



# Table of Contents



## Microsoft TechSpark Fellows Impact Report September 2023 – May 2024

<u>Engage Local Communities</u> -----	3
<u>TechSpark Coaches</u> -----	4
<u>Impact Reports Overview</u> -----	5
<u>Impact Reports by State</u> -----	6
<u>Impact Reports by Focus Areas</u> -----	7
<u>TechSpark Fellows Impact Reports</u> -----	8-50



# Microsoft TechSpark Fellows



## How we work

Our world is facing increasingly complex challenges. Challenges that no one company, industry, country, or region alone can solve. That's why Microsoft works across sectors and borders-to foster collective action, amplify impact, and drive progress faster and further.

## Engage local communities

We understand that change happens locally. That's why we work closely with communities to understand their specific needs, challenges, and strengths-so that we can best support them in their progress.

## September 2023 – May 2024

Microsoft TechSpark Fellows helped catalyze more than **\$177 million** in funding from other organizations and upskilled more than **10,600 job seekers** and employees across 42 U.S communities.

# TechSpark Fellows Coach

The Microsoft TechSpark team guided Fellows as they

- Learned about Microsoft and Microsoft partner resources
- Explored community opportunities
- Implemented new pilot programs
- Sustained what worked by building local ecosystems

We partner across sectors to understand the unique challenges and to explore solutions, programs, and partnerships that will be most effective in local communities.



## TechSpark Coaches



Linda Nguyen  
Los Angeles  
CA



Erika Smith  
Atlanta  
GA



Nisaini Rexach  
Chicago  
IL



JJ Townsend  
Jackson  
MS



Taya Spelhaug  
Fargo  
ND



Omar Saucedo  
Juarez/El Paso  
TX



J.J. Childress  
El Paso/Juarez  
TX



Jeremy Satterfield  
Southern  
VA



Lisa Karstetter  
Eastern  
WA



Matt Adamczyk  
TittletownTech  
WI



Michelle Schuler  
Northeast  
WI



Dennis Ellis  
Cheyenne  
WY



## Microsoft TechSpark Fellows: Impact Reports

Discover the stories of impact, innovation, and empowerment within each Impact Report. Experience the vital role nonprofits play in understanding local opportunities, engaging communities, and activating ecosystems to drive meaningful change. These reports are not just documents; they showcase the transformative work unfolding across the US, bridging gaps where opportunity is often overlooked.

Explore the pages of each Impact Report and be inspired by the incredible efforts to expand opportunities and unlock the full potential of every community.



# TechSpark Fellows

The Microsoft TechSpark program is designed to accelerate local economic opportunity across communities in the United States. Whether it is promoting digital skills and employability or accelerating job creation, TechSpark provides opportunities in places where talent often gets overlooked.

Alongside our partners, Microsoft TechSpark is focused on providing this community-first, community-driven approach nationally.

View each state's progress to expand opportunity.



## TechSpark Fellow by State

<a href="#">Alabama</a>	<a href="#">Louisiana</a>	<a href="#">North Carolina</a>
<a href="#">Alaska</a>	<a href="#">Maine</a>	<a href="#">Ohio</a>
<a href="#">Arizona</a>	<a href="#">Maryland</a>	<a href="#">Oklahoma</a>
<a href="#">Arkansas</a>	<a href="#">Massachusetts</a>	<a href="#">Oregon</a>
<a href="#">Colorado</a>	<a href="#">Michigan</a>	<a href="#">Pennsylvania</a>
<a href="#">Connecticut</a>	<a href="#">Minnesota</a>	<a href="#">Rhode Island</a>
<a href="#">Delaware</a>	<a href="#">Missouri</a>	<a href="#">South Carolina</a>
<a href="#">Florida</a>	<a href="#">Montana</a>	<a href="#">South Dakota</a>
<a href="#">Hawaii</a>	<a href="#">Nebraska</a>	<a href="#">Tennessee</a>
<a href="#">Idaho</a>	<a href="#">Nevada</a>	<a href="#">Utah</a>
<a href="#">Indiana</a>	<a href="#">New Hampshire</a>	<a href="#">Vermont</a>
<a href="#">Iowa</a>	<a href="#">New Jersey</a>	<a href="#">Washington D.C.</a>
<a href="#">Kansas</a>	<a href="#">New Mexico</a>	<a href="#">West Virginia</a>
<a href="#">Kentucky</a>	<a href="#">New York</a>	<a href="#">Puerto Rico</a>

# Impact Reports by Focus Area



Microsoft has long been committed to ensuring people have access to the technology, skills, and opportunities needed to thrive in a digital economy. Together programs were enhanced or developed to support communities in creating inclusive economic growth.

## Click to state impact reports by focus area

Computer Science Education		Digital Inclusion	
<a href="#">Alabama</a>	<a href="#">Maine</a>	<a href="#">Hawaii</a>	<a href="#">Nebraska</a>
<a href="#">Arizona</a>	<a href="#">Maryland</a>	<a href="#">Kansas</a>	<a href="#">New Hampshire</a>
<a href="#">Delaware</a>	<a href="#">Massachusetts</a>	<a href="#">Kentucky</a>	<a href="#">Oklahoma</a>
<a href="#">Florida</a>	<a href="#">Ohio</a>	<a href="#">Michigan</a>	<a href="#">Rhode Island</a>
<a href="#">Iowa</a>	<a href="#">Oregon</a>	<a href="#">Montana</a>	<a href="#">Puerto Rico</a>
		<a href="#">New Mexico</a>	

Digital Skills		Digital Transformation – Nonprofit	
<a href="#">Arkansas</a>	<a href="#">Nevada</a>	<a href="#">Alaska</a>	<a href="#">New Jersey</a>
<a href="#">Connecticut</a>	<a href="#">New York</a>		
<a href="#">Idaho</a>	<a href="#">South Carolina</a>	<a href="#">Indiana</a>	<a href="#">North Carolina</a>
<a href="#">Louisiana</a>	<a href="#">Utah</a>		
<a href="#">Minnesota</a>	<a href="#">Vermont</a>	<a href="#">Missouri</a>	<a href="#">Washington D.C.</a>

Digital Transformation – Startups/SMB	
<a href="#">Colorado</a>	<a href="#">Tennessee</a>
<a href="#">Pennsylvania</a>	<a href="#">West Virginia</a>
<a href="#">South Dakota</a>	

# Microsoft TechSpark Fellows Impact Reports

September 2023 – May 2024



# STREAM Innovations

## Digital Skills in Birmingham, Alabama

### Local opportunity

Exposing students to Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STREAM) skills and careers is vital for preparing them to thrive in a technology-driven world, fostering innovation, and addressing future workforce demands.

### Engaging the community

[STREAM Innovations](#) is pioneering a groundbreaking initiative: A mobile Health Lab designed to introduce students from under-resourced communities to health and tech. With the support of a grant from Catalyze Birmingham, they aim to repurpose a cargo shipping container into this innovative Health Lab, fostering STEM experiential learning and accelerating early access to STEM opportunities in Alabama.

The collaboration with [Microsoft TechSpark](#) accelerates STREAM Nexus targeting 6<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> grade students and seamlessly integrates STREAM and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Classes will be hands-on, leveraging cutting-edge tools with 3D printing and Virtual Reality (VR).

The primary objective is to explore the dynamic nexus between education and innovation, equipping students with vital skills and knowledge for future success in the increasingly interconnected digital world.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- City of Birmingham
- Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 1 Mobile Health Lab
- \$390K Additional Funding from other organizations

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth.

- March 2024: [Catalyze Birmingham Challenge Awards \\$720K to Five Innovative Nonprofits](#)



*“I’m excited about the possibilities that will come from this collaboration and the impact it will have on the communities we serve.”*

[Adrienne Starks, PhD](#)  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Alabama



STREAMInnovations™

# Covenant House Alaska

## Digital Transformation in Anchorage, Alaska

### Local opportunity

With nonprofits potentially missing out on efficiency gains due to a lack of technology integration, it's vital to equip staff and volunteers with digital skills. Amid statewide workforce shortages, there's a unique chance to leverage AI and related technologies. By doing so, we can empower nonprofits to overcome staffing challenges and significantly enhance fundraising and communications efforts.

### Engaging the community

[Covenant House Alaska](#) worked with the community to create a project that leverages AI and related technologies to address the challenges faced by nonprofits amidst a statewide workforce shortage. Through this project, they aim to certify relevant staff leveraging [Microsoft Digital Skills Center](#) and [LinkedIn Learning pathways](#), empowering them to increase fundraising capacity and expand outreach to potential supporters and funders.

By partnering with The Foraker Group and [Microsoft TechSpark](#) they'll organize trainings introducing AI to Alaska nonprofits and host breakout education sessions at their annual conference. Increasing the programs reach to help strengthen the nonprofit community.

With the support of local nonprofit partners like United Way and The Foraker Group, they'll bolster the community's ability to sustain vital programs.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- United Way
- The Foraker Group
- Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- Defined AI Digital Skilling Project

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth

- July 2023: [Microsoft TechSpark and Covenant House ignite economic innovation and opportunity](#)



*“As a nonprofit faced with the growing challenge of raising more funds to support life changing programs for vulnerable young people, it is a timely opportunity to have access to capacity building technology products and grant funding that allows us to jump into an AI innovation project with eyes wide open and lots of hope for the future.”*

Joseph Hemphill,  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Alaska



#### Microsoft TechSpark

Talent is everywhere, Opportunity is not  
[Microsoft TechSpark](#) | [Microsoft CSR](#)

# Arkansas Regional Innovation Hub

## Digital Skills in North Little Rock, Arkansas

### Local opportunity

Arkansas, like many other states, has experienced labor shortages in various industries. This labor shortage hinders economic growth and may lead to social issues. Addressing the labor shortages through targeted programs can benefit individuals, businesses, and the community.

### Engaging the community

[Arkansas Regional Innovation Hub](#) started Skills to Launch in 2020. This program is a 10-week scholarship-based hands-on program, designed to provide technical skills and soft skills training to adults in a variety of trades including industrial operations, production welding, HVAC, Information Technology, and Solar Panel Installation. The goal is to create an opportunity for individuals looking for a career in a trade industry, but do not have the funding to complete the necessary training. The partnership with [Microsoft TechSpark](#) enabled IT students to join the program at no cost.

The partnership with Microsoft TechSpark has increased our ecosystem building efforts and allowed us to leverage Microsoft's brand with employers, funders, and training partners.

The Skills to Launch program offers IT students:

- Microsoft certifications
- CompTIA certifications
- Employment opportunities in local businesses



### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Arkansas Department of Commerce
- Community Impact Arkansas Center for Data Sciences
- University of Arkansas at Pulaski Tech
- PPG Foundation
- Microsoft
- 50+ Companies

### Impact to date

Metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 150 Skilled (22.5% female)
- 85% Job Placement with 76% trade specific
- \$25,000 Additional Funding

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth.

- April 2024: [Thank you, Microsoft TechSpark – Career Seekers Find Path to Success at The Innovation Hub](#)
- August 2023: [The Arkansas Regional Innovation Hub Selected as Part of TechSpark Program to Grow Economic Opportunity in Arkansas](#)
- December 2023: [Microsoft Tech Spark Visits Arkansas Regional Innovation Hub](#)



*“I am stunned at the amount of information I am learning about Microsoft and the very supportive community within the TechSpark Fellows!”*

Errin Stanger,  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Arkansas

*“We are happy to be an employer partner and we value the positive impact this project has on the Arkansas workforce, infrastructure-related sectors, and the lives of the individuals that participate.”*

Zachary Janosky,  
Global Manufacturing, Inc



AT WINROCK INTERNATIONAL

# Coding in Color

## Digital Skills in Phoenix, Arizona

### Local opportunity

The demand for digital skills is rapidly expanding across all industries, and historically underserved students may not have access to digital skills education. By providing these students with the necessary skills we can increase the talent pool. Ensuring organizations have access to a diverse and skilled workforce capable of meeting the demands of a digital economy.

### Engaging the community

[Coding in Color](#) equips historically underserved students with the digital skills to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century through computer science education. This program includes workshops, hackathons, and summer camps:

The partnership with Microsoft TechSpark has increased our ecosystem building efforts and allowed us to leverage Microsoft's brand with employers, funders, and training partners.

- Web Development Certification program, in collaboration with Hope Academy, is possible because of the collaboration with [Microsoft TechSpark](#). This partnership helped launch this program, enabling data gathering and serves as a proof of concept for securing future grants

Hackathon, in collaboration with Phoenix College, marked a significant milestone. During this event, students dedicated their skills to crafting an iOS application for a local business, Taylor Candle & Co. The overarching goal was to contribute to the regional economy by catalyzing Digital Transformation in small businesses and fostering the growth of tech talent.



Throughout the hackathon, our students not only acquired new skills but also had the opportunity to establish professional profiles on LinkedIn, complemented by headshots from the talented local photographer, Francis Andrea.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Salt River Schools, Phoenix College, University of Advancing Technology, Hope Academy High School, NourishPhx, Banner Health, Amazon Software Facility, Smithsonian, and Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 123 Students
- 80% of students are from historically disadvantaged backgrounds
- \$5,000 additional funding

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth.

- August 2023: [‘Coding in Color’ brings the world of computer science to underrepresented teens](#)
- December 2023: [Local Non-Profit Creating Opportunities for Students to Build Apps and Websites for Local Businesses](#)
- February 2024: [Coding in Color Selected as Recipient of Banner Health Community Reinvestment Grant in Arizona](#)



*“We’re thrilled to have been selected as a Microsoft TechSpark Fellow. We’re looking forward to expanding our community relationships and increasing access to our programs across the state.”*

Diana Lee Guzman,  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Arizona

*“We firmly believe that Coding in color offers invaluable opportunities to students, contributing significantly to the creation of a more inclusive and equitable future.”*

Adrian De Alba,  
Maricopa County Regional School  
District



CODING IN COLOR

#### Microsoft TechSpark

Talent is everywhere, Opportunity is not  
[Microsoft TechSpark](#) | [Microsoft CSR](#)

# Innosphere Ventures

## Digital Transformation Startup in Fort Collins, Colorado

### Local opportunity

The Colorado-Wyoming region, two states that have grappled with two decades of environmental challenges such as extreme weather events, has underleveraged potential to address the Western United States' most pressing issue: Climate change and accelerated aridification. Together with our partners, we believe that Colorado and Wyoming can be at the forefront of the nation's environmental and climate technology initiatives because our region is well-positioned to develop innovative solutions for environmental monitoring, measurement, verification, and prediction.

### Engaging the community

[Innosphere Ventures](#) formed the "Colorado-Wyoming Climate Resilience Engine" (CO-WY Engine) to reshape the landscape of reliable climate technologies and economic development in Colorado and Wyoming. The CO-WY Engine will drive the development and commercialization of innovative solutions in areas such as wildfire mitigation, water resource management, soil carbon capture, earth sensing, methane, sustainable agriculture, and adaptation to extreme weather events. These technologies will revolutionize how we predict, mitigate, and adapt to climate impacts – and empower communities, governments, and industries to effectively navigate and adapt to climate challenges. Example areas of collaboration with [Microsoft TechSpark](#) include the [Microsoft Climate Research Initiative](#) (MCRI), the [Microsoft Planetary Computer](#) team that supports sustainability decision-making with the power of the cloud, the Azure Space/geospatial work, beginning a technology assessment with Microsoft for our CO-WY Engine, and on the energy front with [Microsoft for Energy & Resources](#).

### Activating local ecosystems

Forming the backbone of the CO-WY Engine is a diverse partnership network that leverages our region's assets in industry, academia, and government. Key partners include prominent research institutions, federal laboratories, economic development organizations,

tribal communities, workforce centers, community colleges, policy groups, and corporate partners. Examples of Federal Lab partners include the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), examples of corporate partners include Lockheed, NVIDIA, Palantir Technologies, Mars, Shell, Chevron, and Trimble.

### Impact to date

At a kick-off event sponsored by Microsoft in Washington D.C., the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) congratulated the Colorado-Wyoming Climate Resilience Engine (CO-WY Engine) on receiving \$15 million over the next two years, and up to \$162 million over the next ten years. In ten years, the CO-WY Engine expects to generate significant economic impact for the region, including 22,000 new climate technology related jobs, \$1.5 billion in regional GDP impact, more than \$1 billion in private capital formation, the training of more than 2,000 individuals, and the distribution of \$80 million in commercialization grants to startups in the climate technology sector.

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth.

- February 2024: [Washington D.C. Microsoft Event LinkedIn](#)
- January 2024: [Administration announces Innovation Engines Awards](#)



*“This initiative will not only leverage our region’s expertise to develop innovative solutions to climate challenges, but we will accomplish this while driving economic growth through integrated programs in use-inspired research, workforce development, translation of products, and strategic partnerships.”*

Emily Wilson,  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Colorado



#### Microsoft TechSpark

Talent is everywhere, Opportunity is not  
[Microsoft TechSpark](#) | [Microsoft CSR](#)

# STEAM Train Inc.

## Digital Skills in Middletown, Connecticut

### Local opportunity

As the digital skills gap continues to grow, many individuals, particularly those from disadvantaged communities, are unable to access opportunities to acquire the necessary skills to thrive in the ever-changing job market. STEAM Train's initiatives aim to address this challenge by providing digital skills training, thereby ensuring a skilled and diverse workforce for the future.

### Engaging the community

[STEAM Train Inc.](#), is addressing the digital skilling needs of the community through our program offerings. The Fast Track Academy equips graduates with cutting-edge digital skills for the workplace. Connect-In-Tech Camp teaches computer technology to high schoolers, and our AI workshops showcase the power of Artificial intelligence. We leverage [Microsoft Copilot](#), [Microsoft Cloud for Nonprofit](#), [Power Automate](#), [LinkedIn Learning](#) training and certifications, AI tools, and [AI4All](#) resources. They aim to bridge the technical skills gap for underrepresented individuals.

[Microsoft TechSpark's](#) involvement and resources bolstered their ecosystem, lent credibility and drew attention to the importance of STEAM Train's work. They are now garnering interest from C-suite leaders, academics, and elected officials, who are invigorating support for their cause. Microsoft's presentation at the



STEAM Train's fundraiser reinforced their standing in the region, offering clarity to leaders on the significance of their digital skills vision, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and providing invaluable resources to advance their mission.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Connecticut Senate – 9<sup>th</sup> District, Connecticut House of Representative – District 100, Wesleyan University, CT State Community College, Cigna Corporation, Liberty Bank, Travelers Insurance Company, Campus Works, Workforce Alliance, Shiloh Christian Church, and Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- Modernized curriculum leveraging LinkedIn Learning
- 85 learners
- IT apprenticeships for graduates

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth.

- April 2024: [STEAM Train TechSpark Video](#)
- March 2024: [AI Workshop Video](#)
- December 2024: [Fast Track Academy | Dorian Moore](#)
- July 2023: [STEAM Train selected as part of Microsoft TechSpark](#)



*“We are learning how to strengthen our ecosystem by collaborating with Microsoft TechSpark.”*

[Donna Hylton](#),  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Connecticut

*“STEAM Train, Inc's important work in moving people to STEM careers is a never-ending process.*

*The AI Institute initiative will ensure that their students and community partners keep up to date with the opportunities and challenges that artificial intelligence will bring.”*

[Prof. Peter J. Kootsookos](#),  
CT State Community College Middlesex



# Horton's Kids

## Digital Transformation in Washington D.C.

### Local opportunity

The community of Anacostia is rich with potential, but unfortunately has been systematically disinvested. Horton's Kids seeks to change this by becoming a technology hub for the community. Starting with digitally skilling staff and extending to the children and families that we serve. We seek to create an ecosystem where Digital Transformation is the norm.

### Engaging the community

Horton's Kids is leveraging the connections of [Microsoft TechSpark](#) to enhance collaboration, efficiency, and address the professional development of their staff, aligning with strategic priorities outlined in the recent strategic plan. Additionally, they aim to expand their existing STEM education programs, including partnerships with [Girls Who Code](#), and explore entrepreneurship opportunities for caregivers and adults in the community.

They have creatively leveraged [Microsoft 365](#) and [LinkedIn Learning](#) resources to curate training programs tailored to the various needs of their team.

The Corporate Ideation Summit was a great success and attendees included prominent organizations from across the region. This fostered discussions on how to provide opportunities in digital literacy and upskilling for staff and community alike.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic

network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Girls Who Code
- In a Perfect World
- Sanofi
- Leidos
- iGen
- World Strides
- Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 26 staff members digitally skilled using LinkedIn Learning.
- 14 Middle school Girls Who Code
- Hosted an App Competition for Girls Who Code participants. The winning team received a laptop generously donated by Microsoft.

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn.

- November 2023: [Corporate Ideation Summit](#)
- July 2023: [STEAM Train selected as part of Microsoft TechSpark](#)



*“I’ve had the incredible opportunity to bridge the gap between technology and community empowerment. With the successful completion of our Teams integration, we’ve laid the groundwork for meaningful collaboration and learning. Launching the Girls Who Code initiative was a significant step towards inclusivity, ensuring young girls in our program see and believe in their potential to shape the future of tech.”*

Nadine Wilson,  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Washington D.C.



#### Microsoft TechSpark

Talent is everywhere, Opportunity is not  
[Microsoft TechSpark](#) | [Microsoft CSR](#)

# Upendo United Foundation

## Computer Science Education in Wilmington, Delaware and Kenya

### Local opportunity

There is limited access to technology education for underserved youth. Many youth from underserved communities are lacking the resources and opportunities to acquire essential technology skills needed in today's digital world. Lack of access to digital skills can create barriers to future employment and economic advancement.

### Engaging the community

Upendo United Foundation's technology skills program provides youth with hands-on digital literacy and coding skills. This program leverages [Microsoft 365](#), [Microsoft Publisher](#), and [Microsoft MakeCode](#) in its training. Equipping youth with the digital skills needed to secure future in-demand jobs, increased wages, and improved quality of life.

In summer 2024, the technology skills program will host a 6-week program teaching youth how to code leveraging Microsoft MakeCode.

To expand their reach, they extended the program to Kenya. Collaborating with a university intern, they organized a 6-week Microsoft 365 training and provided teacher training using Microsoft MakeCode, empowering educators to teach local youth.



The partnership with [Microsoft TechSpark](#) and harnessing the strength of the Microsoft brand has enabled them to secure additional funding partners.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Avi.IT, St. Joseph Kari, Tabuga JSS, Egashura JSS, Holy Family Children Home, Limuko Secondary, Christian Community Center, Kenya, Laffey McHugh Foundation, and Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 10 trainers in Kenya
- 10 trainers in Delaware
- Kenya trainers will skill 7- to 14-year-old youth who have never touched a computer
- Summer 2024, 20 student class, Delaware
- \$40,000 Additional Funding

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth.

[How we are Collaborating with Microsoft to Bridge Digital Divide in Kenya and the USA](#)

- [Irene M.](#)
- [A. Kavindu](#)
- [Ann K.](#)
- [Lemayian](#)
- [Charles](#)



*"I am truly grateful for the Microsoft resources. We will be able to empower a generation one child at a time both in the USA and Kenya."*

Regina Reithii,  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Delaware



# The Immokalee Foundation

## Computer Science Education in Immokalee, Florida

### Local opportunity

There is a vibrant diversity in Immokalee's 30,000 residents, where English isn't the primary language in most of the households, and where residents predominantly are from Mexican, Guatemalan, or Haitian backgrounds. Despite challenges, such as an average annual income of \$29,000 for males and \$19,000 for females, there's immense potential in engaging deeply with the youth. By imparting crucial digital skills, we can equip them for success in today's dynamic workforce.

### Engaging the community

[The Immokalee Foundation](#), in partnership with [Florida Gulf Coast University](#), created a new middle school program, "TechSpark Immokalee". This program is a 2-year pilot to foster inclusive economic opportunities, ignite job creation, and inspire innovation for youth. For each grade level, there are four-week workshops designed to help equip students with essential digital skills for success today and the future workforce. The curriculum covers data processing, virtual reality, robotics, and AI, with a pilot project targeting the construction and engineering industries. These workshops leverage platforms, including [Microsoft MakeCode](#) and [Chat GPT](#).

The new engagement from [Microsoft TechSpark](#) in the community has proven to be a vital catalyst for positive change and growth. Through initiatives like career panel discussions, youth workshops, and collaborations with educational institutions and community leaders, opportunities for innovation are being nurtured at the grassroots level.

This concerted effort not only promotes digital skills but also fosters a sense of inclusion and progress within Southwest Florida.



As community focus shifts, the impact of these efforts becomes increasingly evident, driving sustainable development, and empowering individuals to succeed in an ever-evolving digital landscape.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Florida Gulf Coast University
- Immokalee Middle School
- Microsoft
- Collier County Industrial Board Authority

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guide decisions, foster sustainability, encourage collaboration, and empower communities.

- 158 students
- 4 workshops for each grade level
- \$25,000 Additional Funding

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth.

- April 2024: [TechSpark Immokalee brings robot dogs, drones and AI to students | WGPU PBS & NPR for Southwest Florida](#)
- January 2024: [Microsoft empowers area youth through TechSpark Immokalee](#)
- November 2023: [Microsoft kicks off TechSpark Immokalee Program with Career Panel for students | South Central Florida Life](#)
- August 2023: [Immokalee Foundation selected – Microsoft's Techspark program](#)



*"We are thrilled to see the progress our students have already made. TechSpark is a testament to the power of collaboration between businesses and community partners, and how together we can create life-changing results. Thanks to Microsoft, FGCU, and a matching grant from the Collier County Industrial Development Authority, we can equip our students with technological skills that will benefit them in their future careers."*

Noemi Y. Perez,  
President & CEO  
The Immokalee Foundation



#### Microsoft TechSpark

Talent is everywhere, Opportunity is not  
[Microsoft TechSpark](#) | [Microsoft CSR](#)

# Project Vision Hawaii

## Digital Inclusion in Honolulu, Hawaii

### Local opportunity

Hawaii has a high rate of homelessness due to one of the highest costs of living in the country. A severe housing shortage of at least 50,000 units, along with a history of displacement of its native peoples, also contribute to the issue of affordable housing. Homelessness, incarceration, and substance use are often a vicious cycle that impact our Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders disproportionately.

### Engaging the community

[Project Vision Hawaii](#), with the help of [Microsoft TechSpark](#), launched a workforce development program at Maui's shelter, Pu'uhonua O Nēnē for Lahaina fire survivors. Residents can receive a stipend for assisting the shelter while learning essential skills, including resume writing and financial literacy, alongside. They also offer certifications for various jobs, and [LinkedIn Learning courses](#).

In February 2024, they launched a supportive housing village with a computer lab, aiding residents—many of whom are community college students or GED candidates.

The program's introduction and on-site technology have led to job placements, educational enrollment, and skill development among residents.

Microsoft's local and virtual teams contribute through volunteering and hosting sessions to enhance PVH's use of Microsoft 365, AI training, and data visualization with Power BI. This partnership provides lasting benefits to the nonprofit.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress.



Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Hawaii Governor's Office, Department of Human Services, Department of Transportation, Kaiser Permanente, Maui Rapid Response, Na Kia`i`O Maui, Maui Medics, Malama Maui Nui, Hawai`i Community Foundation, Adaptive Maui, Maui Rescue Mission, Love Peace Harmony Foundation, Maui United Way, Chef Hui, Maui Foodbank, American Red Cross, local Rotary clubs, the Maui Humane Society, Southwest Airlines, AmeriCares, Direct Relief, Heart 2 Heart Foundation and Microsoft
- Project Vision Hawaii provides all-inclusive care with services like health management, psychological aid, and cultural activities, enabling residents to move from survival to achieving their goals.

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 93 Skilled
- Power BI and 23 students for AI training
- 3 statewide [LinkedIn Learning courses](#)
- 4 workforce development trainings

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth.

- February 2024: [New tiny home village in Kaneohe to house homeless from windward Oahu](#)
- June 2023: [Project Vision Hawaii Selected for Microsoft's National TechSpark Program to Increase Access to Health and Human Services](#)



*"It has been a crazy time for us but knowing we have Microsoft's support has been incredibly encouraging."*

[Darrah Kauhane](#),  
Microsoft TechSpark  
Fellow Hawaii

*"I know how other people live because I used to be on the streets myself. That's what is great about our programs is that I'm able to help by putting myself in their situation,"*

[Cindy Tokita](#),  
Project Vision Peer Specialist



**PROJECT  
VISION**

# PI515

## Computer Science Education in Des Moines, Iowa

### Local opportunity

The absence of a robust STEM and entrepreneurship talent pipeline results in missed opportunities for innovation, economic growth, and sustainable development, hindering a community's ability to compete in a rapidly evolving digital economy.

### Engaging the community

[PI515](#) introduced an inaugural AI Youth Challenge alongside their Day of Innovation, marking a significant stride in educational advancement. This initiative aims to familiarize high school and college student with cutting-edge technological skills and insights, convening 300 students for an immersive day featuring AI and AR workshops, an AI pitch competition, a Girls Entrepreneurship Incubator Pitch, and other enriching activities. Leveraging sponsorships, including support from Microsoft's STEM curriculum into event activities, underscores the importance of [Microsoft TechSpark's](#) involvement.

Microsoft's involvement has been instrumental in capitalizing on its reputation to facilitate strategic dialogues, such as the one facilitated by the TechSpark Coach. These discussions focused on exploring strategies for developing and maintaining a local STEM and R&D talent pipeline, with the goal to foster a dynamic local entrepreneurial ecosystem.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress.

Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Goldman Sachs, Homesteaders Life Company, Principal Financial Group, John Deere, John Pappajohn centers, Accenture, and Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 42 students earned college credits through the Tech Mentorship program
- 20 girl entrepreneurs
- 47 high school and college students building Iowa local solutions with AI
- 250 Students and 100 volunteers participated in an Innovation Day Summit which included an AI Challenge, and Girl Entrepreneurship Incubator
- Semifinalist in the Department of Education's Career Z Challenge
- Relocated to a new facility donated by Principle Financial Group
- \$20K additional funding from other organizations

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth

- April 2024: [Innovation Day Grant](#)
- January 2024: [Beyond Business: Principal® Provides Office Space to Pi515](#)



*"I am thrilled to partner with Microsoft to equip our Iowa's youth with the skills necessary for tomorrow's challenges. Our joint efforts aim to ensure that our students are not only participants but leaders in the future of technology and innovation."*

Nancy Mwiroti,  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Iowa

*"Des Moines is a vibrant community, and we are eager to see how Microsoft is aiding in the development of a future-ready youth through computer science and other essential skills, facilitated by its partnerships and collaborations. This alliance highlights our collective dedication to fostering a generation primed with the necessary skills and mindset for thriving in the ever-changing workforce environment."*

Connie Boesen,  
Des Moines Mayor



# Idaho Women for Education

## Digital Skills for women in Boise, Idaho

### Local opportunity

Idaho has the highest female incarceration rate in the United States according to the annual report of the Federal Bureau of Statistics. Improving opportunities for all disadvantaged women, especially those with the added obstacle of being justice-involved.

### Engaging the community

[Idaho Women for Education](#) quickly identified the gender divide especially when it came to women learning digital skills.

In partnership with the National Women's Business Center Network and Idaho Justice Project, we launched two digital skills programs Business Plan Basics and ConnectHER: Digital Skills Basics. Offering classes and a 3-part series that cover the fundamental skills women need to thrive in today's digital economy. This program utilizes resources offered by [Microsoft Learn](#) and [LinkedIn Learning](#). This series covers working with computers and devices, collaboration online, Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, and getting started with Microsoft 365.

Since our engagement with [Microsoft TechSpark](#), we have been invited to meet with lawmakers, the Department of Corrections, and many public and private businesses. Establishing these partnerships is essential to our continuing to provide services in the community.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Idaho Women's Business Center
- Idaho Justice Project
- Idaho Department of Correction
- Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 55 learners (100% female)
- Hired first Executive Director

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth

- Events: [Tech ConnectHER: Digital Skills Basics](#)
- Aug 2023: [Idaho nonprofit names its first-ever executive director](#)



*“The resources and support we have received from the Microsoft TechSpark team have been excellent. Being a TechSpark Fellow has allowed Idaho Women for Education to expand our audience and grow our organizational goals.”*

[Betsy Davies](#),  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Idaho



# WHIN IOT Project

## Digital Transformation in Northwest Central Indiana

### Local opportunity

The Internet of Things (IOT) is embedded in the physical world and connects it with the digital. It can enable physically oriented sectors like agriculture and manufacturing to finally realize all of the benefits of digitalization in their operations. But in the midst of that revolution, IOT is itself undergoing a transformation. Powered by rapidly evolving AI (Artificial Intelligence), IOT is becoming Physical AI:

Socio-technical systems that can give human users a deeply interactive, intelligently-guided relationship with the physical world.

In rural areas that historically suffer from the digital divide, such tech-enabled opportunities can be overwhelmed by challenges. The Wabash Heartland Innovation Network ([WHIN](#))’s task is to help its community, especially the farmers and manufacturers that are the backbone of the regional economy, to overcome those challenges and become leaders of the Physical AI revolution.

### Engaging the community

Thanks to TechSpark, [WHIN](#) is engaging Microsoft in conversations about how they are extending productivity gains that are being made possible by generative AI to Physical AI—and how farmers and manufacturers in the WHIN region can help to move Physical AI forward. But IOT and Physical AI have big implications for other community needs. Thanks to TechSpark, WHIN is also expanding its work to include K-12 school safety, starting with a basic IOT project that connects devices to a LoRaWAN network in a rural elementary school to summon help quickly when there is a classroom emergency. During the current pilot, participating classrooms are using the devices to gather data to document the kinds of emergencies that occur.



This will help WHIN to determine how best to enhance the system to meet school needs.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- New Market Elementary School
- Montgomery County Sheriff
- Microsoft
- TechPoint

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- In-person meetings with Microsoft to seek common ground in Physical AI
- 1 school district running pilot
- 27 school districts pilot results shared
- 12 school staff and first responders learning about IOT

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth.

- April 2024: [TechPoint Announces 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Mira Awards Winners – Digital Transformation: Wabash Heartland Innovation Network \(WHIN\) West Lafayette](#)
- January 2024: [Beyond Business: Principal® Provides Office Space to Pi515](#)
- July 2023: [WHIN partners with Microsoft TechSpark to pilot school safety system – Inside INdiana Business](#)



*“WHIN would like the TechSpark project to lead to more awareness of how IOT can address community-level problems like school safety. As IOT becomes powered with rapidly evolving AI, those benefits will be even more important.”*

[Pat Corey](#),  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Indiana

*“Being part of WHIN’s Microsoft TechSpark Project is giving our school a new perspective on how technology can support school safety.”*

Alison Karrfalt,  
Principal



#### Microsoft TechSpark

Talent is everywhere, Opportunity is not  
[Microsoft TechSpark](#) | [Microsoft CSR](#)

# IBSA

## Digital Inclusion in Topeka, Kansas

### Local opportunity

Lack of digital inclusion in communities hampers access to essential services and opportunities, widening social and economic disparities. Failure to address this issue will deepen the digital divide, leaving underserved individuals isolated and hindering overall community progress.

### Engaging the community

[IBSA, Inc.](#) has led transformative efforts on the topic of digital inclusion, presenting significant opportunities for community advancement. Leveraging Microsoft's reputation and global expertise, particularly in areas like generative AI, they spearheaded virtual discussions on inclusive participation in the AI economy.

IBSA plays a pivotal role in developing digital access strategic plans for Topeka and Unified Gov't Kansas City, while also serving on the State Advisory Board for the state Digital Equity Strategic Plan. Establishing the digital equity consortium, TSC Get Digital, and utilizing the [Microsoft Digital Equity Dashboard](#) to gather crucial data and partnering with [EveryoneOn](#) for affordable offers.

Their engagement with local elected officials, chamber representatives, and economic development agencies underscores their dedication to fostering collaboration and driving progress. As active participants in community meetings, they serve as a crucial voice advocating for inclusive policies and initiatives. This proactive approach is yielding tangible results, as evidenced by the increasing frequency and depth of community discussions and partnerships.



### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Growth Organization of Topeka, Greater Topeka Partnership, Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, Gil Carter Initiative, Kansas City Kansas Community College, Wyandotte Economic Development Organization, City of Topeka, USD 500 (KCK), EveyoneOn, Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- Only voice in the room
- Increased community awareness
- Increased community discussions

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth.

- November 2023: [Microsoft representatives hold AI workshop at Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library \(wibw.com\)](#)
- November 2023: [KCKCC | Community Leaders, Microsoft to Discuss AI and Economic Growth Opportunities at Wyandotte Economic Development Council](#)
- July 2023: [Kansas Nonprofit Selected as Part of Microsoft's National TechSpark Program – Dogon Village](#)



*“Every day I learn more; I’m compelled to learn more.... Then I’m ready to teach someone what I know.”*

[Lazone Grays](#),  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Kansas

*“Learning computer skills has been a rewarding experience for me as a 62-year-old office/clerical skills trainee. I can use Microsoft 365 and I have also taken advantage of Microsoft Digital Skills resources to enhance my skills. I have achieved three LinkedIn Learning certifications in AI and Cybersecurity, and I am looking forward to learning more.”*

Community Member



# SOAR (Shaping our Appalachian Region)

## Digital Inclusion in Appalachian Region, Kentucky

### Local opportunity

In the heart of Appalachia, where opportunity can feel scarce, a beacon of hope is rising. With over 30,000 Eastern Kentuckians yearning for employment while facing a landscape of only 2,500 available job openings, the challenge is clear. However, the Solutions for Our Appalachian Region (SOAR) project is stepping up to close this gap, leveraging the power of remote work opportunities available online.

### Engaging the community

In late 2023, SOAR's ([Shaping our Appalachian Region](#)) Office of Digital Equity launched a pioneering digital skilling program to equip Eastern Kentuckians with essential skills for the digital workforce, featuring [Microsoft Office](#) and [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\)](#) training to navigate today's tech-driven world. Hosting [Microsoft TechSpark](#) representatives in November 2023 and January 2024 underscored SOAR's dedication to partnership and innovation.

Through securing substantial funding:

- \$500,000 from the Trust Foundation for advanced digital skilling
- \$400,000 from the USDA for broadband planning in Pike County, KY
- \$1.4 million from the U.S. Department of Labor for tailored IT training

This concerted effort is driving economic empowerment and fostering resilience in Eastern Kentucky, promising a brighter future under SOAR's leadership.



### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Commonwealth of Kentucky Digital Equity Office, National Digital Inclusion Alliance, Connect Humanity, Toyota Tsusho, County libraries, Local Internet service providers (Peoples Rural Telephone Cooperative, Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative, and Foothills Communications), Community action agencies, Cooperative extension offices, K-12 Partners, Postsecondary education specifically the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, and Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 135 Digitally Skilled
- 5,000 Individuals signed up for FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program
- \$2.3 million funding from other organizations

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth.

- July 2023: [Microsoft TechSpark Fellows program LinkedIn](#)
- December 2023: [SOAR Receives \\$1,452,338 from the Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities \(WORC\) Initiative](#)
- August 2023: [SOAR Announces Collaboration with Microsoft TechSpark](#)



*“Microsoft’s commitment to our region, offering cost-effective technology solutions and free training, is deeply appreciated. We anticipate this partnership will significantly benefit Eastern Kentucky families in need.”*

Colby Hall,  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Kentucky

*“They taught me to leverage technology to be independent. I can now access my online medical portal. I look forward to my classes.”*

Working Senior, Goodwill

# SOAR

# Inclusive Tech South - NOLAvate

## Digital Skilling in New Orleans, Louisiana

### Local opportunity

NOLAvate Black's Tech Talent Survey sheds light on the unmet skilled STEM Worker needs in New Orleans. The survey data revealed a need for Training and continuing education, highlighting the need for skill-building programs and resources. Entry level apprenticeships suggesting a desire for opportunities to gain on-the-job training. Mentorship and career coaching indicating the importance of guidance and support. Assistance in navigating the technology industry, pointing to the complexities faced by individuals. Bias and hiring challenges, highlighting persistent issues of discrimination faced by BIPOC professionals.

### Engaging the community

[NOLAvate](#) Black's Explore Tech is a 6-week professional development program for entry-level and early-career BIPOC professionals. Participants attend weekly sessions and are paired with a mentor to help them get hired in the tech sector. Skills assessments are administered to align participants' skills and goals to develop a personal career plan. Graduates are placed in a paid position with an employer partner committed to building diverse and inclusive teams.

Engaging with [Microsoft TechSpark](#) helped to identify additional Microsoft resources, including [Microsoft Learn](#) to scale and grow the program. The Fellowship positioned the organization to foster new relationships and expand its ecosystem building work around work around workforce development, including working with Microsoft policy leaders to advocate around digital equity in the state of Louisiana.



The City of New Orleans is also collaborating with NOLAvate Black to explore and address policy around digital equity. They participated in the commentary around \$1 Billion in Digital Equity Funds allocated to the state. Working with the workforce development office to explore providing wrap-around services for job seekers.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- City of New Orleans
- Louisiana Office of Economic Development
- Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- First Explore Tech cohort graduates from the program in October 2023
- 33 Middle school girls learned how to build games with local [Microsoft TEALS](#) volunteers using [Microsoft MakeCode](#)
- \$350K Additional Funding

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth.

- December 2023 [Sabrina Short, Microsoft Tech Spark Fellow named one of New Orleans 500 Most Inspiring Executives](#)
- October 2023: [Black Tech NOLA's HBCU Tour, focused on all things tech, art, and culture!](#)
- July 2023: [Microsoft TechSpark Program Expands to Louisiana](#)



*“We were able to leverage our collaboration with Microsoft TechSpark to engage the community around moving the needle on digital equity.”*

Sabrina Short,  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Louisiana



# CSforMA

## Computer Science Education across Massachusetts

### Local opportunity

There are systemic disparities in computer science education across our state that include issues of access, representation, skills gaps, and curriculum coverage. By prioritizing underrepresented groups and providing opportunities for hands-on experience and industry connections, the playing field can be leveled so that we can prepare all students for success in this digital age.

### Engaging the community

CSforMA Inc. leverages CSforAll SCRIPT to facilitate District Visioning, Standards Gap Analysis, and Curriculum Identification, and planning for Educator Professional Development. This year, they worked with 15 districts, comprised of over 100 team members, that participated in a series of workshops to develop comprehensive plans to build capacity in their district and ensure student success.

One key initiative involves connecting under-represented students with industry professionals to increase their awareness of and skill development for computing careers. They facilitate meetings at local venues, review curricula and products for school use, and leverage Microsoft connections for programmatic insights.

To this end, CSforMA has launched a pilot of a Flipped Internship Program in Chelsea Public Schools, modeled after the successful Burlington program. This initiative provides students with hands on experience, mentorship, and certification opportunities in partnership with industry leaders.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- MA Dept of Elementary & Secondary Education
- MA Association of School Superintendents
- MA Business Alliance for Education
- 17 school districts
- Whale Rock Capital
- Takeda Pharmaceuticals
- Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 18 Flipped Internship Program students and 25 mentors
- 100 team members from 15 school districts participated in 5-days of workshops
- Over 100 Educators currently registered for CSforMA Summer Institute workshops



*“Our partnership with the Flipped Internship Program not only empowers students to see themselves as computing professionals but also facilitates connections with industry experts. These professionals provide valuable insights into college and career opportunities, helping students chart their paths toward success.”*

Deborah Boisvert,  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Massachusetts

*“Grounded in the belief that all teachers can learn and teach digital literacy and computer science principles to their students, CSforMA consistently brings forth new initiatives for district consideration and professional development opportunities for teachers of all content areas.”*

Denise Matuszczak,  
Springfield Public Schools



# Code in the Schools

## Digital Skills in Baltimore, Maryland

### Local opportunity

The lack of coding education leaves students unprepared for today's digital world. Coding skills are essential for innovation and career advancement in various industries. It is critical to provide young adults with the career development and technical skills needed to launch careers in tech.

### Engaging the community

[Code in the Schools](#) launched a series of initiatives that provides youth between the ages of 16-24 with paid internships and opportunities to gain entry-level tech certifications. These efforts will be sustained through cultivating industry relationships, which is made easier through our relationship with [Microsoft TechSpark](#).

As part of their afterschool program, they developed a Machine Learning and AI track, leveraging [Microsoft AI LinkedIn Learning Career Pathway](#). Four students participated in this 56-hour course.

They also developed relationships with CISO and CompTIA to provide certifications for students and staff.

The CodeWorks program is a pilot extension of the summer technical career exposure program where interns are paid to gain technical skills, industry related certifications, and work experience.



Seven interns participated in the program with:

- 2 working on certifications in Python
- 1 working on a certification in web development
- 2 working on developing front-end development skills
- 2 working on development skills in gaming development

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Baltimore City Public Schools
- Baltimore's Mayor Office of Employment Development
- Cisco
- CompTIA
- Amazon Security Systems
- Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- Industry-recognized certifications added to the curriculum
- 11 learners
- \$80K Additional Funding

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth

- January 2024: [Baltimore bootcamp guide: Coding, tech skills and certifications](#)



*“In order to prepare today’s young adults for the jobs of the future we need strong partnerships with industry. Partnerships like Microsoft TechSpark gives nonprofits the resources and leverage we need to bridge the gap between education and careers for our under-represented students.”*

[Stephanie Alpee](#),  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Maryland

*“My year has been a blast, I’ve gotten to dive deeper into my field of study, computer science. So far, this is an amazing experience.”*

CodeWorks Participant



# Educate Maine

## Computer Science Education in Portland, Maine

### Local opportunity

Expanding computer science (CS) education is essential for preparing students for the digital age and fostering innovation. Without access to CS education, students may face a skills gap, limited opportunities, and stagnated innovation. Expanding CS education is crucial for equipping future talent with the skills needed for success in the modern economy.

### Engaging the community

[Educate Maine](#) has expanded the work of their [Project>Login](#) Program. This program is the state's leading resource for anyone interested in the computing and IT field. The program connects education with technology careers in Maine. Through outreach, advocacy, and collaboration, it prepares students for postsecondary learning and the workforce. This program serves as a clearinghouse for information about events and opportunities in computer science and IT.

In collaboration with [Microsoft TechSpark](#), Educate Maine's programming leverages [Microsoft for Nonprofits](#), [Microsoft Digital Equity Dashboard](#), and Microsoft [MakeCode](#).

Educate Maine's partnership with [Girls Who Code](#) focuses on attracting more girls to computer science classes and fields of study. They are gearing up to expand Girls Who Code summer camp experiences to all 16 counties across Maine as well as planning for the [CS Summer of Fun](#) PD Week for teachers which includes the inaugural CS Leadership Summit.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic



network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance (MMSA), Maine Discovery Museum, Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Maine Afterschool Network, The Roux Institute at Northeastern, Husson University, HighByte, UNE, Systems Engineering, WEX, Maine Connectivity Authority, Girls Who Code, Give IT. Get IT., National Digital Equity Center, Computer Science Teachers Association (Maine chapter), Maine Department of Education, UMaine RiSE Center, Challenger Learning Center of Maine, Wabanaki Nations, Idexx, CSforAll, Brave Behind Bards, MIT, and Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 27 regional Out-of-School providers
- Activated a network within Wabanaki Nations
- 150 girls in 31 new Girls Who Code Clubs in rural Maine
- 73 Teen Tech Night Attendees
- 12 students networked with 4 employers
- \$1.4M additional funding

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth

- March 2024: [TechSpark Video](#)
- July 2023: [Educate Maine Selected as Part of Microsoft's National TechSpark Program to Grow Economic Opportunity in Rural Maine](#)



*“Microsoft TechSpark’s Fireside Chats have been a really nice way to connect with and learn from others in the Fellows program and I’ve happily shared the information with my ecosystem partners.”*

[Angela Oechslie](#),  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Maine

*“We couldn’t ask for a better partner who “gets” the value, importance, and critical need for expanding CS education in Maine.”*

[Kate Dickerson](#),  
Maine Discovery Museum

## EDUCATE MAINE



#### Microsoft TechSpark

Talent is everywhere, Opportunity is not  
[Microsoft TechSpark](#) | [Microsoft CSR](#)

# Sistahs Reachin' Out (SRO)

## Digital Inclusion in Detroit, Michigan

### Local opportunity

Community tech hubs that offer residents and families increased access to digital technologies and upskilling opportunities are essential to achieve digital inclusion in underserved, under-resourced communities like Detroit, MI. It empowers individuals to navigate the digital world, access online resources, and pursue educational and employment opportunities. Moreover, it serves as a nexus for community engagement.

### Engaging the community

Sistahs Reachin' Out (SRO) is excited to open their tech hub – The Career and College Access Center (CACAC) – this Summer 2024. This center will serve families and residents throughout Detroit's District #2. With the aim to upskill underserved community members toward increased access to higher education and transformative employment opportunities, through the CACAC SRO will mete out its mission to effectuate economic equality for economically challenged residents through digital access and equity.

The CACAC will feature free access to a digital media lab staffed with 24 high-speed internet-enabled computer workstations, an upskilling curriculum that includes training in Generative AI, and the Co-Lab — a community Co-working space. SRO successfully secured a two-year \$550,000 grant from Michigan's Office for Labor and Economic Opportunity.



The partnership with [Microsoft TechSpark](#), played a pivotal role in securing this funding. With a focus on digital upskilling, we're committed to advancing economic mobility and security. Thanks to the support of Microsoft TechSpark fellowship, they're poised to make significant strides in enhancing digital access and equity for underserved Detroiters. Bringing about tangible change for the community.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders can work together to drive collective progress and impact. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Ally Bank
- Norfolk-Southern
- City of Detroit Office of Digital Equity & Inclusion
- Comcast
- Microsoft
- Rocket Community Fund
- Black Tech Saturdays

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- \$675K additional funding

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth

- January 2024: [LEO – \\$14.4M Awarded to Remove Employment Barriers for At-Risk Michiganders](#)
- July 2023: [SRO selected as part of Microsoft TechSpark Program](#)

“



*“Because of Microsoft and the incredible support via the TechSpark program, SRO has sharpened the focus of its community programming, and is more determined than ever to increase access to educational, employment and entrepreneurial opportunities that can facilitate economic mobility and security for our community.”*

[Jenny Hutchinson](#),  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Michigan

SRO

# TechFluent Academy

Digital Skills in Minneapolis, Minnesota

## Local opportunity

Income inequality for marginalized groups is a pressing challenge that undermines social equity and economic stability. Addressing this issue is crucial for fostering a more equitable society where all individuals have equal opportunities for economic success.

## Engaging the community

[TechFluent](#) addresses income inequality by providing mentorship and training in [Microsoft Dynamics 365 and Power Platform](#). They tackle the lack of tech education and opportunities for marginalized groups by providing laptops, virtual training, hands-on experience, mentorship, career services, and [Microsoft Learn certifications](#).

The collaboration with [Microsoft TechSpark](#) helped expand their enrollment fourfold, offering foundational and advanced training through [TechFluent Academy](#).

Leveraging [Microsoft for Nonprofit](#), [Microsoft Learn](#), [Microsoft Learn Career Connected](#), and Microsoft Global Skills Initiative resources, they're providing specialized paths in Dynamics 365.

CRM/Power platform, Business Central, Finance, and Supply Chain Management, and Power BI.



Microsoft's support facilitated connections to FutureFIT AI and LinkedIn. Enrolling 100 individuals into a 6-month custom training plus utilizing Microsoft Learn, they'll graduate Microsoft certified. We aim to attract 1,000 applicants.

## Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Launch Ministry, Smart North, Upwardly Global, Argano, Dynamics Communities, CongruentX, Elevate Digital, Item by Item, Ludia Consulting, Dynamics User Group, PS Hummingbird, RSM, Stoneridge Software, Velosio, and Microsoft

## Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- \$500K
- 119 skilled
- Developing a consulting practice with paid contracting opportunities for graduates. Currently in the pilot stage with 2 program alumni

## In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth.

- April 2024: [Welcome to TechFluent: Empowering Change](#)
- November 2023: [TechFluent founder and Microsoft MVP Liz McGlennen joins Dynamics User Group to continue learning](#)
- July 2023: [TechFluent Awarded Microsoft TechSpark Grant \(techfluentacademy.org\)](#)

“



*“Microsoft TechSpark has empowered us to grow and enhance our program beyond expectations.”*

[Liz McGlennen](#),  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Minnesota

*“It feels so surreal to say that for once I won't be working two jobs and to be at home during Christmas! TechFluent's generosity has given me the incredible gift of spending more quality time with my family, something I haven't had the privilege of enjoying for many years. TechFluent's willingness to invest in my future, coupled with the support, has led to a profoundly positive change in my life.”*

Program Graduate



## Microsoft TechSpark

Talent is everywhere, Opportunity is not  
[Microsoft TechSpark](#) | [Microsoft CSR](#)

# Neighborhood Innovation Center

## Digital Transformation in St. Louis, Missouri

### Local opportunity

Neighborhood Innovation Center champions local entrepreneurship and integrates technology to enhance economic opportunity, aiming to create sustainable revitalization and economic growth within the Dutchtown neighborhood.

### Engaging the community

[Neighborhood Innovation Center](#) in Dutchtown, St. Louis, Missouri, cultivates a unique innovation community, focusing on local and accessible “digital forward” integration alongside entrepreneurial support.

The Microbusiness Incubator (MBi) was launched using [Generative AI](#) to support Urban Eats Food incubator and The Wink! Retail Incubator. The Microlearning Library, powered by ChatGPT and [Bing Chat](#), helps bridge knowledge gaps for member, supporting early-stage entrepreneurs to launch, grow or pivot.

[Microsoft TechSpark](#) played a key role during the Dutchtown TechSpark Day. This event emphasized the integration of technology in enhancing small business and community life.

### Activating local ecosystems

Strategic and operational partnerships with entities such as TechSTL and acknowledgments from the Missouri Department of Economic Development

highlight the collaborative efforts underway to foster an environment of innovation and mutual support in Dutchtown. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Dutchtown Main Streets/St. Louis Main Street
- TechSTL
- Microsoft

### Impact to date

Initial successes, marked by the recognition of local businesses such as Arcades Markets and Dad’s Cookies, illustrate the positive steps that have been taken toward community empowerment and the gradual economic revitalization of Dutchtown.

- 4 Community events
- Awards Gala to celebrate achievements of past and present entrepreneurs

### In the news

The Missouri Department of Economic Development’s visit spotlighted Dutchtown’s innovation efforts, acknowledging the community’s strides in revitalization.

- December 2023: [Missouri Department of Economic Development Visits Dutchtown](#)



*“The Microsoft TechSpark program is inspiring because it not only showcases impactful work across the Country but also demonstrates Microsoft’s commitment to supporting our initiatives. This experience has provided valuable insights and encouragement in our endeavors.”*

[John Chen](#),  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Missouri



# Accelerate Montana

## Digital Inclusion in Missoula, Montana

### Local opportunity

Montana is a very large state with a very low population density, access to broadband is essential for accessing training and in-demand jobs. While Montana ranks last among states with only 72% of people having access to high-speed broadband, that coverage is even worse for the state's tribal communities.

### Engaging the community

[Accelerate Montana](#) supports inclusive economic prosperity for Montanans through workforce and economic development programs. By providing awareness of broadband inequity, they aim to use access to broadband to bring more workforce training and job opportunities to Montana's Tribal community.

They are partnering with Tribal Broadband Bootcamp to bring opportunity to the Tribal communities. This boot camp provides networking and hands-on training to all Tribal communities at no charge.

[Microsoft TechSpark](#) shared the [Microsoft Airband Digital Equity Dashboard](#) to highlight the digital inequity for the reservations in Montana. This helped partners in the state better understand the challenge we are trying to address and helped garner excitement for opportunities in ahead. Montana Tribal Communities will have the opportunity to learn more about broadband.

The networking opportunity will provide tribal leaders opportunity to ask questions regarding access and funding. Tribal members will have the training to help when internet providers go through Tribal land. Better internet access will positively impact Tribal member's quality of life.

### Activating local ecosystems

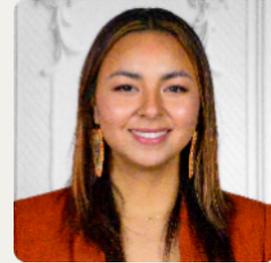
An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Tribal Broadband Bootcamp
- Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- Increased digital inclusion and broadband community conversations
- Increased networking and community engagement
- 60 people reached



*“As an Indigenous person, I am grateful to have the ability to use my voice to spread awareness about the Digital Inequity we face on our Tribal Communities in the State of Montana. Having these conversations is not only important but crucial to create more opportunities for Indian Country.”*

[Ticia Cliff](#),  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Montana

*“Internet access is essential in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. By bringing the Tribal Broadband Bootcamp to the Fort Belknap Indian Community, they share our priority to ensure Indian Country has a voice in the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program.”*

Governor Greg Gianforte



# ACCELERATE

# Apparo

## Digital Transformation in Charlotte, North Carolina

### Local opportunity

Nonprofits not leveraging technology miss out on vital opportunities for efficiency, outreach, and impact. Embracing Digital Transformation is essential for nonprofits to maximize their potential, streamline operations, and create efficiencies to better serve their communities.

### Engaging the community

Apparo's Tech Therapy program supports nonprofit organizations in transforming their digital capabilities by providing pro bono tech advice & resources to help with overcoming the challenges that nonprofits face with limited or no staff dedicated to technology.

For many of our nonprofits, Tech Therapy is the first service they use from Apparo. Tech Therapists advise nonprofits and provide knowledge to help them find resources & solutions to address their technology challenges. A Cybersecurity Resilience cohort pilot was added, funded by Bank of America. This offers security awareness education, security assessment w/scorecard, and a follow-up meeting with each NPO to give recommendations & remediations that will help enhance their security posture. Currently, we are creating an AI Strategy Playbook for Nonprofits which will give them a base of where to begin, what tools to use, use case examples, along with an AI policy template.

Apparo is transforming nonprofits through technology with a free technology maturity model that shows a nonprofit's current state. Apparo leveraged [Microsoft LinkedIn Learning](#), [Microsoft Digital Skills Center \(TechSoup\)](#), webinars, and white papers to educate the Apparo team as well as sharing this information with the nonprofit community to help on their Digital Transformation journey.



### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Dress for Success Charlotte, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Charlotte, Hospitality House of Charlotte, Project Scientist, A Place at the Table, Charlotte Rescue Mission, FeedNC, Heart Math Tutoring, Reconsidered Goods, Nonprofit Participants, Bank for America, and Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 210 nonprofits served
- 430 Tech Therapy Opportunities identified
- 910 Skilled Volunteer hours
- 9 Nonprofits Cybersecurity Resilience cohort
- \$233K additional funding from other organizations

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth.

- February 2024: [Microsoft Visits Apparo's Nonprofit Community](#)
- October 2023: [Apparo selected for Microsoft TechSpark Fellowship to grow economic opportunity in North Carolina](#)
- October 2023: [Apparo – Microsoft Techspark](#)
- November 2023: [Microsoft Techspark Coach visits Charlotte](#)



*“Digital Transformation is not just about the technology, but about the people. I love that Apparo emphasizes creating long-lasting relationships and trust in the nonprofit community. I am grateful for Microsoft TechSpark for giving us the opportunity to represent NC and continue helping nonprofits reach their technology goals.”*

Stephanie McKee,  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
North Carolina

*“Protecting our clients’ and donors’ information is not just a priority; it’s a responsibility. By enrolling in Apparo’s program, we are equipping our team with the necessary knowledge and tools to elevate our cybersecurity posture.”*

Fontella McKyer,  
Dress for Success Charlotte



#### Microsoft TechSpark

Talent is everywhere, Opportunity is not  
[Microsoft TechSpark](#) | [Microsoft CSR](#)

# Code Black Tech Community

## Digital Inclusion in Omaha, Nebraska

### Local opportunity

Digital inclusion for under-represented groups is imperative for fostering equitable opportunities, bridging socio-economic divides, and empowering individuals to fully participate in the digital economy.

### Engaging the community

[Code Black Tech Community](#) is actively working to support their infrastructure, ensuring resources such as mentors, career support, and capstone projects are continuously enhanced. The forthcoming grant with United Way of Midlands presents a pivotal opportunity to bolster their impact.

Code Black Tech Community remains steadfast in their mission to drive meaningful change, foster inclusivity, and empower individuals to excel in the field of technology.

Collaboration with the Microsoft TechSpark and Urban League of Nebraska will help deliver a specialized technology course leveraging tools such as ChatGPT and Microsoft Copilot to enlighten high school students.

By equipping the next generation with these advanced skills, they are empowering them to thrive in an increasingly digital world and fostering a pipeline of diverse talent in the tech industry.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic

network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- United Way of Midlands
- Urban League of Nebraska
- Inclusion Analytics
- Nebraska Tech Collaborative
- Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 95% of students responded favorably to questions about Code Black providing a psychologically safe learning environment
- Expanding our training with a new online learning platform
- 40 high school and adult learners impacted
- \$30K additional funding secured from other foundations

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth

- July 2023: [LinkedIn Post](#)



*“Our unwavering commitment to fostering positive change within our community and state is fueled by the steadfast support and encouragement.”*

David Pollock,  
TechSpark Fellow  
Nebraska

*“Patience\*\* is the lesson that David and Alex have taught us. They remain calm and believe in patience. No matter how anxious or impatient you feel, hurrying won't make things go faster. When I was nervous about finding a job, they were always there to listen. Having someone to talk to and practicing patience made a difference.”*

Erika, student from CodeBlack



# United Way Nashua's

## Digital Inclusion in Nashua, New Hampshire

### Local opportunity

United Way Nashua serves an 11-county region with 200,000 residents and is addressing the digital divide – A problem stemming from unequal access to broadband and technology resources. It needed attention because it disproportionately affected low-income individuals' interactions with the digital world. It is essential for all members of the community to have better access to services, learning opportunities, jobs, and healthcare, and to stay connected to families and friends.

### Engaging the community

United Way Nashua's "Tech Connect United" program bridges the digital divide by enhancing broadband and tech accessibility in the community. By leveraging the knowledge gained from Microsoft TechSpark and the reputation of Microsoft's brand, they successfully secured funding to bolster their efforts. By conducting local surveys and mapping, they learned that broadband was available in most areas but the number of people who have access to devices varied widely by community.

Tech Connected United partnered with:

- [PCs for People](#) to secure donated refurbished laptops and discounted Microsoft Office licenses to provide community members with devices and software
- Volunteers assisted with signing up for low-cost broadband services and learning digital skills
- Digital Navigators provided 1-on-1 sessions
- State leaders leveraged a \$5 million federal grant to create the Greater Nashua Digital Equity Coalition to develop a comprehensive four-year New Hampshire digital inclusion plan



### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Nashua Regional Planning Commission
- National Collaborative for Digital Equity
- University of New Hampshire
- Boys & Girls Club of Souhegan Valley
- Nashua Division of Public Health
- Nashua Public Library
- Harbor Care
- Comcast
- Nashua Senior Center
- Skillsoft
- PC's for People
- Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 25 Digital Navigators and Educators
- 5 Classes/Lectures per Month
- 16 Navigation and Education Locations
- 250 Laptops Refurbished
- 50 Hotspots Available
- 41 Members of Digital Equity Coalition
- \$70K Additional Funding

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth.

- January 2024: [United Way launches laptop donation program to bridge digital divide](#)



*“In today’s increasingly digital world, access to technology is essential for participation in education, employment, healthcare, and community engagement. Through this program, we hope to bridge the digital divide and empower individuals from all walks of life by providing them with the tools they need to thrive in a technology-driven society.”*

Sara Ceaser,  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
New Hampshire



# Urban Food Alliance

## Digital Transformation in Middlesex County, New Jersey

### Local opportunity

In response to the identified community opportunity, business development programs were needed to empower minority-owned businesses through technology. Businesses need not only to enhance their digital presence but also to streamline their operations, making them more efficient and competitive in the digital age.

### Engaging the community

[Urban Food Alliance](#) created a small business development program leveraging Microsoft technology. Microsoft 365 was deployed to elevate productivity and foster collaboration. Microsoft Dynamics was instrumental in enabling small businesses to automate mundane tasks using Microsoft Power Automate platform and Microsoft Copilot to make self-service enabled customer service AI bot, thereby freeing up valuable time to focus on strategic growth initiatives. These technologies were carefully selected to address the unique needs of their community, ensuring that program participants could achieve tangible improvements in their operations.

Leveraging [Microsoft TechSpark](#) in the community forged valuable connections and bolstered their offerings to small businesses. The Microsoft affiliation has been invaluable, lending credibility and instilling confidence among local business owners who are increasingly looking to trusted technology solutions to drive their growth.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Nassau County Muslim Committee
- Synesis IT
- Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 10 small businesses trained
- 500 students skilled

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth

- July 2023: [New Path in Tech Employment | Urban Food Alliance](#)



*“Witnessing the intersection of people, politics, and processes through the lens of AI and technology has significantly expanded my horizons. This experience has not only broadened by understanding but also reinforced my commitment to integrating advanced technology in addressing community challenges.”*

[Mushi Bhuiyan](#),  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
New Jersey



# Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico

## Digital Inclusion in Southern New Mexico

### Local opportunity

The [Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico](#) (CFSNM) to address the pervasive broadband issue in Dona Ana County. CFSNM seeks to collaborate with grantees and is open to understanding how they can provide more support related to the program supported by this grant.

### Engaging the community

CFSNM has engaged with several organizations including the Mycelia Foundation, Raices del Sabar (a charter school focused on bilingual education), Borderplex Connect, Dona Ana County – IT services, and the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico.

Bold Futures leads policy change, research, place-based organizing, and culture shift by and for women and people of color in New Mexico. They center on the lived experiences and expertise of those most impacted by an issue, engaging with people at the intersection of their identities.

Empowerment Congress facilitates a community leadership development program for community leaders and youth leaders. They support community leaders' efforts to create policy-changing campaigns, engage in policy advocacy, and organize community projects.



### Activating local ecosystems

The CFSNM team has partnered with the Mycelia Foundation, a nonprofit focused on tech expansion in a charter school for Spanish-speaking families. The partnership with the Mycelia Foundation There has been substantial progress has been made in community engagement efforts.

Promises to strengthen the local ecosystem. Mycelia's work with Raices and support from local entities are key to efforts to bridge digital divides, improve education, and stimulate economic growth. Mycelia's commitment to community development is clear in its strategic focus and their partnership with Raices.

### Impact to date

Significant progress has been made in community engagement, network expansion, and identifying potential collaborations.

Ongoing dialogue with BoldFutures and Empowerment Congress aims to involve youth in their empowerment programs.

The community and local ecosystem engagement have been productive, and there is optimism about the potential impact of these collaborations on the community.



[Jonathan Macias](#),  
Microsoft  
TechSpark Fellow  
New Mexico



# Dress for Success

## Digital Skills in Northern Nevada

### Local opportunity

Empowering women with digital skills in northern Nevada is crucial for fostering economic growth and enhancing workforce diversity. By equipping women with digital expertise, we open doors to expanded opportunities in a rapidly evolving digital economy. Closing the digital skills gap paves the way for a more inclusive and prosperous Nevada for generations to come.

### Engaging the community

[Dress for Success Reno – Northern Nevada](#) launched the Skills for Success program, specifically designed to empower underemployed women by enhancing their digital skills. In this program, participants can choose multiple learning pathways including technical and soft skills. Through collaboration with [Microsoft TechSpark](#), they leveraged the [Microsoft Skills Initiative](#) to create this virtual skilling program. Women participating in this program are acquiring [LinkedIn Learning](#) certifications. These certifications serve to bolster their technology expertise and knowledge, equipping them with success in the ever-evolving digital landscape.

Dress for Success Reno – Northern Nevada harnessed the power of [Microsoft Power BI](#) to drive Digital Transformation within their organization. They are achieving this by creating a Community Referral dashboard that will effectively track available skilling options in the community to refer women to other programs in the community.

Leveraging the reputable name of Microsoft, Dress for Success Reno –

Northern Nevada bolstered their efforts in securing grants. TC Energy is now a collaborative partner. Meaningful conversations with potential collaborators are further advancing their mission to empower women.

### Activate local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- TC Energy
- Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities:

- 30 digitally skilled first pilot group
- \$25K Additional Funding

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth

- July 2023: [LinkedIn post: Dress-for-success-reno-northern-nevada\\_microsoft-techspark](#)



*“It has been an incredibly exciting journey to build a program delivering both hard and soft skills for underemployed women in Northern Nevada. Much care went into the analysis and approach.”*

Beth Crockett,  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Nevada



**DRESS FOR SUCCESS**<sup>®</sup>  
RENO - NORTHERN NEVADA

*Going Places. Going Strong.*

# TechBuffalo

## Digital Inclusion in Buffalo, New York

### Local opportunity

In Western New York (WNY), significant barriers exist when it comes to accessing tech and tech-aligned training opportunities. Specifically, challenges related to childcare hinder participation in the local tech ecosystem, especially for underrepresented individuals. By addressing these barriers and fostering inclusivity, we can empower individuals to contribute to a stronger and more diverse technology community.

### Engaging the community

TechBuffalo is piloting Family Code Nights, a family-based approach that introduces basic programming concepts through a shared guardian-and-child [Minecraft Education](#) experience, while also providing adults with ample resources on the broader Western New York (WNY) tech ecosystem. Through this intentional paired learning approach, TechBuffalo hopes to reduce a barrier to learning about and accessing training opportunities – Childcare and its subsequent costs. This program will focus on reaching communities historically underrepresented in tech.

TechBuffalo leveraged the Minecraft Education team to help design and implement the program. For adult learners, they showcased [LinkedIn Learning pathways](#). We leveraged [Microsoft TechSpark Coach](#) and Microsoft TechSpark Fellow, Educate Maine, for advice in shaping the program.

Microsoft opened doors within its own ecosystem and brought together a broader range of stakeholders – ranging from elected leaders to local nonprofits



– to learn more about TechBuffalo and their partnership with Microsoft TechSpark. It raised their profile within WNY, enabling them to reach a broader audience to share resources and lessons learned.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- M&T Reuse, 43 North, Northland Workforce Training Center, Buffalo Fatherhood Initiative, Villa Maria, Korp Foundation, and Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 100+ WNY-based nonprofits and NYS Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes' office to share Microsoft nonprofit resources
- 90+ WNY attendees representing 100+ nonprofits attended TechConnect event
- 6 families participated in Family Code Nights (Goal to reach 25)
- 30 attendees at LinkedIn Learning Pathways events (Goal to reach 100+)
- 25 donated laptops

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth

- July 2023: [Buffalo Inno – TechBuffalo to join Microsoft's national TechSpark program](#)



*“Tech is transforming the ways we work at an exponential pace, and we can lean on this network to determine how we ensure tech creates equitable opportunity together.”*

[Sarah Tanbakuchi](#),  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
New York

*“Family Code Night was a creative way to introduce coding...to me and my 12-year-old brother! I never really understood why the older generations are apprehensive about newer tech... but now, being in my 30s, I get it! Incompetence is intimidating and hard to admit...I appreciate the simplicity of the foundational blocks that TechBuffalo is attempting to lay for children...and for the adults.”*

Faye Noel,  
Family Code Night Participant



# Richland Community Development Group

## Computer Science Education in Mansfield, Ohio

### Local opportunity

In Ohio, uniting businesses, government entities, K-12 school districts, and higher education around the common goal of creating and sustaining a digital education ecosystem is essential.

### Engaging the community

[Richland Community Development Group](#) is uniting their digital education ecosystem. Learning from Microsoft TechSpark helped to create multiple programs that build Richland County's ecosystem:

- [Girls Who Code](#) Community Partnership: Five clubs formed with 40 students engaged
- Teacher Technology Boot Camp: Six technology-oriented business visits, creating curriculum lessons and receiving graduate-level credit through Ashland University
- [Code a Carnival Camp](#): Hosted at North Central State College leveraging [Microsoft MakeCode](#) curriculum
- 179<sup>th</sup> Cyberspace Wing: Facilitating an Electronics for Beginners summer camp
- Cybersecurity Certificates: Assisting Ohio State University in creating certificates

Utilizing the expertise gained through collaborating with [Microsoft TechSpark](#) strengthened Richland

The [Empowering Communities Playbook](#) played a critical role to help facilitate community conversations, implement new programs, and build ecosystems to sustain programs that drive local impact.



Community Development Group's reputation.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Mid-Ohio Educational Service Center, North Central State College, The Ohio State University at Mansfield, 179<sup>th</sup> Cyberspace Wing, Dallas Design & Technology, ES Consulting, Avita Health System, DRM Productions, Inspirations Academy, Madison Comprehensive High School, Springmill STEM Elementary School, and Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 40 3<sup>rd</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled across 5 Girls Who Code clubs
- 15 teachers exposed to local technology career pathways
- 15 high school students receive an intro to Arduino programming
- 30 middle school students Code a Carnival
- 480 students Stellar Robotics

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth.

- February 2024: [Electronics for Beginners summer camp open to high school students](#)
- July 2023: [RCDG selected as part of Microsoft's National TechSpark Program to grow economic opportunity in Richland County – Crawford County Now](#)



*“This ecosystem will improve our work in economic development, workforce development, and business growth.”*

[Angie Cirone](#),  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Ohio

*“We are proud to cultivate the next generation of programmers and tech leaders together.”*

[Elizabeth Shirk, M.Ed.](#)  
Springmill STEM Elementary



Strong Business.  
Strong Community.

# Black Tech Street

## Digital Inclusion in Tulsa, Oklahoma

### Local opportunity

Hack the Future: Greenwood is an event to pilot what exposing and educating black and marginalized communities about AI looks like at scale and in a way that catalyzes holistic AI adoption, application, and ecosystem development (AI transformation).

### Engaging the community

[Black Tech Street](#) hosted Hack the Future: Greenwood aimed at introducing AI to black and marginalized communities at scale, catalyzing holistic AI adoption and ecosystem development. This event showcases AI's transformative potential in crucial areas of black life.

Over 100 participants, including members of the historic Black Wall Street community, explored ChatGPT's capabilities across six vital domains: Entrepreneurship, creative expression education, spirituality, community development, and social justice. The event featured panels the national AI landscape and its implications for creators and entrepreneurs, headlined by Olivia Zhu, Senior Policy Administrator on AI at the White House of Office of Science and Technology Policy.

Zhu emphasized the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to leveraging AI's benefits while mitigating risks, stressing the importance of community engagement, exemplified by events like Hack the Future Greenwood. This event propels Greenwood's AI ecosystem, aspiring to make it a national exemplar for ethical AI use.



Microsoft including [Microsoft TechSpark](#) helped pilot what will be the bedrock of an AI ecosystem model that will hope to be used to scale AI transformations to other Black and marginalized communities.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Charles & Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies
- George Kaiser Family Foundation
- Microsoft
- SeedAI and Wilson Center

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 100 digitally skilled
- 4 startup ideas
- 1 rap song created
- \$25K additional from other organizations

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth.

- February 2024: [Community Partner Profile: How Black Tech Street is Building the Blueprint for Empowering Communities in AI](#)
- July 2023: [Black Tech Street Announces Alliance with Microsoft to Digitally Transform Historic Greenwood \(prnewswire.com\)](#)



*“Knowing that Black Tech Street has streamlined access to Microsoft resources makes me feel as though I can equip the hard-working members of the Tulsa ecosystem with the tools they need to succeed.”*

[Tyrance Billingsley](#),  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Oklahoma

*“Working with communities across the nation—including right here in Tulsa—is essential to getting AI right. We’ll continue to work tirelessly to ensure that the benefits of AI are shared equitably across America.”*

[Olivia Zhu](#),  
White House of Office of Science  
and Technology Policy



# Integral Youth Services (IYS)

## Digital Inclusion in Klamath Basin, Oregon

### Local opportunity

The current dilemma is that the youth are underserved and have limited access to career education and technology resources. This creates a cycle of digital divide resulting in low-income and excluded youth falling behind in our digital world.

### Engaging the community

[Integral Youth Services](#) (IYS) services the Klamath Basin which is home to 69,000 residents and is addressing the digital divide among youth. IYS created a Digital Hub where youth could learn new digital skills. The hub included 20 laptops, Smartboard, and cameras. The hub exposed youth to [Microsoft 365](#), [Microsoft Minecraft for Education](#), and [LinkedIn](#). Guidance from [Microsoft TechSpark](#) opened the doors for [Last Mile Fund Scholarships](#) to help with transportation costs for youth.

The collaboration with Microsoft and leveraging their reputation has driven IYS as a front liner for digital skilling for youth in the Klamath Basin.

IYS has also leveraged partnerships with Klamath Community College, Oregon Tech, and our local public-school districts. IYS plans to utilize this partnership to leverage additional funding with our local community.

Health Care agency, and foundations such as Ford Family and Murdock Trust.



### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Klamath Community College, Klamath Housing Authority, Washington Federal Bank, Klamath Falls City Schools, IYS & HECC Work2Learn Crews, Department of Human Services, and Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 20 laptops, Smartboard, and camera in Digital Hub
- 80 students digitally skilled
- 4 scholarships
- \$50K additional funding from other organizations

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth

- March 2024: Klamath Basin kids learn from Minecraft over spring break
- February 2024: [From Challenges to Triumph: A Journey through Career Readiness](#)
- July 2023: [IYS Career Readiness Club named as part of Microsoft's National TechSpark Program – Integral Youth Services](#)
- May 2024: [IYS Microsoft TechSpark program \(youtube.com\)](#)



*“I love to work with the students one on one, and with being in Development, this isn’t a normal setting for me. Seeing the sparkle in student’s eyes when they’re able to create something of value has given me a sense of hope which IYS strives for each and every Microsoft Tecday.”*

[Taylor Hampton](#),  
TechSpark Fellow  
Oregon

*“Working with these youth has been wonderful. They have many reasons to give up but yet they come to class and put in the effort to become career ready.”*

[Luis Solis](#),  
Club TA Intern



# Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business & Industry

## Digital Transformation Entrepreneurship in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

### Local opportunity

The lack of resources and opportunities for tech-related entrepreneurship in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, hampers economic growth, stifles innovation, and perpetuates reliance on traditional industries. Failure to address this issue risks falling behind in the global economy, losing skilled talent to other regions, and perpetuating economic stagnation, ultimately hindering long-term prosperity and competitiveness.

### Engaging the community

[Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business & Industry](#) is launching the Luzerne County TechCelerator program. This ten-week program will provide early-stage entrepreneurs with essential resources, including educational workshops and personalized mentoring sessions, covering critical topics such as business models, customer development, financials, funding options, and legal considerations. They aim to tailor the curriculum to meet the specific needs of the entrepreneurial community.

[Microsoft TechSpark](#) has ignited enthusiasm for Digital Transformation and innovation in our community, fostering a dialogue around the needs of tech entrepreneurs.

Collaboration with Microsoft TechSpark has enabled us to establish a partner collaborative of organizations with experience in running TechCelerator programs in other counties, to be involved in tailoring the program, curriculum, and logistics to best fit the needs of our community in Luzerne County.



This involves doing in-depth funding planning to determine the best source that will allow us to provide this opportunity in an ongoing capacity, ensuring sustainable impact.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Northeastern Pennsylvania
- tecBRIDGE
- Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- Represent eight (8) tech entrepreneurs/startups
- Create eight (8) jobs
- 8 Wilkes University Small Business Development Center (SBDC) referrals
- 32 Ecosystem Partners
- \$50,000 in additional funding

### In the news

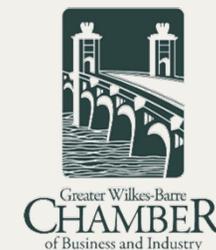
Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth

- October 2023: [WB Connect conference focuses on creative solutions, sustainable impact](#)
- October 2023: [Microsoft speaks at Wilkes-Barre Connect Conference](#)
- July 2023: [Greater WB Chamber selected as part of Microsoft National TechSpark program](#)



*“Pilot programs like these are joint efforts between multiple organizations, and we are committed to making this effort a long-term sustainable offering for our community to ensure ongoing impact.”*

Shanie Mohamed,  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Pennsylvania



# Fuerza Laboral

## Digital Literacy in Central Falls, Rhode Island

### Local opportunity

The community is extremely low-income, first-generation immigrants from Latin America who may be working in dangerous, unstable, exploitative jobs where the incidence of wage theft is recurrent. Most have limited education attainment and have little exposure to technology. The combination of these factors limits them from improving their life situation.

### Engaging the community

[Fuerza Laboral](#), “Overcoming the Technology Gap” is a program aimed at enhancing computer and digital literacy, with a bilingual approach, to empower individuals in navigating the digital era confidently. The program covers a wide range of essential skills, including proficiency in online work-related systems, tips in civic engagement in the digital age, resume writing techniques, LinkedIn navigation, webs-based job searches, and introduction to Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Through this program, we integrate four key components:

- Basic internet concepts
- Usage of online legal tools
- Finding a job online
- Introduction to Artificial Intelligence

In addition, the program incorporates principles from [LinkedIn Learning](#), [Microsoft 365](#), and [Microsoft Edge](#).



This program shows commitment to equipping people with the knowledge and confidence needed to thrive in the digital age.

Leveraging [Microsoft TechSpark](#) accelerated a transformation journey for the community, catalyzing deeper collaboration to enhance community engagement.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- City of Central Falls, Rhode Island Department of Labor, Progreso Latino, Amor, Colombian Association of RI, American News, and Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 72 digital learners
- 24 created LinkedIn profile

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth

- March 2024: [LinkedIn Post](#)
- December 2023: [PROYECTOS PARA LA COMUNIDAD INMIGRANTE | AMERICA NEWS](#)
- December 2023: [Fellow Spotlight for Microsoft TechSpark!](#)



*“Our community has had this particular need for a long time now, especially among older workers. Our mission is to bring economic equilibrium, digital literacy is necessary.”*

[David Molina-Hernandez](#),  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Rhode Island

*“Upon hearing that Fuerza Laboral was one of the chosen non-profits by Microsoft, I was eager in learning everything the program offered. Since I am one of the people who does not know how to navigate technology very well, and the world right now is based around computers, I can benefit from being less afraid of technology, and look for jobs online and don’t miss a good opportunity.”*

Wanda Báez,  
Fuerza Laboral volunteer



**FUERZA LABORAL**  
**POWER OF WORKERS**

# Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce

## Digital Skills in the Charleston Metro Region, South Carolina

### Local opportunity

Regions thrive when people have the workforce skills that match the need of its employers. Digital literacy and digital skilling are becoming increasingly important for residents in the region and the success of the growing industries. The [Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce](#) (CMCC) serves as a catalyst for development through a robust network of strategic partnerships and initiatives.

### Engaging the community

Chamber collaborations include the Charleston County Public Library, ALL IN Lowcountry Coalition, and the Barbara Bush Foundation, with participants leveraging Microsoft resources such as [Digital Equity Dashboard](#), [AI for Education](#), [Digital Inclusion](#), and [Digital Skills](#) to improve efficiency and increase impact of regional efforts. Strong partnerships with regional school districts allows touchpoints with all students and staff to expand knowledge gained through [Microsoft TechSpark](#). These and other opportunities for collaborative development can be accessed through the Career & Education Coalition, housed under the Chamber's Strategic Initiatives and Programs Division.

Charleston is more than one city. As a metro region, harnessing the power of partnership is key in effecting real change.



The ecosystem is dependent on collaborative efforts to activate the region to move forward in the digital economy.

### Activating local ecosystems

A robust ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Charleston County School District
- Berkeley County, Dorchester Districts 2 and 4 school districts
- Charleston County Public Library
- Tricounty Cradle to Career
- Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Governments
- ALL IN Lowcountry
- Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 116,000 students and families
- 413,000 Charleston County residents
- On our way to training or upskilling 1,000 people in healthcare

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth.

- July 2023: [Charleston Metro Chamber Selected as Part of Microsoft's National TechSpark Program](#)



*“Collaborating with Microsoft TechSpark opened so many opportunities. I went into this initiative thinking that the scope was going to be very narrow and now there are so many different resources that I want to push into our communities. Having this type of access is a real game changer when it comes to economic mobility.”*

Celeste Granger,  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
South Carolina

*“The relationship with the chamber is so valuable. Everyday members turn to our staff for resources that are beyond books, including job and workforce related support.”*

Natalie Hauff,  
Charleston County Public Library

Charleston Metro  
Chamber of Commerce



# Elevate Rapid City

## Digital Transformation in Rapid City, South Dakota, and the Black Hills

### Local opportunity

Entrepreneurship is key to sustaining a growing community for many reasons: Providing jobs, promoting growth, refining skills, and inspiring innovation. As Rapid City and the Black Hills region experience explosive growth; entrepreneurship is a pivotal component that has not grown in-kind. This is not due to a lack of entrepreneurial spirit but a shortage of early-stage resources. By bridging this resource gap, we can lift entrepreneurship throughout the region.

### Engaging our community

[Elevate Rapid City](#) spearheaded the establishment of Founder's Hub in the community, aimed at fostering an ecosystem conducive to the growth of startups and small businesses. Central to this initiative is the accessibility of crucial resources within the community, including but not limited to, incubator/accelerator programs, financial support, mentorship opportunities, and other valuable resources. By addressing the community's demand for entrepreneurial support, they not only stimulate the program but also promote digital inclusion.

Founder's Hub serves as the pivotal resource driving empowerment within the startup community.

This platform enables them to furnish the expanding SaaS community with essential support from the outset of their journey while ensuring continued access as they progress.



Alongside Founder's Hub, the strategic engagement with Microsoft TechSpark has proven instrumental in fortifying their ecosystem-building initiatives.

The collaboration between Elevate, Wildfire Labs, and Microsoft TechSpark plays a crucial role in enhancing our comprehension of successful startup ecosystem tactics.

### Activate our ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Wildfire Labs
- South Dakota School of Mines
- US SBA
- Microsoft

### Our Impact

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 1 business accepted into Founder's Hub
- 20+ businesses supported
- 2 Wildfire Labs graduates
- \$200,000 SBA Grant to establish a mentorship program and resource navigator

### In the News

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth.

- January 2024: [Wildfire Labs: A Year in Review](#)
- September 2023: [Microsoft TechSpark Fellows Kick Off Summit](#)
- July 2023: [Elevate Rapid City and Microsoft to work together to ensure regional growth of the entrepreneurial ecosystem](#)



*“Being part of the Microsoft TechSpark program offers advanced support for my community and makes me excited for the future of Rapid City.”*

Dillon Matuska,  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
South Dakota

*“As we prepare to scale, Founder's Hub has given us the confidence that we've established the necessary foundation.”*

John Barbour,  
CEO CounSil LLC



# Chattanooga Chamber

## Digital Transformation in Chattanooga, Tennessee

### Local opportunity

Revitalizing Chattanooga's tech entrepreneur scene is vital for the city's future. Expanding this ecosystem, allows for economic growth, attracts talent, and creates sustainable opportunities for years ahead.

### Engaging the community

The [Chattanooga Chamber](#) and the strategic marketing partnership with [Brickyard](#), a leading venture capital firm, has not only showcased Chattanooga as an attractive destination for entrepreneurs but also facilitated the influx of new firms through Brickyard's investments. This collaboration has bolstered the startup ecosystem, leading to measurable growth and increased opportunities for startups to reach series A metrics.

The ongoing investments in the INCubator demonstrates the commitment to nurturing local talent and fostering innovation. Through collaboration with ecosystem and government partners, the future of the INCubator ensures Chattanooga remains a thriving hub for entrepreneurial success.

[Microsoft TechSpark's](#) involvement brought value to our efforts by providing invaluable expertise and resources in Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration. Through workshops tailored to our local startups, they gained practical insights on incorporating AI processes and tools to meet business needs effectively. Microsoft's visits facilitated knowledge exchange, enabling advanced learning and unique approaches from other communities in building startup tech ecosystems.



These interactions not only inspired collaborative ideas but also opened doors for future partnerships and programming enhancements to the INCubator, further propelling the mission of fostering innovation and growth.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Hamilton County
- City of Chattanooga
- Brickyard
- Heed P.R.
- ChaTech
- Co:Lab
- LaunchTN
- Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 5 new INCubator startups
- 1 new INCubator client with diverse founders
- 3 INCubator graduates
- 14 INCubator clients that attended AI Microsoft Workshops

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth

- July 2023: [INCubator at BDC Awarded \\$50,000 Microsoft TechSpark Fellowship](#)



*“Partnering with Microsoft has helped us kick off new partnerships with ecosystem partners and bring programming ideas for our clients that we are excited to build for the future.”*

[Adam Myers](#),  
VP Economic & Talent Development  
Chattanooga Chamber



#### Microsoft TechSpark

Talent is everywhere, Opportunity is not  
[Microsoft TechSpark](#) | [Microsoft CSR](#)

# Tech-Moms

## Digital Skills in Ogden, Utah

### Local opportunity

Addressing the gender gap in tech is crucial for innovation and diversity. Active encouragement and support for women to pursue careers in technology is needed to harness the full potential of diverse perspectives in shaping the digital future.

### Engaging the community

[Tech-Moms](#) recognized the underrepresentation of women in IT and cybersecurity careers and took proactive steps to address this issue within their community. By creating a specialized 6-month bootcamp, they aimed to provide comprehensive tech training, enabling participants to obtain three industry-recognized certifications: A+, Network+, and Security+.

Private companies collaborated with Tech-Moms, offering feedback on curriculum, volunteers as mentors, and job interviews for graduates, showcasing their dedication to diversity and inclusion in tech.

Leveraging Microsoft's reputation and support from [Microsoft TechSpark](#), Tech-Moms strategically incorporated the company's name in grant applications, discussions with potential employers, and conversations with state leaders.

This collaboration not only enhanced the credibility and visibility of the program but also facilitated access to additional resources and opportunities for the participants.



Through their innovative approach and partnerships, Tech-Moms empowers women to transition directly into high-demand technical roles, thereby contributing to greater diversity and inclusion within the tech industry.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Utah Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity, Talent Ready Utah, Upwork Foundation, Prog Foundation, Apprenti, Arctic Wolf, Private companies, and Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 100 women digitally skilled; 75 in AI and 25 in cybersecurity
- \$212K additional funding

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth

- March 2024: [Cybersecurity Students Post](#)
- February 2024: [Breaking Barriers: Tech-Moms Unveils a 6-Month Cyber Security Program](#)
- February 2024: [Post | Feed | LinkedIn](#)
- August 2023: [Tech-Moms Selected as Part of Microsoft's National TechSpark Fellowship](#)



*“Cybersecurity is an industry that not only has the demand but is a natural fit for the curiosity, critical thinking, and intuition that women bring to the field.”*

Gwen Larussi,  
Technical Trainer,  
Tech-Moms

*“It is a dream come true to see this room full of women ready to dive into a difficult training program knowing they have the support they need to succeed.”*

Robbyn Scribner,  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Utah



# Technology for Tomorrow (T4T)

## Digital Skills in South Burlington, Vermont

### Local opportunity

In Vermont, the digital divide presents a significant challenge, particularly for aging adults. As technology becomes increasingly integrated into daily life, those lacking access or proficiency in digital tools are at a distinct disadvantage. Bridging the digital divide is essential to ensure equitable access to technology, digital skills, and support for individuals in Vermont.

### Engaging the community

[Technology for Tomorrow's \(T4T\) TechSpark Wednesdays](#) training program works to close the digital divide by increasing digital literacy through community classes offered in collaboration with nonprofit partners who serve under-resourced populations including older adult, New Americans, and unemployed individuals.

T4T created a 20-class series for our TechSpark program. The 90-minute hybrid classes met weekly in Vermont at the South Burlington Public Library's Digital Lab. Adult learners also can join virtually, ensuring the ability to access digital learning.

- Digital Literacy: Cohorts focused on basic digital literacy skills leveraging [Microsoft 365 training](#)
- Generative AI: Cohorts centered on understanding and effectively using AI

T4T opened the program by hosting a statewide roundtable with special guests from [Microsoft TechSpark](#),

Vermont Senator Keshia Ram Hinsdale, and Christine Hallquist of Vermont Community Broadband Board.



Based off what they learned from Microsoft, T4T will expand their efforts across the state and partner to add [Digital Navigators](#).

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB)
- Local Nonprofits, including AARP Vermont, US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
- South Burlington Public Library
- Vermont Small Business Development Center
- Comcast NBC Universal Foundation
- Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 224 Digitally Skilled in collaboration with 15+ nonprofit organizations
- 2 Cohorts
- Metrics
- \$45K Additional Funding from other organizations

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth.

- December 2023: [Nonprofit leaders work to close digital divide](#)
- July 2023: [Technology for Tomorrow \(T4T\) is selected as Part of Microsoft's National TechSpark Program to Grow Economic Opportunity in Vermont – Vermont Technology Alliance \(vtta.org\)](#)



*“Digital equity is a must-have for our communities. For T4T, bringing digital literacy to under-resourced populations is a must-do. We want to close the digital divide in Vermont. In the coming year, we aim to amplify our efforts to achieve digital inclusion by training digital navigators around the state in collaboration with our partners.”*

[Vijay Desai](#),  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Vermont

*“Learning how to use the different Microsoft 365 applications, along with how to utilize AI better to help improve my personal life and skills, has been a great opportunity.”*

Kevin Booth, VABIR



**Technology For Tomorrow**

Empowering People in Need with Technology Education  
A non-profit 501(c)(3) organization

# High Technology Foundation

## Digital Transformation in Fairmont, West Virginia

### Local opportunity

Central Appalachia has been one of the nation's least economically diverse regions. This directly contributed to a perennial 50<sup>th</sup>-place ranking in educational attainment. As a result, West Virginia has been deprived of the key resources for participating in the nation's "knowledge" sector. This region needs to overcome this challenge.

### Engaging the community

[High Technology Foundation](#) is developing an innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem around the commercial climate and weather industry, the "Ecosystem," by leveraging local NOAA operations involved in the collection and analysis of climate and weather data. The Ecosystem's cloud computing and data science occupations are perfect for increasing educational attainment levels needed in the workforce.

This "Big Data" advantage gives us a competitive edge, and our collaboration with local support services and universities aims to expand the sector, estimated to be worth billions.

Our "Cloud Data Analytics" program at WVU involves four professors using NOAA datasets and [Microsoft Azure](#) and [Generative AI](#) in their curriculums.

This program introduces students to the commercial potential of NOAA's data and Azure's environment, resulting in startup proposals. [Microsoft TechSpark's](#) collaboration with NOAA, the NOAA Open Data Dissemination (NODD) program, supports our initiative.



### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress. Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- West Virginia University, West Virginia Public Education Collaborative, Vantage Ventures, Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, INNOVA Commercialization, Cooperative Institute for Satellite Earth System Studies, West Virginia Development Office, Appalachia Funders Network, Invest Appalachia, Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 4 classes and expanding to engineering school
- 160 digitally skilled with 3 more sessions ahead
- 2 additional large companies joined the program setting the basis for a new supply chain paradigm
- \$120K additional funding from other organizations

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth.

- July 2023: [High Technology Foundation Selected as Part of Microsoft's National TechSpark Program to Grow Economic Opportunity in West Virginia](#)



*"I'm amazed at the quality of opportunities we have identified through our involvement with Microsoft's TechSpark initiative in just six months. I like to describe it as a "force multiplier" enabling us to drive change and increase our community's participation in the digital economy. I've also found great motivation in learning about the efforts of the other Fellows. It is truly inspirational."*

[James Estep](#),  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
West Virginia

**HIGH TECHNOLOGY  
FOUNDATION**  
BUILDING A **STRONGER** WEST VIRGINIA

# The Trust for the Americas' POETA

## Digital Inclusion in Puerto Rico

### Local opportunity

To empower entrepreneurs, addressing the digital skills gap is essential, enabling them to effectively utilize technology for productivity and integration into the digital economy.

### Engaging the community

The Trust for the Americas' POETA DigiSpark, implemented in partnership with [Center for Puerto Rico](#), focuses on promoting local entrepreneurship digital skilling and Digital Transformation that is essential in the digital age.

With the help of [Microsoft TechSpark](#), this program was able to reach several communities across the island, including Loiza, known as a representative locality of Afro-Puerto Ricans. In Loiza, training sessions in basic digital skills, life skills, and entrepreneurship were provided to a group of women interested in growing, starting, or enhancing their businesses.

POETA DigiSpark acts as an essential catalyst for personal and economic growth in the region. Thanks to key collaborators, the POETA DigiSpark program has been very successful.

### Activating local ecosystems

An ecosystem is vital for fostering collaboration and innovation with communities, serving as a dynamic network where diverse stakeholders come together to drive collective progress.

Ecosystem partners for this program include:

- Center for Puerto Rico
- Interamerican University (Fajardo Campus)
- Eidos Global, Blacks at Microsoft (BAM)
- Danaliz Davila (a prominent community leader in Loiza), and Microsoft

### Impact to date

Community Impact metrics evaluate how well initiatives improve communities, guiding decisions, fostering sustainability, encouraging collaboration, and empowering communities.

- 448 digitally skilled (87% women)
- 183 economic opportunity through entrepreneurs

### In the news

Sharing the story more broadly is crucial as it allows others to learn from your experiences, fostering knowledge sharing and collective growth

- February 2024: [Trust for Americas and Microsoft implement TechSpark in Puerto Rico](#)
- January 2024: [The Trust for the Americas | PR | In 2023, #Trust4Americas and the @centroparapr Foundation brought the #TechSpark initiative to the community of Loiza in Puerto... | Instagram](#)



*“This exciting collaboration underscores our commitment to bridging the skills gap and fostering economic opportunities. In the upcoming training cohort, we’re integrating AI training to ensure participants are well prepared for today’s digital landscape.”*

Veronica Philippe,  
Microsoft TechSpark Fellow  
Puerto Rico

*“We often assume that we live in a world where technology is accessible to everyone, and these interactions allow us to see the reality of the lack of access.”*

Sila M. Calderon Foundation,  
Center for Puerto Rico



#### Microsoft TechSpark

Talent is everywhere, Opportunity is not  
[Microsoft TechSpark](#) | [Microsoft CSR](#)

