ was always there.”

The most recent ‘something else’ has led her from being a patent group director to her current role as Deputy Chief Administrative Officer where she supports the development and delivery of administrative functions for the agency. Wynn’s favorite part of her job is working collaboratively with diverse people from across the agency to problem-solve.

“Having more women, and frankly more diversity in any group of people, maximizes the creativity, innovation and overall success of that group because unique perspectives will be heard and considered. Ultimately, better decisions will be made and we will break down the stereotypes that exist for both men and women in the workplace.”

Her advice to women in STEM? “Take an active interest in someone and be a mentor. Or on the flip side, ask someone you respect and admire to mentor you. We are all accountable for and responsible for our actions, our decisions, and ultimately our careers — but we need help and guidance along the way.”



Valencia Martin- Wallace

**DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOR
PATENT QUALITY**

"I can't imagine a world that does not include women scientists, engineers and mathematicians."

Success Mantra: “Challenge your mind, always follow your curiosity and never limit yourself.”

According to Valencia, Deputy Commissioner for Patent Quality who has worked at the USPTO for over 20 years, exploring the world of science and technology is something that you’ll never regret.

Why? Through STEM, she says, you can make this world a better place for yourself and those around you. But, you might wonder, why STEM at the USPTO in particular?

“Your future happiness and career fulfillment are in your own hands here,” Valencia says. “It’s no mistake that we are consistently ranked as a best place to work in the federal government.” Enough said.

Four months after Valencia began her career at the USPTO as a patent examiner, she began law school. *That’s right. Only four months later.* And if she had to do it all over again, she’d do it exactly the same way. The heightened discipline, rigor, and organizational skills needed to juggle a new job and the successful pursuit of

a new degree have continued to pay dividends as she has risen through the ranks at the agency.

As a woman in STEM, her work both as an examiner and now as a surveyor of patent quality helps to fulfill her sense of public service through innovation.

“I can’t imagine a world that does not include women scientists, engineers, and mathematicians. Diversity of opinion, critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity are the hallmarks of technology. Women are intelligent, creative, dynamic, and amazing! Without our unique manner of identifying, approaching, and solving problems we would not have the inventions that seem commonplace to us now, but were virtually unthinkable when created — such as windshield wipers invented by Mary Anderson, or a combustion engine by Margaret Knight, or the computer and a computer language (COBOL) by Grace Murray Hopper.”



Joyce Ward

**DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF EDUCATION
AND OUTREACH**

“My job at the USPTO enables me to instill the idea of entrepreneurship and innovation in others, and help students, teachers, parents, and mentors recognize the tremendous potential they have to affect change.”

Success mantra: "The sky is the limit! You have the ability to shape your own destiny."

Hearing the squeals of laughter and awe in a child's voice when they see a sketch of their invention transformed into a 3D printed object never gets old for Joyce.

She builds the kinds of programs that capture the imaginations of future leaders in STEM one mind at a time.

"My job at the USPTO enables me to instill the idea of entrepreneurship and innovation in others, and help students recognize the tremendous potential they have to affect change."

Joyce, the Director of the Office of Education and Outreach, and her team travel throughout the country to develop and implement programming that increases knowledge and awareness of intellectual property among future innovators and the people who educate them.

Her main goal: to help students learn how to tap into their inherent sparks of genius and creativity, and turn those ideas into reality.

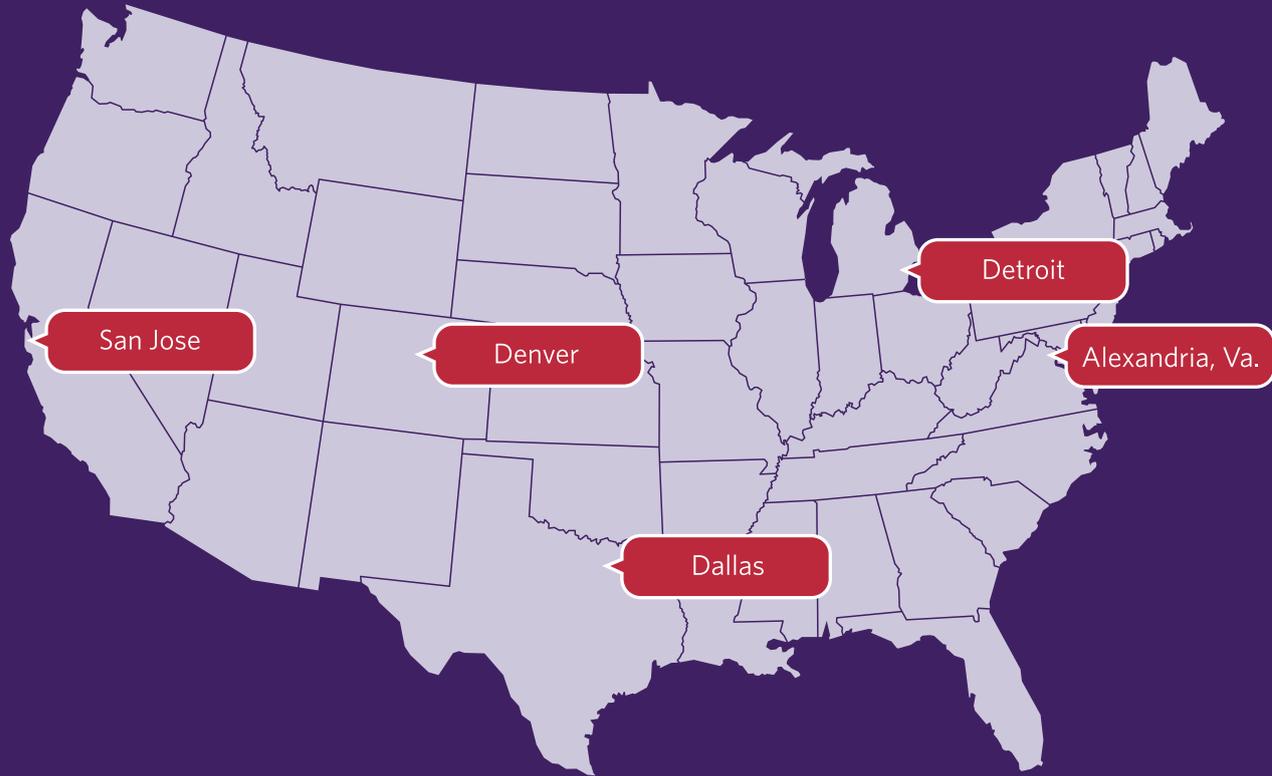
"Ideas are powerful, and they have the ability to change conversations, communities, industry, and the world," she says.

Joyce's passion to motivate students to understand how STEM fields have real-world applications has transformed education and outreach for the agency. As a former USPTO trademark examining attorney in the early 1990s, Joyce returned to the agency when she was selected to lead a new office dedicated to exposing children and young adults to STEM and IP, especially those students who might not otherwise have had access to such programming.

Her advice to young students in STEM?

"Know that what you do has an impact, and it has value!" she says. "Your basic STEM knowledge — problem solving and understanding how things work — is so valuable in all aspects of life. Whether you pursue a career in STEM or not, use it to make a difference."

Nationwide workforce



#USPTONearYou

In 2012, we started expanding USPTO operations across the country to Dallas, Denver, Detroit, and Silicon Valley, bringing new resources to innovators' doorsteps.

The USPTO historically operated from headquarters in the Washington D.C. area. When President Obama signed the Leahy-Smith America Invents Act in 2011, the USPTO moved to establish four regional offices to create new economic opportunities and to serve local entrepreneurs more efficiently, with the added benefit of having a USPTO presence in every time zone in the U.S.

The first regional office opened in Detroit in 2012, followed by Denver in 2014, and Silicon Valley and Dallas in 2015.

Our regional offices allow us to recruit a diverse range of talented technical experts. We have hired hundreds of regional office staff, including regional directors and their support staff, administrative patent judges, and patent examiners, who work closely with intellectual property services, startups, and job-growth accelerators in their regions. They also collaborate with local STEM organizations.

The offices also function as resource and education hubs — providing public search facilities as well as information on pro bono programs designed to assist financially under-resourced independent inventors and small businesses.

We're continuing to hire staff to help the regional offices thrive. Visit www.usajobs.gov and use keyword "USPTO" to view positions near you.



Elizabeth Dougherty

**DIRECTOR OF INVENTOR
EDUCATION, OUTREACH, AND
RECOGNITION**

Office of Innovation Development

“Be the change you seek: advocate for more women in STEM, serve as a mentor and pave the way for a new generation of female scientists and engineers.”

Success Mantra: "Believe in yourself!"

Liz had a strong, homegrown interest in STEM right from the very start. She was influenced at an early age by her father, a professional electrical engineer in robotics.

"I would watch my father develop new inventions for semiconductor-related technologies that he planned to patent. His eagerness to protect his intellectual property and strong desire to obtain a patent left a lasting impression."

And when an unexpected affinity for physics emerged during an introductory course at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., her fate was steered towards a career in STEM. She turned that initial spark of excitement and curiosity in the study of matter and its motion through space and time into her major. So when the USPTO came

to Catholic to recruit, she immediately felt a kinetic pull toward an organization whose mission it is to have a direct and enduring impact on America's economy by safeguarding innovators just like her dad.

She began as a patent examiner in electric devices used for measuring and testing, and has since navigated all facets of the agency to arrive in a role that allows her to work directly with the independent inventor community.

Her advice to women in STEM?

"Be the change you seek: advocate for more women in STEM, serve as a mentor and pave the way for a new generation of female scientists and engineers."

Montia Pressey

STAFF ATTORNEY

*Petitions Office, Office of the
Commissioner for Trademarks*

*"When I heard USPTO was hiring,
I jumped at the chance to join!"*



Success Mantra: “Consistently do a great job. Cultivate a reputation as someone who has a high quality work product and a strong work ethic.”

We’re not bragging, ahem, but we hear this quite a bit from employees at the USPTO: “When I heard the USPTO was hiring, I jumped at the chance to join!”

Such is the story for Montia, who is on her second stint at the agency, having left briefly to explore life at an intellectual property law firm.

What brought her back for good?

“The USPTO has afforded me the flexibility to pursue the career I want, and the opportunity to practice law in a field that I love, in an environment that is supportive of both my career goals and my desire for true work-life balance.”

Montia’s work as a trademark attorney has taken her across the globe and back to attend and participate in

committees on trademark law, and to conduct media interviews and speaking engagements before legal professionals and entrepreneurs.

In her life at the USPTO, there are no typical days — and she prefers it that way.

Without hesitation, she encourages women to join the USPTO. In her humble opinion, it is unmatched by any other company or agency.

“Working with intelligent and accomplished colleagues at the top of their respective fields who share a commitment to excellence and enjoy the quality of life that the USPTO has to offer... it doesn’t get any better than this.”



Dr. Arthi Murugesan Krishna

COMPUTER SCIENTIST

Office of the Chief Information Officer

"I like that the USPTO is safe and diverse, accommodating people in all walks of life. Being a parent of young kids, the excellent on-campus child care facility has helped me tremendously."

Success Mantra: “Keep your skills current! Put yourself in a position where you can learn and practice new skills on a regular basis.”

When you’re a Ph.D. in artificial intelligence and natural language processing and your day-to-day vernacular includes “cognitive task analysis” and “groovy closures,” coming to work at a future-forward agency devoted to protecting intellectual property just makes sense.

Meet Dr. Arthi. Her journey through the USPTO bridges user experience engineering, customer outreach, coding, and more, all in the name of improving patent and trademark examination and processing tools. And she thinks the coolest part of her job is when she can engage end users one-on-one to determine what’s working and what’s not.

To stay sharp, Arthi collaborates closely with her team and belongs to the USPTO’s C.O.D.E. (Club for Open Data Enthusiasts). She has also been able to make the most of training made available through the support of

her supervisors, who routinely ask her to come up with ideas she would like to work on.

Arthi found other kinds of support invaluable when it came time for maternity leave. She mentions how many women across the agency willingly shared sage advice on how to navigate returning to work happy and healthy. A major part of that was taking advantage of the USPTO’s on-campus daycare facility.

In her work, she helps to provide the vision and define the path forward through new technologies that can improve the lives of inventors and examiners. At the USPTO, Arthi has been able to fully realize her career vision with a fulfilling and supported work-life balance, knowing that her experience, innovative ideas, and work ethic above all else are respected and valued.

And that, indeed, is pretty groovy.

Susannah Chung

SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

*"It's critical for women to enter
STEM fields because diversity
drives innovation."*



A portrait of Marivellise Santiago-Cordero, a woman with long, wavy brown hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a dark grey, sleeveless top. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor setting.

Marivellise Santiago- Cordero

SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

"I want to learn, lead and be a role model for other women."

Octavia Hollington

PATENT EXAMINER
Measuring and Testing

*"If you choose to work here, you will
utilize your STEM training every day
in a way that serves the public."*



Success Mantra: "As you work, do so with speed, accuracy, and passion."

"It takes persistence, a sharp eye, and an analytical mind to be a patent examiner," says Octavia. She should know — she's been examining at the USPTO for more than 15 years and still gets a thrill each and every time a new technology crosses her desk.

She dissects patent applications to determine if they comply with legal requirements and rules, to validate the originality of a new and useful idea before it is granted the right to be deemed a new invention.

Her work as a patent examiner matters, and not just to the independent inventors who work for years to develop, test, and submit their inventions for the right to protect their art. It matters to the country as a whole, because patents have a direct impact on the economy. And that makes Octavia very proud to work at the USPTO.

"STEM careers are exciting at the USPTO! If you choose to work here, you will utilize your STEM training every day in a way that serves the public," she says. "Your career as a patent examiner can be fulfilling, especially if you like to constantly learn new things and want to work with cutting-edge technology."

87%

OF FEMALE STEM EMPLOYEES AT THE USPTO SAY THAT THEY ARE PROUD TO WORK FOR THIS AGENCY.

82%

BELIEVE THAT THE USPTO'S MISSION IS VERY IMPORTANT TO THEM.



Rebecca Volentine

PATENT EXAMINER

Video Compression and Recording

“The flexibility has allowed me to adopt a work schedule that balances well with my personal life.”

Success Mantra: “Be self-disciplined and always be willing to learn.”

Making the connection to real-world applications of the inventions that she examines is the coolest part of what Rebecca does. Collaborating with fellow examiners on everything from how new technologies operate to the intricate details of newly passed patent laws and regulations is a close second.

The prolific and diverse perspectives at the USPTO provide her with an enriching experience, which underscores her delight in having selected the USPTO as her first employer since graduating from George Mason University in the Washington, D.C. area in 2012.

“The salary and benefits are really competitive,” says Rebecca. “Also, it is difficult to imagine another comparable position elsewhere which offers such a high degree of work schedule flexibility. The constant exposure to new and cutting-edge technologies always keeps things interesting. I find the ability to set my own schedule a great benefit. The flexibility has allowed me to adopt a work schedule that balances well with my personal life.”

Top five things

FEMALE STEM EMPLOYEES LIKE BEST ABOUT THE USPTO:

1. Flexible schedule
2. Benefits
3. Teleworking
4. Supervisor
5. Colleagues

A portrait of Tyeshia McIntyre-Bray, a Black woman with short, curly brown hair, smiling. She is wearing a black top with yellow and white geometric patterns and large hoop earrings. The background is a blurred office setting.

Tyeshia McIntyre- Bray

SENIOR IT PROGRAM MANAGER
Office of the Chief Information Officer

“Diversity is a way of life at the USPTO, and it’s not limited to ethnicity and gender. Diversity of thought is prevalent.”

Success Mantra: “Be committed to getting the job done.”

Ty’s experience as a military veteran at USPTO has afforded her opportunities beyond her day-to-day activities as an IT program manager. Once she arrived at the agency in 2012, she joined the USPTO Military Association, which helps veterans seamlessly transition from active duty to the civilian workforce through mentorship and fellowship.

Ty has been able to leverage her military experience and 22 years as an IT professional in her role. But she has also been able to tap into even greater opportunities for career growth and advancement in STEM through the USPTO’s training and educational programs. It’s clear that people, and their professional and personal success, come first at the USPTO and Ty couldn’t be more impressed.

“The USPTO is one of the most progressive federal agencies. The quality of life here is amazing. We have flexible duty schedules that support work-life balance,” she notes, but goes on to really champion the agency’s commitment to a culture of inclusion and diversity above all else.

“Diversity is a way of life at the USPTO, and it’s not limited to ethnicity and gender. Diversity of thought is prevalent.”

One of the
best places
to work in
the federal
government

Based on employee feedback through the annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, the Partnership for Public Service ranks the USPTO as a Best Place to Work in the Federal Government® year after year. And we are currently indexed within the top 10 out of 298 subcomponent agencies as a leading employer of choice among women.

A portrait of Kathy Hook, a woman with long blonde hair and glasses, smiling. She is wearing a blue patterned cardigan over a blue top. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor setting.

Kathy Hook

**SEARCH BUSINESS
PROGRAM COORDINATOR**
*Office of Patent Information
Management*

*"I love my boss... He has empowered
me to lead projects and to lead
people, which I never thought
I'd do or want to do."*

Success Mantra: “Stay agile!”

When we asked Kathy to describe her job, her answer was “Wow, that’s a good question!”

Why? Because she’s been able to affect process change and scope in IT contracts, patent system operations and programs since she started in 2007 — and in ways she never dreamed of.

Kathy is a project manager who works on patent examiner tools. She was the first USPTO scrum master when the agency decided to change its IT project management process from waterfall to agile. The translation: The USPTO modernized its software development methodologies from a linear approach to an iterative one. So as scrum master on one of the agency’s multi-million dollar IT projects under this new mode, she was head honcho — taking the lead on managing everything from developing start-up documentation, to software deployments, and everything in between.

Currently, she is handling all of the business program coordination for a new search tool. She liaises with key internal stakeholders across the agency and keeps

senior leadership informed that the project is on time and on budget.

Kathy’s days begin at 5 a.m. and typically range from ‘crazy to crazier.’ But she wouldn’t have it any other way.

At the USPTO, Kathy is happy, busy, challenged, and rewarded. Her favorite part about working at the USPTO is the diversity of the groups with whom she works. From administrative assistants to executives, she says, all do their part to help the agency thrive.

Case in point: her boss. She attributes much of her professional success to a great and extremely supportive supervisor who will, at any given moment, check in with her just to ask if she’s fulfilled and if there’s anything she wants to do that she’s not currently doing.

“I love my boss. He’s the type of boss who will support you on anything and everything. He has empowered me to lead projects and to lead people, which I never thought I’d do or want to do. He has helped me grow professionally, for which I’m eternally grateful.”



United States Patent and Trademark Office

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